

3.12 Public Services and Utilities

This section evaluates the potential impacts from construction, invasive plant management, and maintenance of the Project relative to public services and utilities. Construction activities include the earthwork involved in the estuarine restoration and infrastructure improvement portions of the Project. Invasive plant management activities include the removal of dense-flowered cordgrass (*Spartina densiflora*), European beachgrass (*Ammophila arenaria*), and dwarf eelgrass (*Zostera japonica*) using any one or a combination of the methods described in Section 2.5 (Proposed Invasive Plant Management). Maintenance activities include periodic repairs and improvements to the non-motorized boat put-in, trails, parking lots and road within the Project Area, and also include monitoring activities. Potential impacts from public access related to public services and utilities are also considered in this section. Public services discussed in this section include fire protection, law enforcement, schools, parks, and other public facilities. Utilities discussed in this section include water, wastewater, storm drainage, solid waste, electricity and natural gas, and communications. The study area for public services and utilities is the same as the Project Area.

3.12.1 Setting

Public Services

Fire Protection

Founded in 1900, the Loleta Volunteer Fire Department (LVFD) is responsible for the preservation and protection of life and property for the community of Loleta and the surrounding rural area. The Loleta Fire Protection District (LFPD) is a special district responsible for providing fire protection services, through the LVFD, to the community of Loleta and the surrounding lands including the unincorporated communities of Table Bluff, Hookton Slough, the South Spit, a portion of Fernbridge, and the remainder of the Eel River bottoms north of the Eel River. The LFPD operates one fire station, located on Park Street, which is centrally located in downtown Loleta.

The active powers of the LFPD include fire protection and suppression services to all structures within the District's boundaries, water supply and storage for domestic and fire suppression purposes, basic and advanced life support services with paramedics for medical emergencies, as well as other services. While the LFPD is responsible for structural fire protection and emergency medical responses, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) retains responsibility for wildland fires. The LFPD has mutual aid agreements with similar nearby districts which allow the districts to enter into agreements for services, including emergencies which have the potential to overwhelm the resource capabilities within a single district. This enables the LFPD to maintain preparedness for a disaster beyond their capacity, without the need to expand and create an additional facility.

The LFPD has a district boundary of 49 square miles or 31,284 acres (12,660 hectares). The District's current boundaries encompass the area from the Pacific

Ocean on the west to the tip of the South Spit and southern edge of Humboldt Bay to the north, and to approximately 3 miles (4.8 kilometers) east of Tompkins Hill Road to the east, and to the Eel River and approximately 1 mile (1.6 kilometers) north of Fortuna on the southern border. The LFPD maintains three type 2 pumper fire engines, one water tender fire truck, one rescue unit, one type 3 wildlands truck, one type 4 attack truck, and one 1939 International Fire Engine. As of 2016, the Department has 29 volunteers trained as first responders (LAFCO 2008; Loleta Volunteer Fire Department 2016).

Law Enforcement Services

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office provides a variety of public safety services (court and corrections services) countywide and law enforcement services for the unincorporated areas of the county. The California Highway Patrol is responsible for enforcing traffic laws on roadways within the unincorporated areas and on state highways throughout the county.

The Sheriff's Office Operations Bureau is made up of seven units under the command of the Undersheriff. The most visible of these units is the Patrol Unit. Sheriff's Deputies assigned to the Patrol Unit are responsible for responding to emergency calls for service, criminal investigations, and crime prevention through neighborhood and beat patrols. The County Sheriff Patrol Unit has one main station in Eureka, substations in Garberville, Hoopa and McKinleyville, and six resident deputy posts.

The Sheriff's Office has mutual aid agreements with cities and the California State Highway Patrol. Mutual aid is an agreement between agencies where the agency of jurisdiction can request assistance or resources from allied agencies or agencies within the surrounding areas. These agencies could be local or State agencies.

According to the Humboldt County General Plan, Sheriff's Office facilities are insufficient for current needs and the Sheriff does not have adequate funding to maintain generally accepted officer-to-population ratios (Humboldt County 2017).

Public Schools

The study area is located within the Loleta Unified Elementary School District. School age persons in the Project vicinity requiring public schooling from kindergarten through eighth grade attend Loleta Elementary School, located in Loleta. Public high school students attend Fortuna High School, located in Fortuna (Humboldt County Office of Education 2018).

Parks

The study area is located less than three miles (4.8 kilometers) from four recreational facilities: Table Bluff County Park, Crab County Park, the Pedrazzini Boat Ramp and the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge. These areas offer visitors access to the Eel River estuary by boat, wildlife viewing, and hiking opportunities. All are day-use only areas, contain parking lots, and do not require fees for use (Humboldt County 2018).

The study area is open to the public for recreational uses, including equestrian use, hiking, wildlife viewing and seasonal waterfowl hunting. Undeveloped and informal hiking trails are located within the study area primarily along levees and dispersed

within the dunes. Vehicle access into the estuarine portion of the study area is limited by a locked gate located at the north end of the study area off Table Bluff Road. Pedestrians and other non-motorized users can access the estuarine portion of the study area through an opening on the west side of the gate. Parking is currently located just north of the locked gate and has capacity for approximately three vehicles.

Utilities and Service Systems

Water Supply

No water companies or districts provide water to the Project Area. Historically a private well provided water to the Project Site. The surrounding rural areas are served by private wells and by the Loleta Community Services District (CSD). The Loleta CSD is located approximately 3.75 miles (6 kilometers) east of the study area (Humboldt LAFCO 2008b). According to the 2017 Humboldt County General Plan Update Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) there are 258 existing municipal water service connections within the Loleta CSD, and 56 available to new users (Humboldt County 2017b).

Wastewater Treatment and Disposal

There are no wastewater treatment disposal facilities or septic systems in the study area. Wastewater treatment in most of the surrounding area is provided by private septic systems and through the Loleta CSD. According to the 2017 Humboldt County General Plan Update DEIR, there are 260 existing wastewater service connections within the Loleta CSD, and zero available to new users (Humboldt County 2017b).

Stormwater Infrastructure

The study area does not contain formal stormwater drainage infrastructure, only a drainage ditch occurs alongside the unpaved road entering the estuarine portion of the study area from Table Bluff Road. Tide gates may exist in neighboring agricultural properties located along slough channels and other waterways.

Solid Waste Collection and Disposal

There is no formal waste service at the study area. CDFW collects trash from the study area on an as needed basis and hauls it to one of the waste collection facilities in the Project vicinity, which include the Recology Eel River Center and Smith Lane Recycling Center in the City of Fortuna; a transfer station in the community of Redway; the Potrero Hills landfill located in Solano County; or the Dry Creek landfill located near Medford, Oregon .

Electricity and Natural Gas Infrastructure or Right of Ways

No electricity or natural gas pipeline system exists in the study area. Electricity and natural gas available in the Project vicinity is provided through Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E).

Communications Infrastructure or Right of Ways

Frontier Communications and 101NetLink provide basic and long-distance telephone, dial-up internet and DSL service in the Project vicinity. Suddenlink

provides cable television and cable internet service. Cellular telephone service and satellite television are available from a variety of companies.

3.12.2 Regulatory Framework

Federal

There are no federal regulations governing public services and utilities that apply to the Project.

State

California Integrated Waste Management Act

The California Integrated Waste Management Act (CIWMA), also known as Assembly Bill 939, required each jurisdiction in the state to divert 50 percent of its solid waste from landfill or transformation facilities by 2000, and established a statewide diversion of 75 percent by 2020 for all municipal solid waste. The CIWMA also required each County to prepare a Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan (CoIWMP), which is the main planning document for solid waste management in each County. Humboldt County's CoIWMP is the principal planning document for solid waste management in the county, addressing source reduction, household hazardous waste, and countywide landfill capacity needs.

Regional and Local

Lands within the Project Area are owned by CDFW or are under the jurisdiction of the State Lands Commission, and therefore will not require a Conditional Use Permit from Humboldt County nor adherence to the Humboldt County General Plan or the Local Coastal Program Eel River Area Plan. Because potential impacts related to public services and utilities would be limited to the immediate Project Area, local and regional regulatory policies are not included in this analysis.

3.12.3 Evaluation Criteria and Significance Thresholds

The Project would be considered to have a significant impact on public services and utility systems if it would result in any of the following:

- Substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for fire protection, police protection, schools, parks, and/or other public facilities;
- Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects;
- Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the Project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years;

- Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the Project that it has adequate capacity to serve the Project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments;
- Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals; or
- Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste.

Areas of No Project Impact

Construction, invasive plant management and maintenance of the Project would not result in short term, long term or cumulative impacts relative to several of the evaluation criteria identified for public services and utilities. For the reasons presented below, the following evaluation criteria are not applicable to the Project.

- **Would the Project have substantial adverse impacts to schools, parks, and/or other public facilities?** The Project would not induce population growth and, therefore, would not result in an increase in the local student population or the need for new or expanded schools. The Project would not require the expansion of additional recreational facilities to maintain service ratios in parks and would not require the expansion of other public facilities. Therefore, no impact would occur, and this significance criterion is not discussed further.
- **Would the Project require or result in the construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment, or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities the construction or relocation of which would result in significant environmental effects, or have sufficient water supplies to serve the Project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years, or result in a determination by a wastewater treatment provider that it has adequate or inadequate capacity to serve the Project?** The Project would not include or require any wastewater, water, storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities. The Project would not directly or indirectly induce population growth in the community and would not increase the amount of wastewater or storm water generated or result in an increased demand for water, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications. Therefore, the Project would not require or result in the construction of other facilities, and would not put a strain on the existing water supply, or create a shortage under normal, dry, and multiple dry year conditions. No impact would occur, and this significance criteria is not discussed further.
- **Would the Project require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?** The Project includes improvements to existing amenities including the parking area and road, and also includes the installation of a new parking area and multi-use trail system. The improved and proposed amenities would be surfaced with pervious

concrete or gravel. No new storm water drainage facilities are proposed at this time because precipitation would percolate through the pervious concrete or gravel and would not run off. No impact would occur, and this significance criteria is not discussed further.

3.12.4 Methodology

Potential impacts to public services and utilities are evaluated for construction, invasive plant management and maintenance activities. The evaluation considers whether the Project would affect the county's existing public services, including fire protection and law enforcement, by affecting the current service ratios/response times. The evaluation also considers whether the Project would affect the capacity of the landfill that serves the Project, whether the Project would comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste, or impair attainment of solid waste goals.

3.12.5 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impact: PS-1: Would the Project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for fire protection and police protection?

Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services

The Project would not contribute to an increase in population, therefore, it is not anticipated that the Project would increase the need for fire protection or emergency medical services, or affect service ratios or response times of these public services. The fire hazard within the estuarine portion of the study area is currently low because a good portion is open wetlands kept moist by tidal inundation, summer fog, and periodic precipitation. The Project would reduce fire hazard in these areas by restoring a series of open tidal channels, and interconnected wetlands which would serve as a firebreak. In addition, the Project proposes to remove European beachgrass which would result in a dune vegetation that is sparser and less flammable than current conditions. Prescribed burning may be implemented to manage invasive plant species (both dense-flowered cordgrass and European beachgrass), and will require notification to the local CAL FIRE staff who will be on site during the burning; however, the demand on CAL FIRE would be limited in scope and duration and coordinated well in advance to avoid overextending staff. Finally, improvements to public facilities under the Project, including the access road and existing parking area, the addition of a new parking area and boat put-in, and formal trail system within the estuarine restoration area, would be wholly beneficial and maintained by CDFW as the land manager. The impact would be less than significant.

Refer to Section 3.16 (Transportation) for an evaluation of impacts to emergency access.

Law Enforcement Services

The study area is patrolled by the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office and by CDFW Wildlife Officers. The majority of the study area is currently not regularly used by the public, although limited recreational use does occur and may increase after the Project is complete. The sand road within the dune restoration area is used for recreational access. However, recreational use of the dunes is not anticipated to increase substantially over current levels as a result of the Project. County roads in the Project vicinity are used by local walkers, joggers, equestrians, cyclists, and local vehicle traffic. Public access to the study area would be via Hookton Road to Table Bluff Road. The Project would not substantially increase use or access to the study area, or increase the area needing regular patrol by the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office or CDFW Wildlife Officers. Additional patrol would not be required. The impact would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is necessary.

Level of Significance: Less than significant.

Impact: PS-2: Would the Project generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals and comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

The Project would generate a minimal amount of solid waste during construction. Such waste may include damaged tide gates/culverts, abandoned fence posts and barbed wire, and general construction worker garbage. All sediment excavated to construct the Project would be reused onsite, and therefore not subject to offsite disposal. Similarly, invasive plants removed from the study area would not be off-hauled; rather they would be buried, burned, or otherwise left to biodegrade onsite. Project maintenance would not generate solid waste beyond removing incidental garbage or recycling left onsite by recreational users.

There are no active permitted in-County landfills. As a result, construction waste with no practical reuse that cannot be salvaged or recycled would be disposed of through Humboldt Waste Management Authority or Recology Eel River at either the Potrero Hills landfill or the Dry Creek landfill. Construction waste generated by the Project is estimated to be approximately 10 to 15 cubic yards, and would represent a small fraction of the daily permitted tonnage of local landfills. Therefore, the Project's construction-related solid waste disposal needs would be sufficiently accommodated by existing landfills and would not impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals. The Project would not conflict with or impede implementation of management and reduction regulations related to solid waste. The impact would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is necessary.

Level of Significance: Less than significant.

3.12.6 Cumulative Impacts

Impact: PS-C-1: Would the Project contribute to a cumulatively significant impact related to public services?

As discussed in Section 3.14.3, the Project would not result in impacts relative to the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities for schools and parks, wastewater treatment capacity, water supply, storm water drainage, energy, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities. Therefore, implementation of the Project would not contribute to any related cumulative impact on these resources.

As discussed in Impact PS-1 and PS-2, the Project would have a less-than-significant impact relative to the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities for fire and police protection, altered landfill capacity, or impediment of solid waste goals or regulations. Similar to the Project, implementation of cumulative projects identified in Table 3-1 (Projects Considered for Cumulative Impacts), such as the Eel River Estuary Preserve and Centerville Slough Enhancement Project, may result in additional recreational use and ongoing maintenance in the Project vicinity. The cumulative projects are predominantly restoration based, and similar to the Project, any increases in public access and maintenance would not be anticipated to result in a substantial increase for fire and police protection or need for waste management. Therefore, the cumulative impact would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is necessary.

Level of Significance: Less than significant.

3.12.7 References

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