

5 LAND USE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides information relevant to land use impacts under NEPA and CEQA in connection with the Proposed Action and alternatives. This chapter includes an introduction, environmental and regulatory setting, impact analysis methods and assumptions, significance criteria, environmental effects of the action and alternatives, and mitigation measures to address effects that are identified as significant.

5.1.1 Data Sources

The following sources of information were reviewed to prepare the land use chapter.

- ▲ *Yolo County 2030 Countywide General Plan* (Yolo County General Plan) (Yolo County 2009a),
- ▲ *Yolo County 2030 Countywide General Plan EIR* (Yolo County General Plan EIR) (Yolo County 2009b),
- ▲ *City of Davis General Plan* (City of Davis 2007),
- ▲ *City of Davis Draft Environmental Impact Report for the City of Davis General Plan Update and the Establishment of a New Junior High School Site* (Davis General Plan EIR) (City of Davis 2000),
- ▲ *City of West Sacramento General Plan 2035 Policy Document* (City of West Sacramento 2016a),
- ▲ *City of West Sacramento General Plan Update EIR* (City of West Sacramento 2016b),
- ▲ *City of Winters General Plan* (City of Winters 1992a),
- ▲ *City of Winters General Plan EIR* (City of Winters 1992b),
- ▲ *City of Woodland General Plan* (City of Woodland 2017), and
- ▲ *City of Woodland General Plan EIR* (City of Woodland 2017).

5.1.2 Definitions

Common land use categories typically found in one form or another across municipalities consist of open space, agriculture, parks and recreation, residential, commercial, industrial, public and quasi-public, and specific plan designations. Land use categories are a method to organize similar land use designations into groups. These categories are generally the same from municipality to municipality. In this chapter, the term “category” is used to describe groups of land use designations of similar uses.

Existing land uses may also be described using the same land use categories. However, data on existing land use is harder to find than for planned land uses. The Yolo HCP/NCCP team did extensive work on examining and assigning land cover types to parcels throughout the Plan Area. Land covers do not directly relate to typical land use categories. In many instances, they are more detailed regarding agricultural or open space categories and less detailed regarding “developed” categories, such as residential, commercial, or industrial.

5.2 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

5.2.1 Environmental Setting

This section examines existing land use conditions and land use plans in the Plan Area. It provides an overview of the primary land use agencies within the Plan Area and a brief description of each agency's mission and jurisdiction. The Plan Area includes all of Yolo County. Land use plans and policies have been established by the County and by the cities of Davis, West Sacramento, Winters, and Woodland. Broad land use designations within the Plan Area include parks and open space, agriculture, and urban uses (Exhibit 5-1). While land uses vary throughout the county, the majority of the Plan Area consists primarily of agricultural fields and open space lands (including grasslands), with urban development concentrated in a limited number of locations.

EXISTING LAND USES

Yolo County has a total land area of approximately 653,494 acres. Four incorporated cities are located in the County: Davis, West Sacramento, Winters, and Woodland. The unincorporated County contains 15 named unincorporated communities/places: Capay, Clarksburg, Dunnigan, Elkhorn, El Rio Villa, Esparto, Guinda, Knights Landing, Madison, Monument Hills, North Davis Meadows, Rumsey, Willow Oak, Yolo, and Zamora (see Exhibit 2-3). The Plan Area also includes a 1,130-acre expanded Plan Area for riparian conservation in Solano County, on the south side of Putah Creek (see Exhibit 1-1).

For the purposes of this analysis, existing land uses are described in terms of the "land cover types" consistent with the units of analysis used in the HCP/NCCP (see Table 2-1 of the HCP/NCCP). The land cover types are summarized below in Table 5-1 in three ways:

- ▲ Farmlands within the Plan Area include cultivated lands, other agriculture (citrus/subtropical, deciduous fruits/nuts, vineyards, pasture, truck/nursery/berry crops), and semiagricultural/incidental to agriculture land cover types.
- ▲ Undeveloped lands within the Plan Area include the following land cover types: grasslands, shrubland and scrub, woodland and forest, wetland and riparian, and eucalyptus.
- ▲ Developed and barren lands within the Plan Area include barren and developed land cover types.

The majority of land in Yolo County is used for farmland (accounting for 343,515 acres, or 53% of the total land area). Undeveloped lands make up another 40% of the land (262,157 acres). Developed and barren lands account for approximately 7% of total land in Yolo County (47,822 acres).

Table 5-1 shows the percentage of land in different land use categories within the Plan area. Exhibit 5-2 shows where these existing land covers fall within the Plan Area.

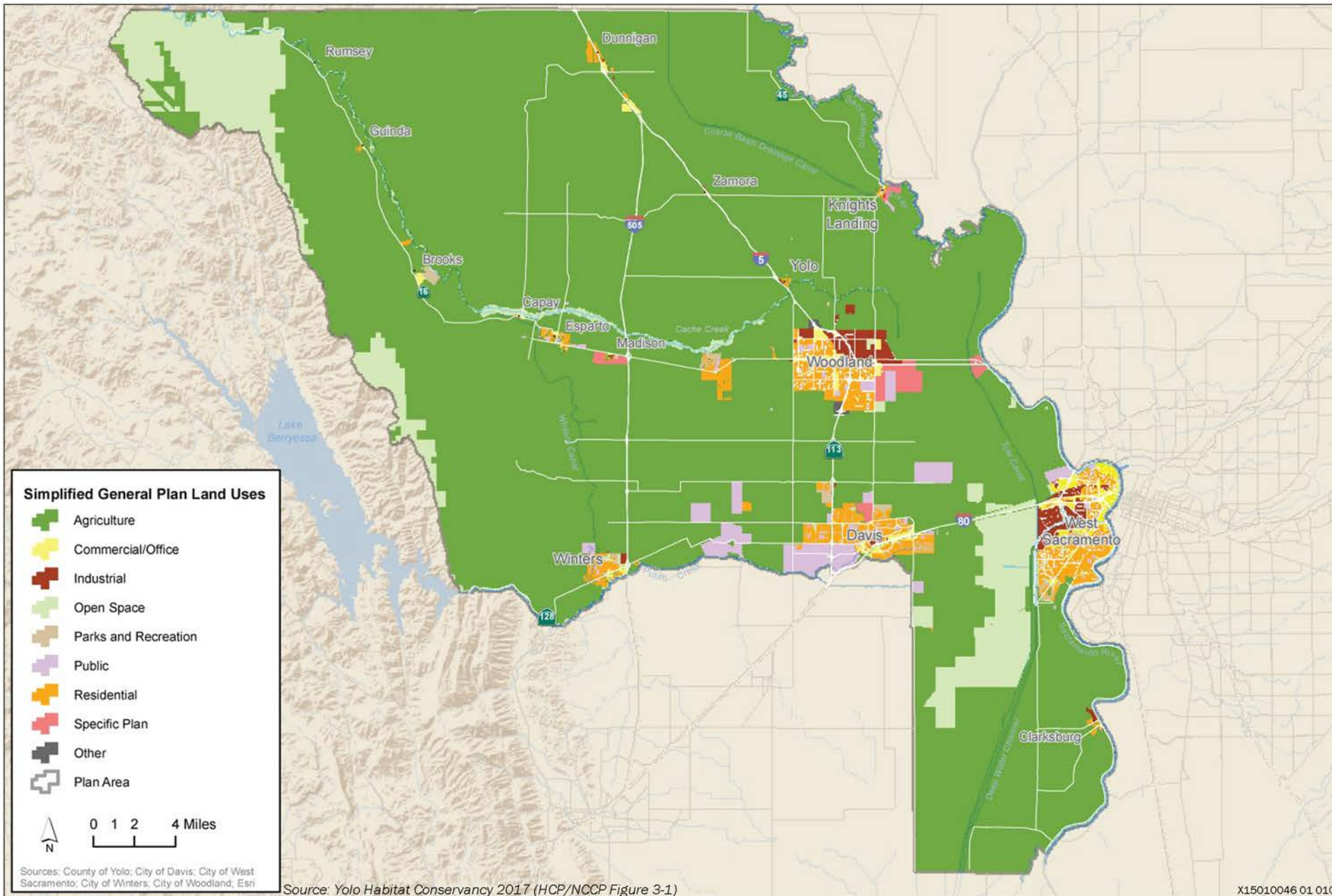


Exhibit 5-1

General Plan Land Uses



Table 5-1 Existing Land Cover Types in the Plan Area

Existing Land Use	Acres	Percent of Plan Area
Farmlands		
Cultivated lands	250,841	38%
Other agriculture	62,164	10%
Semiagricultural/incidental to agriculture	30,510	5%
Total Farmlands	343,515	53%
Undeveloped Lands		
Grassland (including Grazing Land)	81,158	12%
Shrubland and scrub	44,705	7%
Woodland and forest	83,143	13%
Riparian, wetland, and open water	52,782	8%
Eucalyptus	369	0%
Total Undeveloped Lands	262,157	40%
Developed and Barren Lands		
Barren	2,122	0%
Developed	45,700	7%
Total Developed and Barren Lands	47,822	7%
Total	653,494	100%

Source: Yolo Habitat Conservancy 2018, Adapted from Table 2-1

LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

General plan land uses within the Plan Area are shown on Exhibit 5-1. For HCP/NCCP planning purposes, and for the purposes of this environmental review, land use categories were derived from over 94 designations set forth by Yolo County and the Cities of Davis, Winters, Woodland, and West Sacramento, and were aggregated into the following eight categories:

- ▲ **Agriculture** in the Plan Area includes row crops, orchards, vineyards, dryland farming, livestock grazing, forest products, horticulture, floriculture, apiaries, confined animal facilities and equestrian facilities, agricultural industrial uses, and agricultural commercial uses.
- ▲ **Commercial/Office** includes retail centers, grocery stores, restaurants, stores and shops, and offices.
- ▲ **Industrial** includes manufacturing, production, and warehouse and distribution centers.
- ▲ **Open Space** includes public open space lands, major natural water bodies, agricultural buffer areas, and habitat.
- ▲ **Parks and Recreation** includes park facilities, such as regional, community and neighborhood parks; tot lots, sports fields and public pools.
- ▲ **Public** includes governmental offices, schools, and places of worship.

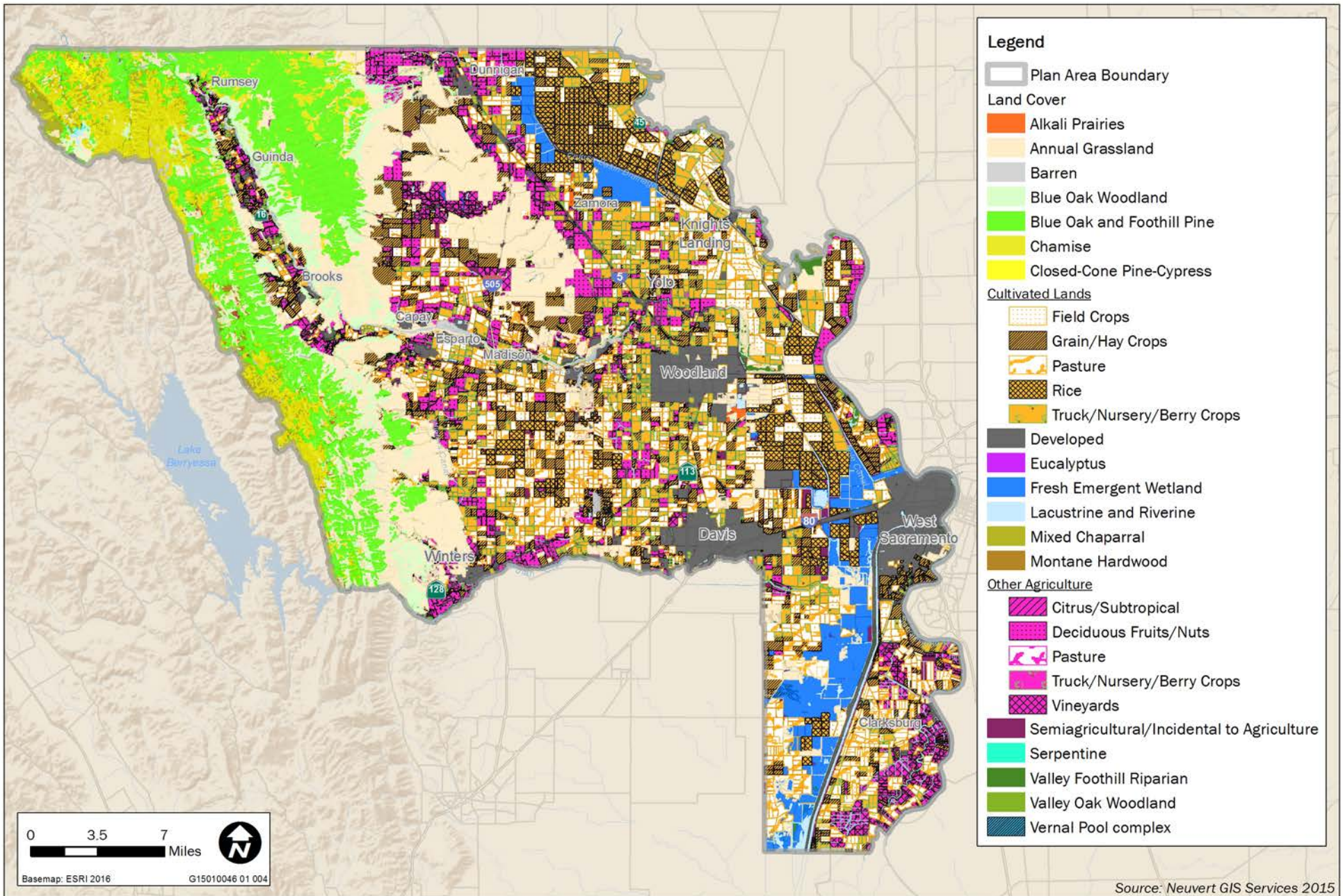


Exhibit 5-2

Land Cover



- ▲ **Residential** includes single-family homes and multi-family homes (e.g., duplexes, triplexes, apartment buildings, condominiums).
- ▲ **Specific Plan** indicates the areas included in an area plan, such as Cache Creek Area Plan, the Capay Valley Area Plan, and the Clarksburg General Plan.

These categories are distinct from the existing land use (i.e., land cover) categories in that they correspond to local designations for allowable land uses rather than existing uses that have been mapped within the Plan Area. Exhibit 5-2 shows the existing land uses within the County.

5.2.2 Regulatory Setting

FEDERAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS

Cache Creek Coordinated Resource Management Plan

The Cache Creek Coordinated Resource Management Plan was adopted by the BLM in 2004 and provides the framework for the future management direction of BLM lands included within the Cache Creek Natural Area.

STATE LAWS AND REGULATIONS

Delta Protection Act of 1992

The Delta Protection Act of 1992 (California Water Code Section 12220) established the Delta Protection Commission (DPC). The Delta Reform Act of 2009 (SBX7-1) amended the 1992 act in November 2009. The Commission has land use planning jurisdiction over the Delta Primary Zone, which generally consists of lands in the central portion of the Delta that were not within either the urban limit line or sphere of influence of any local government's general plan. The Primary Zone, which comprises 487,625 acres, or approximately 66%, of the Delta, encompasses portions of San Joaquin, Contra Costa, Solano, Yolo, and Sacramento Counties. The Secondary Zone is the area outside the Primary Zone and within the "Legal Delta." The Primary Zone is within the planning area of the DPC but the Secondary Zone is not. Lands in Yolo County that are overlaid by the Primary and Secondary Delta Zones are shown in Exhibit 5-3, and are comprised of areas in the southeastern corner of the county, which includes lands that are part of the Yolo Bypass (Yolo County 2009a).

DPC is charged with preparing a regional plan for the Primary Zone to address land uses and resources management, with particular emphasis on agriculture, which was designated by the Delta Protection Act as the primary use of this zone. This plan, the Land Use & Resource Management Plan (LURMP) provides guidance to local governments. Specifically, Land Use Policy P-2 and Agriculture Policies P-1 through P-10 address the role of local governments in preserving and protecting long-term agricultural viability and open space values in the Primary Zone through implementation of general plan policies and zoning codes.

California WaterFix/EcoRestore

The California WaterFix project consists of a water conveyance facility with three new intakes on the Sacramento River and dual tunnels to convey water to existing state and federal pumping plants. This system would include construction of two 30-mile long tunnels, each 40 feet in diameter and 150 feet underground. The tunnels would pump as much as 9,000 cubic feet of water per second from the three new intakes on the Sacramento River near Courtland to the Clifton Court Forebay. This project and California EcoRestore replace the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDGP), which previously propose the same project as an HCP/NCCP. The state is no longer pursuing mitigation through an HCP/NCCP. Instead, construction and operation impacts are proposed to be mitigated through about 2,300 acres of habitat restoration and up to 13,300 acres of habitat protection (e.g., conservation easements). California EcoRestore would restore at

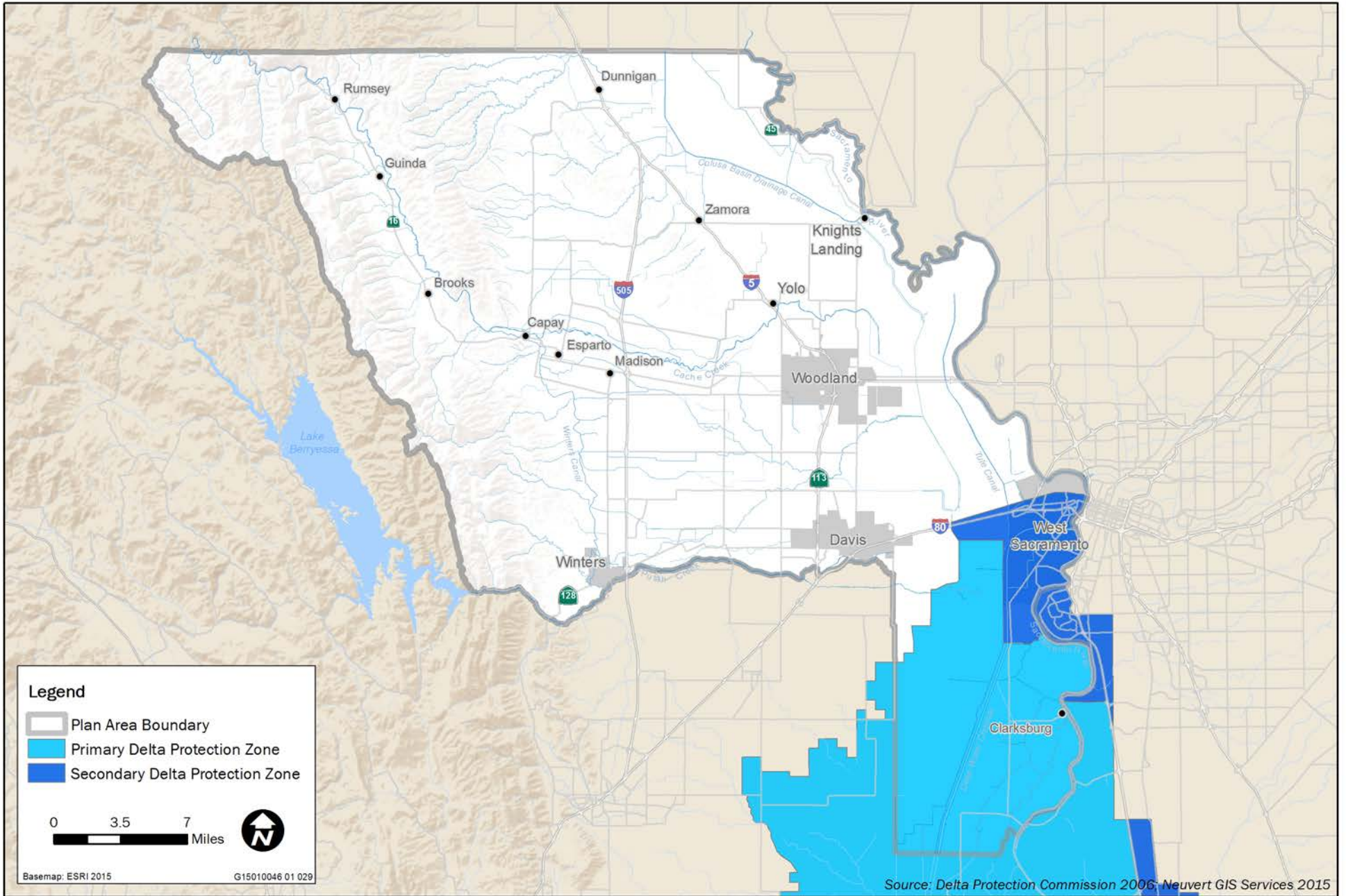


Exhibit 5-3

Delta Protection Zones



least 30,000 acres of habitat in the Sacramento – San Joaquin Delta completely independent of habitat restored as mitigation under California WaterFix, including the lower Yolo Bypass and the Clarksburg region. The WaterFix/EcoRestore are still in the planning phases and have not yet started construction of projects.

Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area Land Management Plan

The Land Management Plan (LMP) for the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area (Wildlife Area) covers approximately 16,770 acres within the Yolo Bypass in Yolo County. The purpose of the Wildlife Area (which is managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife) is to protect and enhance habitat for wildlife species, and to provide the public with compatible, wildlife-related recreational uses. The Wildlife Area has existed since the first land acquisition in 1991 and the LMP proposes continuation of an ecosystem-based approach to management of the diverse mosaic of natural communities. The Wildlife Area provides habitat for special-status species, game species, and other native and nonnative species. This LMP provides a description of the Wildlife Area and its environment and also includes an evaluation of public uses that are compatible with the purpose of the Wildlife Area. This LMP is a general policy guide to the management of the Wildlife Area. It does not specifically authorize or make a precommitment to any substantive physical changes to the Wildlife Area. With the exception of ongoing restoration and enhancement, and operations and maintenance activities, any substantive physical changes that are not currently approved will require subsequent authorizations and approvals.

LOCAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS

Yolo County General Plan

The 2030 Countywide General Plan (Yolo County 2009a) contains land use, agriculture, open space, and resource conservation goals, objectives, and policies that are reflective of local public needs and wishes for a better physical and natural community environment throughout the county. It also incorporates the community area plans for the Capay Valley, Clarksburg and Clarksburg Area, Dunnigan, East Yolo, Esparto, Knights Landing, Madison, and Southport areas, and urban area plans for Woodland, Davis, and Winters.

The following policies related to land use are potentially relevant to the Plan:

- ▲ **Policy LU-2.4** Vigorously conserve, preserve, and enhance the productivity of the agricultural lands in areas outside of adopted community growth boundaries and outside of city SOIs.
- ▲ **Policy LU-3.7** Prohibit the designation of new urban development in places with one or more of the following characteristics:
 - Areas without adequate emergency services and utility capacity and where there are no capital improvement plans to pay for and construct new facilities that can accommodate the proposed development.
 - Areas where there are significant hazards and where there are no plans to adequately mitigate the risk (e.g. floodplains, high fire hazard areas, unstable soils, known seismic faults, etc.).
 - Areas where there are significant natural resources (e.g. groundwater recharge, wildlife habitat, mineral or timber resources, scenic areas, etc.).
 - Areas not contiguous to existing urban development.
- ▲ **Policy LU-4.2** Continue active involvement with State and regional efforts to establish policy, regulation and management for the Delta, to promote the economic and social sustainability of the town of Clarksburg, the viability of the Agricultural District, the habitat needs of the Yolo Natural Heritage Program and the water resources needed for the success of each of these efforts.

- ▲ **Policy LU-7.2** Support and participate in countywide, regional and other multi-agency planning efforts related to housing, tourism, air quality, open space, green infrastructure, recreation, agriculture, habitat conservation, energy, emergency preparedness and flood protection.
- ▲ **Policy CO-1.1** Expand and enhance an integrated network of open space to support recreation, natural resources, historic and tribal resources, habitat, water management, aesthetics, and other beneficial uses.
- ▲ **Policy CO-1.14** Support the preservation of open space consistent with this General Plan, via acquisition of fee title or easement interest by land trusts, government agencies, and conservancies from willing landowners.
- ▲ **Policy CO-1.15** Support efforts to acquire either fee title or easements on additional open space areas adjoining existing protected natural resource areas to increase the size, connectivity, and buffering of existing habitat.
- ▲ **Policy CO-1.16** Coordinate open space acquisition with habitat acquisition that occurs pursuant to the Yolo Natural Heritage Program.
- ▲ **Policy CO-1.24** Allow for specified areas of resource parks to be preserved, enhanced and/or restored as mitigation sites for public agencies only, consistent with the requirements of appropriate regulatory and funding agencies, provided that adequate compensation, including funding for operations and maintenance of the mitigation, is provided.
- ▲ **Policy CO-1.29** Balance the needs of agriculture with recreation, flood management, and habitat, within the Yolo Bypass.
- ▲ **Policy CO-2.1** Consider and maintain the ecological function of landscapes, connecting features, watersheds, and wildlife movement corridors.
- ▲ **Policy CO-2.4** Coordinate with other regional efforts (e.g., Yolo County HCP/NCCP) to sustain or recover special-status species populations by preserving and enhancing habitats for special-status species.
- ▲ **Policy CO-2.11** Ensure that open space buffers are provided between sensitive habitat and planned development.
- ▲ **Policy CO-3.1** Encourage the production and conservation of mineral resources, balanced by the consideration of important social values, including recreation, water, wildlife, agriculture, aesthetics, flood control, and other environmental factors.
- ▲ **Policy CC-2.15** Develop all services, parks, buffers and infrastructure within identified community growth boundaries. Mitigation lands for the loss of agricultural land and wildlife habitat are the only component of community development that are allowed to be located outside of the growth boundaries.
- ▲ **Policy CC-3.10F.** Avoid biological impacts to sensitive species and habitats, to the greatest feasible extent and fully mitigated where they occur, particularly inside designated critical habitat for the California tiger salamander.
- ▲ **Policy AG-2.10** Encourage habitat protection and management that does not preclude or unreasonably restrict on-site agricultural production.

Yolo County Specific/Community/Area Plans

The County has 8 community and area plans which serve to implement the General Plan for the particular geographical area. These plans are: the Cache Creek Area Plan (1996); the Capay Valley Area Plan (2010); the Clarksburg General Plan (2001); the Dunnigan General Plan (2001); the Esparto General Plan (2007);

the Knights Landing General Plan and County Airport Master Plan (1999); the Madison Community Plan (1974); and the Monument Hills Specific Plan (1984).

Yolo County Parks and Open Space Master Plan

The purpose of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan (Master Plan) is to provide information and guidance for the management, use, and future development of Yolo County parks and open space facilities, both individually and system-wide. The Master Plan provides baseline inventories and assessments of recreational uses, as well as system-wide classifications and design elements to reinforce an identity and management consistency for county park property. Relevant policies and actions are described on pages VI-1 to VI-4 and VI-8 to VI-22 of the Master Plan (Yolo County 2006a).

Yolo County Oak Woodland Conservation and Enhancement Plan

The *Yolo County Oak Woodland Conservation and Enhancement Plan* (Yolo County 2007) promotes voluntary efforts to conserve and enhance the county's existing oak woodlands to help minimize the effects of land conversion and other factors that disturb the health and longevity of existing oak woodlands.

Yolo County Zoning Code

Title 8 of the Yolo County Code, Land Development and Zoning, contains the zoning code (Article 2) and describes the permitted land uses and development standards within each zoning district. As the primary regulatory tool for implementing the Yolo County General Plan, the Zoning Ordinance provides specific requirements for each district, consistent with the land use designations within the Yolo County General Plan. Development standards include height, setback, and parking requirements.

City of Davis General Plan

Chapter 1, Land Use and Growth Management, of the City of Davis General Plan contain the following goals and policies potentially relevant to this Plan.

Goal LU 1. Maintain Davis as a small, University-oriented city surrounded by and containing farmland, greenbelt, and natural habitats and reserves.

- ▲ **Policy LU 1.4** Establish a distinct permanent urban edge which shall be defined by an open space, hedgerows, tree rows, similar landscape
- ▲ **Policy LU 1.5** Aggressively work to prevent urban sprawl on the periphery of Davis and in the region utilizing a variety of legislative / legal methods and strategic land acquisitions.
- ▲ **Policy LU 1.6** For developments that are on the edge of City, a minimum of a 150-foot wide urban agricultural transition area is required.

City of Davis Zoning Code

Chapter 40 of Davis Municipal Code contains the City's zoning code. The code zones property within the incorporated City limits. Specific zoning ordinances are provided for different land uses (e.g., residential, commercial, etc.) and special circumstances (e.g., accessory structures, parking requirements, etc.).

City of West Sacramento General Plan

The City of West Sacramento General Plan contains the following goals and policies that relate to land use and that may be applicable to the analysis of the HCP/NCCP:

Goal LU-1. To provide for sustainable, orderly, well-planned, and balanced growth that meets the needs of residents and businesses, uses land efficiently, and is supported by adequate infrastructure.

- ▲ **Policy LU-1.1 Sustainable Development.** The City shall encourage compact development patterns and higher-development intensities that use land efficiently; preserve open space; support transit, bicycle,

and pedestrian mobility; increase housing diversity; and provide for strong neighborhood commercial retail viability.

- ▲ **Policy LU-1.11 Annexations within the Planning Area.** For proposed projects outside the city limits, the City shall work with project proponents to ensure high-quality development, adequate infrastructure improvements, adequate flood protection, and provision of City services. All future urban development within the Planning Area should occur under the jurisdiction of the City. To this end, the City shall require that vacant unincorporated properties be annexed into the City prior to the provision of any City services, or that a conditional service agreement be executed agreeing to annex when deemed appropriate by the City. In order to minimize the disruption and protect agricultural land, development that is adjacent to the city boundaries or has convenient freeway access shall be preferred. Proposals for development of land not adjacent to the city or without convenient freeway access shall be discouraged.
- ▲ **Policy LU-1.12 Yolo County Development Approvals.** The City shall encourage Yolo County to honor the City's growth policies and not approve development adjacent to the city limits.

City of West Sacramento Zoning Ordinance

The zoning ordinance is used by the City of West Sacramento to regulate the size, type, structure, and use of land or buildings in designated areas of the City. The zoning ordinance is Chapter 17 of the West Sacramento Municipal Code.

City of Winters General Plan

The following land use related goal and policies of the 1992 City of Winters General Plan are potentially relevant to the Plan.

Goal I.A: To provide for orderly, well-planned, and balanced growth consistent with the limits imposed by the city's infrastructure and service capabilities and by the city's ability to assimilate new growth.

- ▲ **Policy I.A.2.** The City shall designate an Urban Limit Line delineating the area to be urbanized within the time frame of the General Plan and designed to accommodate a population of 12,500 by the year 2010.
- ▲ **Policy I.A.10.** The City shall designate land adjacent to the Urban Limit Line in the northwest part of Winters as Urban Study Area for future consideration of incorporated development. (See Exhibit D-2.)
- ▲ **Policy I.A.11.** The City will strenuously oppose any new unincorporated highway-related commercial or urban development in Yolo or Solano County, with the exception of agricultural industrial uses, within one mile of the City's Urban Limit Line.

City of Winters Zoning Code

Title 17 of the City of Winters Municipal Code contains the zoning ordinance. As stated in Section 17.04.040 *Purpose*, the zoning ordinance is intended to:

- A. Provide specific guidance for the physical development of the city in order to preserve the safety, character and quality of residential neighborhoods, achieve harmonious working relationships between land uses and to achieve the arrangement of land uses prescribed in the general plan;
- B. Achieve consistency with the city's adopted redevelopment area plan;
- C. Promote economic stability of land uses which are consistent with the general plan, including within the central business district;
- D. Ensure the adequate provision of open space for light, air and fire safety;
- E. Conserve and enhance the city's architectural and cultural resources;

- F. Promote safe and effective traffic circulation systems including adequate off-street parking and loading zones for new development; and
- G. Minimize environmental degradation by ensuring orderly development of lands consistent with the general plan.

City of Woodland General Plan

Chapter 2, Land Use, Community Design, and Historic Preservation Element, of the 2017 City of Woodland General Plan contains the following land use related goal and policies potentially relevant to the Plan.

Goal 2.A: Growth and Change. Support sustainable growth through orderly, well planned development that provides for economic growth, strong social ties, protection of the environment, an enhanced quality of life, and preservation of Woodland’s community character and agricultural heritage.

- ▲ **Policy 2.A.1:** Urban Limit Line. A permanent Urban Limit Line (ULL) is established around Woodland to permanently circumscribe urban development and comply with provisions for agricultural lands. Public services and facilities shall not extend beyond the permanent Urban Limit Line. The City shall take such administrative steps as may be required to implement Policy 2.A.1. The City shall also identify funding for implementing a permanent urban limit line, including mitigation for developing on agricultural land. The City shall continually reevaluate residential land use densities, housing policies, and zoning to determine the potential for increased residential densities for both infill sites and undeveloped land within the Urban Limit Line. The City shall continually review existing non-residential zoning to determine the potential for conversion to higher density residential uses within the permanent Urban Limit Line. The City will encourage and support appropriately located agricultural and wildlife conservation easements to support implementation of the permanent urban limit line.

This policy enacts Woodland Measure A (Ballot of June 2006), Urban Limit Line, and can only be modified by the voters.

- ▲ **Policy 2.A.3:** Agricultural Mitigation. For impacts to agricultural land within the ULL, require one acre to be permanently conserved for every acre converted to urban development (1:1 ratio). The farmland being conserved must be of the same Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program type (Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Local Importance) as the farmland that is being converted, or of a type of higher quality, and the conserved farmland should be located outside of, but as close to the Woodland Urban Limit Line as possible.

City of Woodland Zoning Ordinance

The zoning ordinance is Chapter 25 of the Code of the City of Woodland and provides a precise and detailed plan for the use of land based on the General Plan of the City. It consists of zoning maps designating certain districts and a set of regulations controlling the uses of land, the density of population, the uses and locations of structures, the height and bulk of structures, the open space about structures, the external appearance of certain uses and structures, the areas and dimensions of sites, and requiring the provision of off-street parking, off-street loading facilities of landscaping.

SACOG Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy

The Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) is an association that includes the Counties of El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba, as well as 22 cities, including the cities of Davis, West Sacramento, Winters, and Woodland. As a metropolitan transportation organization, SACOG is required to prepare a long-range transportation plan for all modes of transportation—including public transit, automobile, bicycles, and pedestrians—every 4 years for the six-county area. In response to this requirement, SACOG has completed the *Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS) 2035*. The purpose of the MTP/SCS 2035 is to establish regional access and identify mobility goals; identify present and future transportation needs, deficiencies, and constraints within the transportation system; analyze potential solutions; estimate available funding; and propose investments. The MTP/SCS 2035 does

not present requirements for development within the Planning Area; rather, it forms the foundation for regional transportation investments, the Regional Housing Needs Plan, and compliance with federal air quality and state greenhouse gas emissions requirements. On February 18, 2016, the SACOG Board of Directors adopted the 2016 update to the MTP/SCS.

The MTP/SCS is guided by six principles adopted in 2005 by the SACOG Board of Directors (SACOG 2016):

- ▲ Smart Land Use,
- ▲ Environmental Quality and Sustainability,
- ▲ Financial Stewardship,
- ▲ Economic Vitality,
- ▲ Access and Mobility, and
- ▲ Equity and Choice.

SACOG Preferred Blueprint Scenario for 2050 and Preferred Rural-Urban Connections Strategy

The SACOG Preferred Blueprint Scenario serves as a framework to guide local government decisions related to growth and transportation planning through 2050 and the Blueprint is part of SACOG's MTP/SCS 2035.

Building on the Blueprint, the Rural-Urban Connections Strategy looks at the region's growth and sustainability objectives from a rural perspective. In the same way that the Blueprint is an economic development strategy for urban areas, the Rural-Urban Connections Strategy is intended to be an economic and environmental sustainability strategy for rural areas.

Airport Plans

SACOG is the designated Airport Land Use Commission for the counties of Yolo, Sacramento, Sutter, and Yuba. There are four general aviation airports in Yolo County. Three of these airports – Yolo County Airport, Watts-Woodland Airport, and Borges-Clarksburg Airport – are subject to the respective Airport comprehensive land use plans prepared by the Airport Land Use Commission. A fourth airport, University Airport, is subject to an Airport Layout Plan prepared by UC Davis.

5.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

5.3.1 Methodology and Significance Criteria

METHODS AND ASSUMPTIONS

This analysis assumes that the local general plans and specific plans will be built out as described in Chapter 2, *Proposed Action and Alternatives*. It is assumed that all activities and projects approved by the County and cities would be consistent with the policies of their respective general plans and would be subject to any mitigation measures identified in the general plan EIRs.

As described in Section 3.3, the issuance of ITPs by the Wildlife Agencies for take of 12 covered species associated with five categories of covered activities – together with subsequent adoption and implementation of the Plan by the Applicants consistent with the Permits – is the Proposed Action considered in this EIS/EIR. Issuance of permits by the Wildlife Agencies only provides compliance with the FESA and NCCPA.

All Covered Activities are subject to the approval authority of one or more of the Applicants with jurisdiction over such projects, and HCP/NCCP approval and permit issuance for take of covered species does not confer or imply approval from any entity other than the USFWS or CDFW to implement the Covered Activities. Rather, as part of the standard approval process, individual projects will be considered for further environmental analysis and generally will receive separate, project-level environmental analysis review under CEQA and, in some cases, NEPA for those projects involving federal Agencies.

The assessment of potential effects on land use in the Plan Area is based on the anticipated changes in land cover and land uses over 50 years, corresponding to the permit term under the Proposed Action.

Anticipated changes in land cover/land use for each alternative are described in Chapter 2, Proposed Action and Alternatives. See Chapter 3, Approach to the Analysis, for a description of the methodology used across all resource chapters for the analysis of cumulative effects.

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As described in Chapter 2, Proposed Action and Alternatives, the Conservancy has proposed a number of changes to the HCP/NCCP since the release of the Draft on June 1, 2017. These changes are described and Characterized in Section 2.3.2, *Alternative B – Proposed Action Alternative (Permit Issuance/Plan Implementation)*, of Chapter 2.

These proposed changes fall into several categories;

- ▲ Copy edits such as correction of spelling errors,
- ▲ Minor text clarifications and corrections such as providing or correcting cross references to other parts of the document,
- ▲ Minor numeric corrections, such as small adjustments to acreages of particular land cover types,
- ▲ Providing updated information since publication of the Draft HCP/NCCP such as including information from the City of Woodland General Plan Update 2035, which was adopted after the Draft HCP/NCCP was published,
- ▲ Clarifications or enhancements to particular plan elements such as new or updated Avoidance and Minimization Measures (AMMs),
- ▲ Increased details on plan implementation such as providing additional information on the content of the Implementation Handbook, and
- ▲ Changes in assumptions regarding costs and funding to reflect updated information.

These proposed changes have been analyzed to determine whether they would result in any changes to the impact analysis or conclusions reached in the Draft EIS/EIR. This analysis is provided in Section 24.2, *Evaluation of Proposed Modifications to the Draft HCP/NCCP*. The analysis substantiates that the proposed changes to the HCP/NCCP do not alter the analysis or impact conclusions provided in the Draft EIS/EIR for land use. Therefore, no changes to the analysis provided below are merited.

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

Effects would be significant if an alternative would result in the following:

- ▲ physically divide an established community;
- ▲ conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to, a general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect; or
- ▲ conflict with any applicable HCP or natural community conservation plan.

5.3.2 Effects of Proposed Action and Alternatives

ALTERNATIVE A—NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE (NO PERMIT/NO PLAN IMPLEMENTATION)

Environmental Consequences/Environmental Effects

As described previously in Chapter 2, *Proposed Action and Alternatives*, under the No Action Alternative (Alternative A), take associated with development would occur over the 50-year study period consistent with the local general plans and other applicable planning documents (e.g., community plans, specific plans, recreation plans). As also described in Chapter 2, for purposes of this analysis, development and related activities (e.g., operations and maintenance) under the No Action Alternative are considered using the same organizational categories identified in the Yolo HCP/NCCP; urban projects and activities; rural projects and activities, which includes rural public services, infrastructure, and utilities, agricultural economic development, and open space; and public and private operations and maintenance. Under the No Action Alternative, the Plan would not be approved and implemented and no Endangered Species Act authorizations would be issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) or CDFW related to the Plan. Endangered species permitting and mitigation would continue on an individual project-by-project basis.

Since development would occur as planned for and allowed under the county and city general plans, land use impacts would be the same as those identified for the general plans. In regard to the physical division of established communities, the environmental reviews performed for all the adopted general plans found no significant land use impacts relating to the physical division of existing communities. Since the No Action Alternative would not change development activity already allowed by these general plans, there would be no new or additional activity that would serve to directly divide established communities. Although this EIS/EIR covers a longer study period than the local general plans, it is anticipated that the nature of longer-term future development activity would not change (i.e., most development consisting as growth or expansion of existing communities), and would therefore also not divide established communities.

Under the No Action Alternative, development and other activities in rural and urban areas within the Plan Area would occur as planned by the plan participants through their general plans, various area plans, and other applicable planning documents. The general plans, area plans, and other applicable planning documents provide the basis for ensuring that future development is consistent with the communities' vision and intention. Under the No Action Alternative, the activities (including conservation and operations and maintenance) would be required to be implemented consistent with policies and regulations of the applicable jurisdiction. If general plans and other applicable policies and regulations are updated within the 50-year study period, activities would need to be implemented consistent with the most updated versions. Since activities would need to be consistent with the applicable plans, there is no impact related to plan consistency.

There are currently no existing regional HCPs or NCCPs initiated by Yolo County municipalities in effect in the Plan Area. Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no adopted Yolo HCP/NCCP for the Plan Area and therefore the existing condition relative to HCPs and NCCPs would not change. However, the Solano Multi-Species HCP (Solano HCP) covers approximately 8,000 acres of south Yolo County. While not yet adopted, the Solano HCP is considered in this analysis as the areas covered under the Yolo HCP/NCCP and Solano HCP overlap. Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no changes to the current agreements and practices which would allow for covered activities of Solano HCP plan participants whose projects extend into that portion of Yolo County. However, as stated in the Solano HCP, "Covered Activities in Yolo County are limited to activities undertaken by or under the permitting authority and control of ... three [Solano HCP] Plan Participants and do not include any future urban development in Yolo County. The three Solano HCP plan participants with covered activities within Yolo County are Reclamation District 2068, Dixon Resource Conservation District, and Dixon Regional Watershed Joint Powers Authority. In addition, Solano HCP covered activities proposed in the area of Yolo County within the [Solano HCP] Plan Area ... fall outside of Yolo County's proposed urban expansion areas" (Solano County 2012). Under the No Action Alternative, this area would continue to be covered under the Solano HCP and would not conflict with planned activities in Yolo County, and visa-versa. Therefore, activities would not conflict with an adopted HCP or NCCP.

Cumulative Effects

Land use policy is set at the local level. General plans and other policies and regulations guide local land use decisions for each jurisdiction separately. In determining whether an action would divide an existing community, typically this is reviewed at a local level. As stated above, under the No Action Alternative, the development and activities would not physically divide an existing community. While there could potentially be activities within the region which could divide existing communities, the No Action Alternative would not contribute to that potential impact.

Local policies and regulations are encouraged to be consistent with regional plans, such as the SACOG MTP/SCS. The MTP/SCS is updated every four years. Local general plans are not updated as often. As local general plans are updated, they would be reviewed for consistency with the regional plan. In addition, if a city, county, or public agency in the jurisdiction of SACOG wants to use federal transportation funding for projects or programs, those projects must be included in the MTP/SCS project list. This ensures that the County and cities review the regional plan as needed and not just when updating their plans and policies. The MTP/SCS provides guidance to the jurisdictions on a preferred land use scenario which may be used to guide land use decisions.

As described in Section 5.2.2, *Regulatory Setting*, DPC has prepared a LURMP which provides guidance for the Delta Primary Zone. A portion of unincorporated county land falls within the Delta Primary Zone. That area is identified with a Delta Protection Overlay land use designation in the Yolo County General Plan. Land uses within the Delta Protection Overlay must be consistent with the County's base designation and with the DPC LURMP.

ALTERNATIVE B—PROPOSED ACTION (PERMIT ISSUANCE/PLAN IMPLEMENTATION)

Environmental Consequences/Environmental Effects

The Proposed Action Alternative (Alternative B) incorporates the same development-related activities identified for the No Action Alternative (urban projects and activities, rural projects and activities, and public and private operations and maintenance), with the HCP/NCCP providing a mechanism for the Wildlife Agencies to provide incidental take authorization for these lawfully undertaken covered activities. Land use impacts as a result of these development-related activities would be the same as those described under the No Action Alternative.

Where the Proposed Action Alternative differs from the No Action Alternative is in the implementation of the Yolo HCP/NCCP, including its conservation strategy and neighboring landowner protection program, as well as the required use of Avoidance and Minimization Measures during implementation of covered activities. Components of the conservation strategy include but are not limited to habitat assessment surveys and population surveys; habitat management; restoration, enhancement, and creation of habitats; conversion of agricultural lands to create habitat; construction of facilities necessary for management and maintenance; and monitoring; and control of invasive nonnative species. The following impact discussions focus on these elements of the HCP/NCCP that differ from the No Action Alternative. However, the primary result of the neighboring landowner protection program, from a land use perspective, would be the general preservation of existing conditions on lands adjacent to reserve system lands. The voluntary neighboring landowner protection program is described in more detail in Chapter 2, *Proposed Action and Alternatives*. Since the program would not change land uses, and in effect provides a mechanism to assist in preserving existing land uses, it would not have an effect on land use, and is not evaluated further in the impact discussions below.

Effect LAND-1: Physically divide an established community.

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, the Yolo HCP/NCCP would be adopted and implemented, including the conservation strategy which creates a reserve system and includes biological goals and objectives for the covered species. Lands in the reserve system would either be retained in their existing condition (generally including agriculture and open space uses) through conservation easements or other mechanisms, or would be used for habitat enhancement, restoration, or creation.

Activities that result in continuing an existing agricultural use would not physically divide an established community. Purchasing, or obtaining an easement on currently private lands to enhance, restore, or create habitat, even if this were to occur between two portions of a community, would not further restrict access or the ability for individual to move between areas. Existing roads and existing travel corridors would be retained.

NEPA Level of Significance: As compared to the No Action Alternative, this impact is **less than significant**. Impacts associated with the potential for the reserve system to physically divide an established community are not appreciably different from those associated with implementing habitat mitigation under the No Action Alternative.

CEQA Level of Significance: As compared to Existing Conditions, this impact is **less than significant**. Potential effects from establishment and management of a reserve system under the Proposed Action Alternative would not result in dividing an established community.

No mitigation is required.

Effect LAND-2: Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to, a general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

As stated previously, implementation of the HCP/NCCP as described for the Proposed Action Alternative includes a conservation strategy. Implementation of the conservation strategy is consistent with the County and city general plans. Within the various general plans, there are policies which encourage habitat restoration, land conservation, and species preservation including the policies listed above in Section 5.2.2 *Regulatory Setting*. In addition, several of the general plans include specific goals, policies, and implementing actions which direct the jurisdictions to conserve habitat and, in some cases, adopt and/or implement a habitat conservation plan.

NEPA Level of Significance: As compared to the No Action Alternative, this impact is **less than significant**. Impacts associated with the potential for the reserve system to conflict with applicable plans, policies, and regulations are not appreciably different from those associated with implementing habitat mitigation under the No Action Alternative.

CEQA Level of Significance: As compared to Existing Conditions, this impact is **less than significant**. Potential effects from establishment and management of a reserve system under the Proposed Action Alternative would not result in conflicts with applicable plans, policies, and regulations. *No mitigation is required.*

Effect LAND-3: Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan.

Currently, no HCPs or NCCPs initiated by Yolo County municipalities or entities cover the Plan Area. The Yolo HCP/NCCP would serve as the HCP and NCCP for the Plan Area. As stated previously under the No Action Alternative, the Solano HCP overlaps with a portion of the Plan Area. The Solano HCP covers the expanded Plan Area along the south bank of Putah Creek as well as 8,000 acres in southern Yolo County. The Yolo HCP/NCCP expanded Plan Area overlaps with an area that is planned for conservation in the Solano HCP. In a February 12, 2015 action by the Solano County Water Agency (SCWA 2015), SCWA agreed to act in partnership with the Yolo Habitat Conservancy for habitat projects along the south bank of Putah Creek. Both plans look to this area for habitat preservation and conservation; therefore, this agreement ensures that the Yolo HCP/NCCP is consistent with the Solano HCP for this area.

As stated previously, the Solano HCP provides coverage for three Solano HCP plan participants (Reclamation District 2068, Dixon Resource Conservation District, and Dixon Regional Watershed Joint Powers Authority) whose activities¹ extend into Yolo County. These three plan participants are not participants in the Yolo HCP/NCCP and their activities are not covered under the Yolo HCP/NCCP. The area for which the Solano HCP provides take coverage to their plan participants contains some of the higher priority land acquisition areas

¹ Solano HCP covered activities within Yolo County include routine operations and maintenance activities, such as culvert repair and replacement; weed control; silt and trash removal; ditch gate repair and replacement; and drainage pipe repair and replacement.

identified for the Yolo HCP/NCCP. There is a potential conflict between these two plans where the Yolo HCP/NCCP may direct the Conservancy to acquire land for habitat conservation where the Solano HCP is providing take coverage for covered activities.

NEPA Level of Significance: As compared to the No Action Alternative, this impact is **potentially significant**. Under the No Action Alternative there would be no Yolo HCP/NCCP, and therefore no potential conflict between the Yolo HCP/NCCP and Solano HCP. The potential for conflicts between the two Plans occurs with implementation of the Proposed Action Alternative.

CEQA Level of Significance: As compared to Existing Conditions, this impact is **potentially significant**. Under existing conditions there is no Yolo HCP/NCCP, and therefore no potential conflict between the Yolo HCP/NCCP and Solano HCP. The potential for conflicts between the two Plans occurs with implementation of the Proposed Action Alternative.

Mitigation Measure LAND-1: Agreement with SCWA

Before adopting the HCP/NCCP, the Conservancy must enter into an agreement with SCWA recognizing that the Conservancy's acquisition areas must not conflict with the covered activities of the Solano HCP. The agreement should ensure that implementing the Yolo HCP/NCCP would not preclude the implementation of the Solano HCP.

The implementation of Mitigation Measure LAND-1 prevent circumstances where the Conservancy's acquisition areas would conflict with the covered activities of the Solano HCP. With implementation of this mitigation measure, the impact is reduced to a **less than significant** level.

Cumulative Effects

The existing cumulative condition in the Plan Area resulting from past and present projects is described above for the No Action Alternative and remains the same for the Proposed Action Alternative.

The contribution of the Proposed Action Alternative to the cumulative condition for land use would essentially be the same as the No Action Alternative. Implementation of urban projects and activities, rural projects and activities, rural public services (infrastructure and utilities, agriculture economic development, and open space), and public and private operations and maintenance receiving incidental take authorization under the Proposed Action Alternative would occur at generally the same intensity as the same categories of activities under the No Action Alternative. As described under "Cumulative Effects" for the No Action Alternative, the Proposed Action Alternative also would not contribute to potential divisions in existing communities. In addition, the Proposed Action Alternative would have the same effects regarding consistency with regional plans as the No Action Alternative. Implementation of Mitigation Measure LAND-1 prevents any contribution to potential conflicts between the Yolo HCP/NCCP and the Solano HCP. Adopting an HCP/NCCP as described for the Proposed Action Alternative would not change whether there would be a substantial contribution to a significant cumulative land use effect.

NEPA Level of Significance: As compared to the No Action Alternative, this impact is **less than significant**.

CEQA Level of Significance: As compared to Existing Conditions, this impact is **less than significant**.

ALTERNATIVE C—REDUCED TAKE ALTERNATIVE

Environmental Consequences/Environmental Effects

The Reduced Take Alternative (Alternative C) would include the same categories of covered activities as the Proposed Action Alternative (Alternative B); however, under the Reduced Take Alternative, there are eight areas designated for development under the Proposed Action Alternative in which no activities that would result in take of covered species would be permitted. See Chapter 2, Section 2.3.3, *Alternative C-Reduced Take Alternative* for more information on this alternative. With the limitation on take within these areas, it is

expected that the general categories of current land uses would not change in these eight locations. Therefore, impacts to land use as a result of implementation of the Reduced Take Alternative would be similar to those discussed above for the No Action and the Proposed Action Alternatives. However, the prohibition on take in the eight areas could result in the development planned for these locations being diverted to another part of the Plan Area.

However, the location of take would not change the potential impact on division of an established community or consistency with applicable plans and policies. Overall, under the Reduced Take Alternative, Effects LAND-1, LAND-2, and LAND-3 would not be appreciably different from what is described for the Proposed Action Alternative. Under the Reduced Take Alternative, Mitigation Measure LAND-1 would still need to be implemented.

NEPA Level of Significance: As compared to the No Action Alternative, this impact is similar and is **less than significant**.

CEQA Level of Significance: As compared to the Proposed Action Alternative, this impact is similar and remains **less than significant**.

Cumulative Effects

The existing cumulative condition in the Plan Area resulting from past and present projects is described above for the No Action Alternative and remains the same for the Reduced Take Alternative.

The contribution of the Reduced Take Alternative to the cumulative condition for land use would essentially be the same as the No Action Alternative. As described under “Cumulative Effects” for the No Action Alternative, the Reduced Take Alternative also would not contribute to potential divisions in existing communities on a regional scale. In addition, the Reduced Take Alternative would have the same effects regarding consistency with regional plans as the No Action Alternative. Similar to the Proposed Action Alternative, adopting an HCP/NCCP as described for the Reduced Take Alternative would not change whether there would be a substantial contribution to a significant cumulative land use effect.

NEPA Level of Significance: As compared to the No Action Alternative, this impact is similar and is **less than significant**.

CEQA Level of Significance: As compared to the Proposed Action Alternative, this impact is similar and remains **less than significant**.

ALTERNATIVE D—REDUCED DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE

Environmental Consequences/Environmental Effects

The Reduced Development Alternative (Alternative D) would include the same categories of covered activities as the Proposed Action Alternative (Alternative B), but under the Reduced Development Alternative, development within a portion of the west side of the Dunnigan area, and the Elkhorn Specific Plan Area, would not be covered activities. There are no plans to develop these areas in the near term, but some type of development could potentially occur within the term of the permit. If such development were to occur, it would not be considered a covered activity under the HCP/NCCP. (See Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4, *Alternative D-Reduced Development Alternative* for more information on this alternative).

Under the Reduced Development Alternative, the two identified areas are assumed to remain in their existing use, or develop in the future consistent with the applicable planning documents in effect at that time. Neither of these outcomes would result in land use impacts. Overall, under the Reduced Development Alternative, Effects LAND-1, LAND-2, and LAND-3 would not be appreciably different from what is described for the Proposed Action Alternative. In addition, under the Reduced Development Alternative, Mitigation Measure LAND-1 would still need to be implemented.

NEPA Level of Significance: As compared to the No Action Alternative, this impact is similar and is **less than significant**.

CEQA Level of Significance: As compared to the Proposed Action Alternative, this impact is similar and remains **less than significant**.

Cumulative Effects

The existing cumulative condition in the Plan Area resulting from past and present projects is described above for the No Action Alternative and remains the same for the Reduced Development Alternative.

The contribution of the Reduced Development Alternative to the cumulative condition for land use would essentially be the same as the No Action Alternative. As described under “Cumulative Effects” for the No Action Alternative, the Reduced Development Alternative also would not contribute to potential divisions in existing communities on a regional scale. In addition, the Reduced Development Alternative would have the same effects regarding consistency with regional plans as the No Action Alternative. Similar to the Proposed Action Alternative, adopting an HCP/NCCP as described for the Reduced Development Alternative would not change whether there would be a substantial contribution to a significant cumulative land use effect.

NEPA Level of Significance: As compared to the No Action Alternative, this impact is similar and is **less than significant**.

CEQA Level of Significance: As compared to the Proposed Action Alternative, this impact is similar and remains **less than significant**.