

# Chapter 3

## Affected Environment and Environmental Effects

### Introduction

The public involvement process and scoping process, described in Chapter 1, Introduction, Scope of Analysis, were used to help determine the environmental issues to be evaluated in the EIS/EIR. Based on the comments received during the public involvement and scoping process, the EIS/EIR focuses on the following environmental issues. This chapter has been divided into the sections shown below.

- 3.1 “Land Use”
- 3.2 “Geology, Soils, and Seismicity”
- 3.3 “Water and Sediment Quality”
- 3.4 “Biological Resources”
- 3.5 “Visual Resources/Aesthetics”
- 3.6 “Air Quality”
- 3.7 “Noise”
- 3.8 “Cultural Resources”
- 3.9 “Recreation”
- 3.10 “Traffic”
- 3.11 “Public Services and Utilities”
- 3.12 “Population, Housing, Employment, and Environmental Justice”

Within each environmental issue section, there is a discussion of the existing conditions (affected environment) in the project action area, an evaluation of potential environmental impacts (environmental consequences) of the proposed action on the affected environment, and a summary comparison of the impacts by alternative.

The “Affected Environment” discussion describes the existing conditions or current setting of the project action area relevant to the environmental issue being analyzed. The purpose of this information is to establish the existing environmental context, or background, against which the reader can then understand the environmental changes caused by the proposed action.

The “Environmental Consequences” discussion describes the environmental impacts or effects that could be caused by the proposed action. This section describes the methods used for the evaluation, identifies the potential impacts (effects), and identifies mitigation measures required to reduce potentially significant impacts to a less than significant level. The discussion of effects is divided by each alternative, as listed below.

- No Action Alternative
- Alternative 1: Seven-Pond, Raised-Levee Alternative (Proposed Action)
- Alternative 2: Seven-Pond, Highest Levee Alternative
- Alternative 3: Six-Pond, Highest Levee Alternative

The criteria used to determine the significance of an impact is based on CEQA (California Public Resources [CPR] Code Section 21000 *et seq.*, and implementing guidelines) and NEPA (Title 40, CFR, Section 1508.27) significance criteria. However, because the NEPA criteria are generally considered more broad and less stringent than the CEQA criteria, and because the CEQA criteria used in this chapter incorporates NEPA standards, identification of impacts as significant under CEQA is treated herein as sufficient for identifying impacts considered significant under NEPA. The mitigation measures set forth to minimize CEQA significant impacts are presumed to also mitigate NEPA significant impacts. These assumptions are made only for the purpose of identifying the magnitude of particular impacts; this document complies with NEPA requirements and uses the CEQA analysis only as a source of supporting information.

The “Summary of Effects and Mitigation Measures by Alternative” section provides a summary comparison of the project effects under each alternative in tabular format.