San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area

Final Resource Management Plan / General Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement / Environmental Impact Report

June 2013

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Mid-Pacific Region
South-Central California Area Office

RECLAMATION
Managing Water in the West

California Department of Parks & Recreation
Central Valley District

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS SINCE 1864

MISSION STATEMENTS

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To provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area

Final Resource Management Plan / General Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement / Environmental Impact Report

This document contains a joint Final Resource Management Plan (RMP)/General Plan (GP) and Final Environmental Impact Statement/ Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area (SRA) and adjacent lands in Merced County, California, owned by the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and managed by the California Department of Parks and Recreation (also known as California State Parks, or CSP), California Department of Water Resources (DWR), and California Department of Fish and Game (DFW). This document also contains policies, in the form of goals and guidelines, that relate to the project area and a description of the desired future condition of project area lands and waters for recreation and resource use and management.

A Draft EIS/EIR was prepared to evaluate three action alternatives that provide different options for resource management and visitor use and education programs, as well as the No Action/No Project Alternative. The Final EIS/EIR contains editorial and technical corrections as well as revisions made in response to public comments. Changes made after the public comment period are indicated by a vertical line along the text, as shown to the right.

This document was jointly prepared by Reclamation as the lead federal agency and CSP as the lead state agency to satisfy the requirements of both the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

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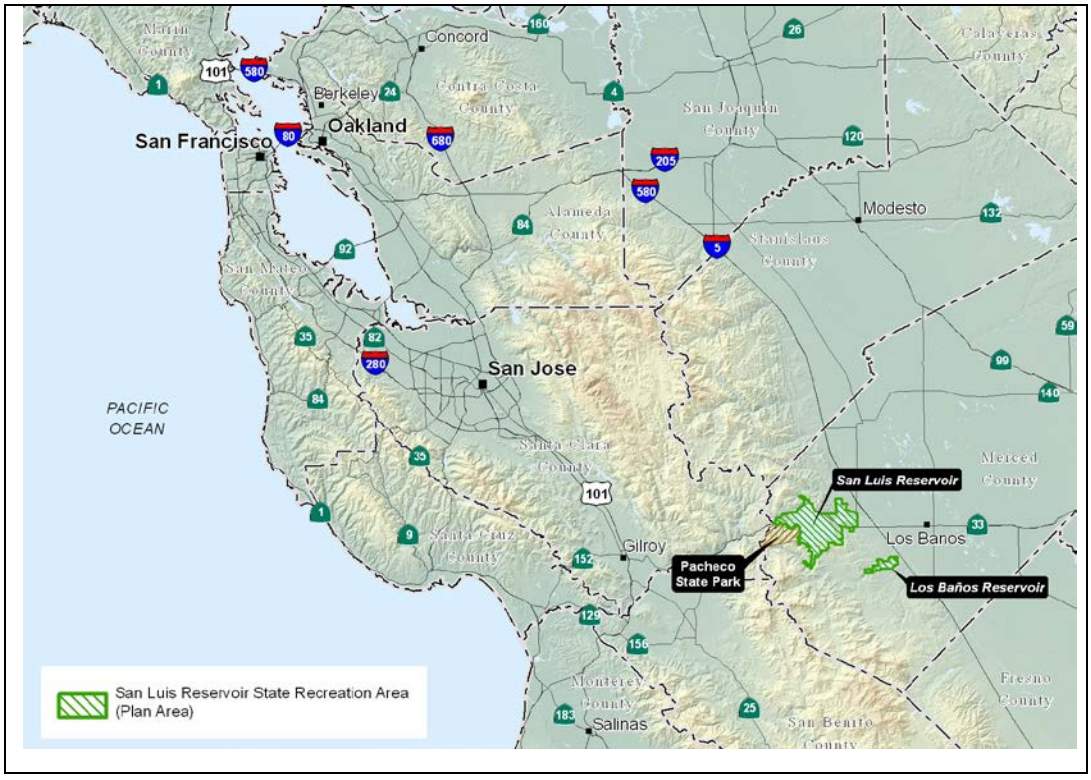
Executive Summary

Introduction

This Resource Management Plan (RMP)/General Plan (GP) has been prepared to set forth goals and guidelines for management of the San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area (SRA) and adjacent lands (known as the Plan Area) for the next 25 years. The Plan Area consists of two geographically separate areas totaling over 27,000 acres in the vicinity of Los Banos, California. The Plan Area includes the water surfaces of San Luis Reservoir, O'Neill Forebay, and Los Banos Creek Reservoir, as well as adjacent recreation lands. The California Department of Parks and Recreation (also known as California State Parks, or CSP), California Department of Water Resources (DWR), and California Department of Fish and Game (DFW) manage the Plan Area lands, which are owned by the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation). Map ES-1 illustrates the location of the Plan Area, which is adjacent to Pacheco State Park and straddles State Route (SR) 152 between U.S. Highway 101 (U.S. 101) and Interstate 5 (I-5).



Map ES-1 Vicinity Map: San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area

San Luis Reservoir, O'Neill Forebay, and Los Banos Creek Reservoir are part of the system of reservoirs, aqueducts, power plants, and pumping stations operated

under the California State Water Project (SWP) and Central Valley Project (CVP). Reclamation constructed the facilities and DWR operates the water storage and delivery components. CSP was given the responsibility to plan, design, construct, maintain, and operate the recreation areas surrounding the reservoirs.

This RMP/GP (hereafter the Plan) has been developed through an agreement between Reclamation and CSP to provide coordinated direction for recreation and resource management of the Plan Area lands while continuing to serve the primary purpose of water storage and distribution and power generation. To comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this document also contains a Final Environmental Impact Statement/ Environmental Impact Report (Final EIS/EIR) that analyze the potential effects of implementing the Plan.

Background

Los Banos Creek Reservoir was completed in 1965, and San Luis Reservoir was completed in 1967. Planning for San Luis Reservoir, O'Neill Forebay, and Los Banos Creek Reservoir was developed in a series of documents dating from 1962 to 1985 (DWR 1962, 1965, 1971; CSP 1966, 1971, 1985; Department of Navigation and Ocean Development 1972). The Plan will supersede the management direction provided in these earlier documents.

The Plan was initially released with a Draft EIR on April 27, 2005. This Plan was reissued with a Draft EIS/Revised Draft EIR for NEPA and CEQA compliance on August 3, 2012. Reclamation is the NEPA lead federal agency and CSP is the CEQA lead state agency for implementation of the Plan. Baseline data and existing conditions for the Plan Area were updated, and the analysis of potential environmental impacts resulting from Plan implementation was updated and revised in accordance with NEPA as well as CEQA.

Lands managed by CSP for recreation are part of the State Park system and comprise the San Luis Reservoir SRA. Additional lands in the Plan Area were set aside by Reclamation for DFW to manage for wildlife preservation and mitigation. These lands, known as the O'Neill Forebay Wildlife Area and San Luis Wildlife Area, are on Reclamation land but are not part of the SRA. To the north of San Luis Reservoir and west of O'Neill Forebay are the Upper and Lower Cottonwood wildlife areas, owned by DFW and therefore not part of the Plan Area.

The SRA and wildlife areas within the Plan Area receive thousands of visitors each year who participate in a variety of land- and water-based recreational activities, including hiking, biking, nature study, picnicking, windsurfing, fishing, boating, personal watercraft use, and camping.

Purpose and Need

Planning for San Luis Reservoir, O'Neill Forebay, and Los Banos Creek Reservoir was developed in a series of documents that are now several decades old. An updated Plan is needed to account for changes in the physical and regulatory environment as well as projected population growth in the state that may affect the level of recreational services and facilities that are needed. Additionally, a Plan for managing resources based on currently available information for natural and cultural resources and the associated regulatory framework is necessary for the long-term stewardship of these resources. Upon approval, this Plan will supersede the previous plans. The new Plan will have a planning horizon of 25 years.

The purposes of the Plan are as follows:

- Provide for the orderly use, development, and management of Plan Area lands and waters for recreation and other uses;
- Provide for the protection and management of natural, recreational, aesthetic, and cultural resources and for safety and security measures for the protection of visitors and resources;
- Ensure that management of quality recreational facilities and opportunities is compatible with other environmental resources and that management planning is based on expressed public need and the ability of the land and water resources to accommodate improved facilities and increased visitor use; and
- Propose uses that are compatible with Reclamation's core mission of delivering water and generating power.

Approach to the Plan

This Plan provides an overview of existing conditions, a summary of opportunities and constraints, a plan for the future use and management of the Plan Area, and the associated environmental analysis pursuant to NEPA and CEQA. The Plan has been prepared in accordance with Reclamation's *Resource Management Plan Guidebook, Planning for the Future (2003)* and CSP's *California State Parks Planning Handbook (2010)*.

The analysis of existing conditions was undertaken as part of the planning process using the collective knowledge of Reclamation, CSP, DWR, and DFW staff research of the physical and operational conditions and visitor activity. These agencies and other interested agencies, along with landowners, recreational users, and other individuals, all provided information about the history and conditions at the Plan Area.

Agency staff participated in several meetings and workshops to identify and develop strategies that address the specific issues for management at the Plan Area.

Management policies in the form of goals and guidelines, management zones for land and water areas, and Plan alternatives were developed based on the collected information and stakeholder input.

Public Involvement

A public workshop, scoping meetings, and a visitor survey were used to inform the public about the planning process and solicit ideas for Plan Area enhancements and visions for its future. Public agencies in the region also provided feedback through the scoping process and attendance at workshops.

A complete list of the issues brought up at the public meetings and the comments received from the public are located in Chapter 6. The meeting summaries, stakeholder comments, and other public outreach and noticing materials are provided in Appendix C. This document includes responses to all public comments received (Appendix D) and changes to the text of the Draft EIS/EIR as a result of public comments. Changes made after the public comment period are indicated by a vertical line along the text, as shown to the right.

Summary of the Plan

The Plan sets forth Plan Area-wide management goals and guidelines that will be used to implement Plan Area use and future actions and to measure Plan success. The following goals and guidelines, which fall under five broad planning areas with relevant issue areas for each category, are discussed in Section 4.2:

Resource Management

- Scenic/Aesthetic
- Cultural/Historic
- Climate
- Hydrology/Water Quality
- Vegetation
- Wildlife
- Aquatic Invasive Species

Visitor Experience, Interpretation and Education

- Visitor Uses/Opportunities and Facilities
- Trails
- Interpretation and Education
- Concession Opportunities

Local and Regional Planning

- Interagency Cooperation
- Regional Plans
- Population and Demographics

- Linkages

Infrastructure and Operations

- Plan Area Access and Circulation
- Management Agreements
- Staffing and Facilities
- Utilities
- Sustainability and Renewable Energy

Water Operations

- Water Elevation Fluctuations
- Restriction of Access to Dams and Power Facilities

This Plan also sets forth management zones that provide an overall direction for managing different lands and waters within the Plan Area while recognizing the uniqueness and diversity of the landscape and surface waters. The zones are based on existing conditions and resources, recreation uses, and landscape character. Section 4.3 presents a summary of existing features, purpose and intent, resource goals, and land use for each zone. Six basic management zones are used to characterize the waters and lands of the Plan Area:

Water-Based Management Zones

- Rural Natural (RN)
- Rural Developed (RD)
- Suburban (S)

Land-Based Management Zones

- Administration and Operations (AO)
- Frontcountry (FC)
- Backcountry (BC)

Alternatives

Three action alternatives were developed to implement the Plan, all reflecting the need to protect and preserve natural and cultural resources throughout the Plan Area. The following alternatives are described in Section 4.4:

- Alternative 1, the No Action/No Project Alternative, would continue the management direction set by previous planning documents as well as ongoing programs initiated under existing legislation and regulations. Alternative 1 is intended to reflect current and expected future conditions in the Plan Area should the proposed Plan not be implemented.
- Alternative 2: Limited new access and development. Alternative 2 would include the fewest physical additions and visitor use modifications among the action alternatives but would implement an array of resource management actions. Visitor access would remain the same as under Alternative 1.

- Alternative 3: Moderate new access and development. Alternative 3 balances the need for future visitor facilities with resource management. This alternative anticipates increased future visitation by providing for physical additions and visitor use modifications but concentrates them in and around existing developed areas. Compared to Alternative 2, Alternative 3 would provide for the same level of resource management and a higher level of visitor access.
- Alternative 4: Maximum new access and development. Alternative 4 would provide for the most physical additions and visitor use modifications among the action alternatives, some in areas that are currently undeveloped. Compared to the other action alternatives, Alternative 4 would provide for the same level of resource management and the highest level of visitor access.

For purposes of the Final EIS/EIR, Reclamation and CSP have identified Alternative 3 as the preferred alternative that best reflects the stated purpose and vision, public interests, agencies' relevant rules and regulations, and environmental resource protection in all planning areas. The preferred alternative will provide Plan Area-wide goals and guidelines while balancing current and future needs to ensure Plan longevity.

Recognizing that the Plan Area's carrying capacity is based on many factors (including data collection, Plan Area purpose, and desired future conditions) a summary of the existing visitor use and facilities is provided in Section 4.5. Additionally, a series of quality indicators were developed to formulate a framework for monitoring carrying capacity for the planning areas outlined in the Plan. From these, managers can use adaptive management strategies to determine when alternative management actions are needed to meet the desired conditions.

Environmental Analysis

One of the primary differences between NEPA and CEQA is the way significance is determined and discussed in environmental documents. Under NEPA, significance is used to determine whether an EIS or some lower level of documentation will be required. NEPA requires preparation of an EIS when the proposed federal action (project) as a whole has the potential to "significantly affect the quality of the human environment." The determination of significance is based on context and intensity (40 CFR §1508.27). Some impacts determined to be significant under CEQA may not be of sufficient magnitude to be determined significant under NEPA. Under NEPA, once a decision to prepare an EIS is made, it is the magnitude of the impact that is evaluated, and no judgment of its significance is deemed important for the text. NEPA does not require that a determination of significance for individual resources be stated in an environmental document. Once the proposal itself is considered as a whole to have significant effects, all of its specific effects on the environment (whether or not "significant") must be considered, and mitigation measures must be developed

where it is feasible to do so (40 CFR §1502.14(f), 1502.16(h), 1508.14, and the Council on Environmental Quality's 40 Most Asked Questions #19a[1]).

CEQA, on the other hand, does require an identification of each "significant effect on the environment" resulting from the project and ways to mitigate each significant effect. A significant effect on any environmental resource triggers the preparation of an EIR. Each significant effect on the environment must be disclosed in the EIR and mitigated, if feasible. In addition, the CEQA Guidelines list a number of mandatory findings of significance that also require the preparation of an EIR. There are no types of actions under NEPA that parallel the findings of mandatory significance in CEQA.

Chapter 5 describes the impacts of each action alternative as well as the No Action/No Project Alternative. Implementation of specified goals and guidelines from Section 4.2 as well as additional avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures, where appropriate, would serve to reduce the severity of each impact.

For the purposes of this document only, impact magnitude (NEPA) and thresholds of significance (CEQA) are expressed in the following categories:

- Beneficial Impact: This impact would occur when an activity could result in the elimination, reduction, or resolution of a conflict.
- No Impact: This impact would occur if an activity would result in no change compared to the existing condition.
- Minor Adverse Impact: This impact would occur if an activity would result in a detectable impact that would lead to deterioration or a conflict. It is equivalent to a less-than-significant impact under CEQA.
- Major Adverse Impact: This impact would occur if an activity would result in a dramatic deterioration or a severe conflict. A major adverse impact can be long-term and substantial. It is equivalent to a significant impact under CEQA.

The EIS/EIR prepared for the Plan is programmatic in scope and does not contain project-specific analysis for facilities proposed in the Plan. Specific projects would undergo subsequent NEPA/CEQA review in the future as appropriate. Project-specific mitigation measures may be implemented where necessary based on further review.

Environmental effects to agricultural and forest resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, land use and planning, Indian Trust Assets and Indian Sacred Sites, energy and mineral resources, noise, socioeconomics, and environmental justice were found not to be significant, as discussed further in Section 5.2.4.

[1] http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/NEPA/regs/40/40p3.htm

The potential impacts of each alternative are summarized below and listed in Table ES-1. Section 5.4 provides a detailed description of potential impacts and mitigation measures.

- **Alternative 1**, the No Action/No Project Alternative, would not provide for future increases or changes in visitation or implement any of the focused management plans that are part of the action alternatives. Impacts to biological resources, cultural resources, recreation resources, and utilities and emergency services could range from minor to major. Under Alternative 1, minor impacts could occur to hydrology and floodplain/water quality and air quality. This alternative would have no impacts on scenic/aesthetic resources or circulation.
- **Alternative 2**, the limited new access and development alternative, would provide the least overall new visitor access and recreation facilities of the action alternatives, but would also result in the least impacts of the action alternatives. Alternative 2 could result in minor to major impacts to hydrology and floodplain/water quality, biological resources, and cultural resources; and minor impacts or no impacts to air quality, scenic/aesthetic resources, recreation resources, circulation, and utilities and emergency services. All major adverse impacts would be reduced to minor levels after mitigation.
- **Alternative 3**, the moderate new access and development alternative, would result in greater impacts than Alternative 2 but less than Alternative 4. Alternative 3 could result in minor to major impacts to hydrology and floodplain/water quality, biological resources, cultural resources, circulation, and utilities and emergency services. Minor impacts or no impacts are anticipated to occur to air quality, scenic/aesthetic resources, and recreation resources. The addition of new activities and facilities with Alternative 3 would be a beneficial impact to recreation resources. All major adverse impacts would be reduced to minor levels after mitigation.
- **Alternative 4**, the maximum new access and development alternative, would result in the greatest impacts of the four alternatives. Alternative 4 could result in minor to major impacts to hydrology and floodplain/water quality, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, circulation, and utilities and emergency services; and minor impacts to scenic/aesthetic resources and recreation resources. All major adverse impacts would be reduced to minor levels after mitigation.

Table ES-1
Impacts Summary

Impact	Alternative 1	Alternative 2		Alternative 3		Alternative 4	
	Impact Magnitude	**Impact Magnitude**	**Impact After Mit.**	**Impact Magnitude**	**Impact After Mit.**	**Impact Magnitude**	**Impact After Mit.**
HYDROLOGY AND FLOODPLAIN/WATER QUALITY (Section 5.4.1)							
Erosion, siltation, turbidity, pollutant release, or additional runoff from facilities maintenance and construction	Minor	Minor to Major	Minor	Minor to Major	Minor	Minor to Major	Minor
Erosion, siltation, turbidity, pollutant release, or additional runoff from trail and road use, maintenance, and construction	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor to Major	Minor
Motorized vessel emissions of fuel or other pollutants	Minor	Minor	NA	Minor	NA	Minor	NA
Contaminants from human use (including body contact with reservoir water) and waste disposal	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor
Reservoir fluctuations from climate change	No Impact	No Impact	NA	No Impact	NA	No Impact	NA
AIR QUALITY (Section 5.4.2)							
Criteria pollutant emissions from motorized vehicles and vessels	Minor	Minor	NA	Minor	NA	Minor	NA
Dust emissions from motorized vehicles, construction, and recreation	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor to Major	Minor
Short-term combustion emissions from prescribed burning or wildland fires	Minor	Minor	NA	Minor	NA	Minor	NA
Greenhouse gas emissions from maintenance and construction equipment and motorized vehicle and watercraft use	Minor	Minor	NA	Minor	NA	Minor	NA

Table ES-1
Impacts Summary

Impact	Alternative 1	Alternative 2		Alternative 3		Alternative 4	
	Impact Magnitude	Impact Magnitude	Impact After Mit.	Impact Magnitude	Impact After Mit.	Impact Magnitude	Impact After Mit.
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES (Section 5.4.3)							
Loss of or disturbance to trees, sensitive habitat, or special-status species; introduction of invasive species; reduction in habitat quality; or habitat fragmentation related to facility maintenance, expansion, and development							
Vegetation and Natural Communities	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor to Major	Minor	Minor to Major	Minor
Wildlife	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor to Major	Minor
Reduction in habitat quality caused by human disturbance, including increased presence, noise, and light; disturbance to vegetation that provides habitat for special-status species; or introduction of invasive species, including invasive mussels, related to camping, boat use, and day use	Minor	Minor to Major	Minor	Minor to Major	Minor	Minor to Major	Minor
Disturbance of habitat, wildlife, or movement corridors; injury or mortality to individuals by vehicle strikes; or disturbance of native vegetation and potential introduction of non-native or invasive species from trail and road use and construction							
Vegetation and Natural Communities	Minor	Minor to Major	Minor	Minor to Major	Minor	Minor to Major	Minor
Wildlife	Minor	Minor to Major	Minor	Minor to Major	Minor	Minor to Major	Minor

Table ES-1
Impacts Summary

Impact	Alternative 1	Alternative 2		Alternative 3		Alternative 4	
	Impact Magnitude	Impact Magnitude	Impact After Mit.	Impact Magnitude	Impact After Mit.	Impact Magnitude	Impact After Mit.
Disturbance to plant or wildlife species from resource management, including prescribed burns	Minor to Major	Minor to Major	Minor	Minor to Major	Minor	Minor to Major	Minor
Reduced wetland and species habitat, increased stress on fisheries, and increased potential for invasive species infestations from climate change	No Impact	No Impact	NA	No Impact	NA	No Impact	NA
CULTURAL RESOURCES (Section 5.4.4)							
Unauthorized collection and vandalism at cultural resource sites from visitor access and use	Minor to Major	Minor to Major	Minor	Minor to Major	Minor	Minor to Major	Minor
Exposure or inadvertent disturbance/destruction of cultural resources from ground-disturbing activities associated with facility construction or improvements	No Impact	Minor to Major	Minor	Minor to Major	Minor	Minor to Major	Minor
Exposure or inadvertent disturbance/destruction of cultural resources from prescribed burns and vegetation management	Minor to Major	Minor to Major	Minor	Minor to Major	Minor	Minor to Major	Minor
Exposure or inadvertent disturbance/destruction of cultural resources from climate change	No Impact	No Impact	NA	No Impact	NA	No Impact	NA
SCENIC/AESTHETIC RESOURCES (Section 5.4.5)							
Reduction of scenic vistas, damage to scenic resources, or light or glare from facilities expansion and construction	No Impact	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor
Reduction in scenic quality from climate change related loss of vegetation or decrease in reservoir levels	No Impact	No Impact	NA	No Impact	NA	No Impact	NA

Table ES-1
Impacts Summary

Impact	Alternative 1	Alternative 2		Alternative 3		Alternative 4	
	Impact Magnitude	Impact Magnitude	Impact After Mit.	Impact Magnitude	Impact After Mit.	Impact Magnitude	Impact After Mit.
RECREATION RESOURCES (Section 5.4.6)							
Fugitive dust and noise, disruption to visitor circulation, and restriction to visitor areas from temporary construction activities at camping and recreation facilities	Minor	Minor	NA	Minor	NA	Minor	NA
Addition of new activities and facilities	Minor	No Impact	NA	Beneficial	NA	Minor	NA
Reduced recreation quality from management of boat density levels	Minor to Major	Minor	NA	Minor	NA	Minor	NA
Recreation access restrictions due to climate change related low reservoir levels or invasive species infestation	No Impact	No Impact	NA	No Impact	NA	No Impact	NA
CIRCULATION (Section 5.4.7)							
Increased traffic to, from, and within the Plan Area	No Impact	Minor	NA	Minor	NA	Minor	NA
Vehicle turning conflicts and other access issues at Plan Area access points	No Impact	Minor	NA	Minor	NA	Minor to Major	NA
Increased parking demand	No Impact	Minor	NA	Minor to Major	Minor	Minor to Major	Minor
UTILITIES AND EMERGENCY SERVICES (Section 5.4.8)							
Disruption to utility service or emergency services from facilities expansion and construction	No Impact	Minor	Minor	Minor to Major	Minor	Minor to Major	Minor
Increased demand for emergency services resulting from increased visitation	Minor to Major	Minor	Minor	Minor to Major	Minor	Minor to Major	Minor

Table ES-1
Impacts Summary

Impact	Alternative 1	Alternative 2		Alternative 3		Alternative 4	
	Impact Magnitude	Impact Magnitude	Impact After Mit.	Impact Magnitude	Impact After Mit.	Impact Magnitude	Impact After Mit.
GHG emissions from generation of water supply and electricity for Plan Area use	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor

Notes:

NA = Not applicable

Impact magnitudes are based on the impact criteria defined for each resource area in Section 5.4.

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Appendices

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AADT	Average Annual Daily Trips
ABAG	Association of Bay Area Governments
ACH	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AO	Administration and Operations Zone
AQMD	Air Quality Management District
ASC	Agricultural Services Center
Authority	California High-Speed Rail Authority
BAAQMD	Bay Area Air Quality Management District
Basin Plan	Central Valley Region Water Quality Control Plan
BC	Backcountry Zone
BMP	Best Management Practice(s)
BP	Before Present
BRM	bedrock mortar
CAFE	Corporate Average Fuel Economy
CALFED	CALFED Bay-Delta Program
Cal Fire	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CAS	California Climate Adaptation Strategy
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CDEC	California Data Exchange
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CFP	California Floristic Province
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CHRIS	California Historical Resources Information System
CNDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
COLD	Cold Freshwater Habitat
Commission	State Park and Recreation Commission

CORP	California Outdoor Recreation Plan
CRHR	California Register of Historical Resources
CSP	California Department of Parks and Recreation (also known as California State Parks)
CVP	Central Valley Project
DAF	Dissolved Air Flotation
DFG	California Department of Fish and Game
DFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife (formerly California Department of Fish and Game)
DMC	Delta-Mendota Canal
DO	Dissolved Oxygen
Draft EIS/EIR	Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report for the San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area Draft Resource Management Plan/General Plan
DWR	California Department of Water Resources
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
ESA	federal Endangered Species Act
ESRP	Endangered Species Recovery Program
ESU	evolutionarily significant unit
FC	Frontcountry Zone
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
Final EIS/EIR	Final Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report for the San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area Draft Resource Management Plan/General Plan
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
FWCA	Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act
FY	fiscal year
Gilroy General Plan	*Gilroy 2002-2020 General Plan*
gpd	gallon(s) per day
GEA	Grasslands Ecological Area
GIS	Geographic information systems

GP	General Plan
HCP	Habitat Conservation Plan
Hollister General Plan	*Hollister General Plan 1995-2010*
I-	Interstate
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
IRRS	Interregional Road System
ITR	International Turbine Research, Inc.
KFPACT	Kit Fox Planning and Conservation Team
km	Kilometer
kWh	kilowatt hours
LAC	Limits of Acceptable Change
LAFCO	Local Agency Formation Commission
LEED	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
LOS	Level of Service
Los Banos General Plan	*The City of Los Banos General Plan*
LZ	Leased Zone
µS/cm	microSiemens per centimeter
MARTS	Merced Area Regional Transit System
MCAG	Merced County Association of Governments
MCL	maximum contaminant level
Merced County General Plan	*Merced County Year 2000 General Plan*
mg/L	milligram(s) per liter
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
Mpg	miles(s) per gallon
mph	mile(s) per hour
MMRP	Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
MPN	most probable number
MTBE	methyl tertiary butyl ether
NAGPRA	Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NCCP	Natural Communities Conservation Plan

NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NHTSA	National Highway Traffic Safety Association
NOA	Notice of Availability
NOI	Notice of Intent
NOP	Notice of Preparation
NOx	oxides of nitrogen
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NPS	National Park Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
OHP	Office of Historic Preservation
OHV	Off Highway Vehicle
OPS	Infrastructure and Operations
OPS-A	Infrastructure and Operations: Plan Area Access and Circulation
OPS-M	Infrastructure and Operations: Management Agreements
OPS-RE	Infrastructure and Operations: Sustainability and Renewable Energy
OPS-S	Infrastructure and Operations: Staffing and Facilities
OPS-U	Infrastructure and Operations: Utilities
PAID	Planned Agricultural Industrial Development
PCS	Potential contaminant sources
PG&E	Pacific Gas and Electric Company
Plan	Resource Management Plan/General Plan and Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report
$PM_{2.5}$	particulate matter with a diameter of 2.5 micrometers or less
PM_{10}	particulate matter with a diameter of 10 micrometers or less
PPPC	Planning Policy and Programming Committee
PRBO	Point Reyes Bird Observatory
PRC	(California) Public Resources Code

Plan Area	San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area
Reclamation	Bureau of Reclamation
RD	Rural Developed Zone
REG	Local and Regional Planning
RES	Resource Management
RFI	Request for interest
RMP	Resource Management Plan
RN	Rural Natural Zone
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan
RTPA	Regional Transportation Planning Agency
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
Santa Clara County General Plan	Santa Clara County General Plan, Charting a Course for the County's Future, 1995-2010
SCS	U.S. Soil Conservation Service
SCVWD	Santa Clara Valley Water District
Secretary	Secretary of the Interior
SFBAAB	San Francisco Bay Air Basin
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
SIPs	State Implementation Plans
SJVAB	San Joaquin Valley Air Basin
SOP	standard operating procedures
SOx	oxides of sulfur
SP	State Park
SR	State Route
SRA	San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area
S	Suburban Zone
SWP	California State Water Project
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TCR	Transportation Concept Report
TDS	Total dissolved solids
TOC	Total organic compound
UC Merced	University of California, Merced

US 101	U.S. Highway 101
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USC	United States Code
USEPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
USFS	U.S. Forest Service
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
UTC	Ultimate Transportation Corridor
VIS	Visitor Experience, Interpretation, and Education
VIS-C	(Visitor) Concession Opportunities
VIS-F	Visitor Uses/Opportunities and Facilities
VIS-I	(Visitor) Interpretive Themes
VIS-T	(Visitor) Trails
VERP	Visitor Experience and Resource Protection
WA	Water Operations
WA-E	Water level fluctuations
WA-F	Management Agreements
WARM	Warm freshwater habitat
WROS	Water Recreation Opportunity Spectrum

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview and History

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and the California Department of Parks and Recreation (also known as California State Parks, or CSP) are required to develop long-term planning documents designed to guide future management actions for lands that they own and manage. Resource Management Plans (RMPs) and General Plans (GPs) are the long-term planning documents that Reclamation and CSP, respectively, are required to prepare. Although the federal requirements for an RMP differ somewhat from the state requirements for a GP, this joint RMP/GP (hereafter the Plan) has been developed through a cooperative effort between Reclamation and CSP to satisfy the requirements for both the RMP and GP.

This Plan has been prepared to enable comprehensive and cohesive management of the San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area (SRA) in Merced County, California. The SRA contains approximately 27,000 acres of lands and waters including San Luis Reservoir, O'Neill Forebay, Los Banos Creek Reservoir, and adjacent lands owned by Reclamation. These lands and waters are managed for different purposes by CSP, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW), and the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), as discussed further in Section 1.2.2. The lands and waters of the San Luis Reservoir SRA subject to the federal and state actions proposed in this Plan are collectively referred to as the Plan Area.

This Plan incorporates a joint programmatic Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) that will be used to evaluate the potential effects of implementing the Plan. The Plan was initially released on April 27, 2005, with a Draft EIR for purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). A CEQA Notice of Availability (NOA) was filed with all interested agencies, organizations, persons, and the California State Clearinghouse. The Plan was reissued with a Draft EIS/Revised Draft EIR (Draft EIS/EIR) on August 3, 2012, to meet the requirements of both National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and CEQA compliance. Baseline data and existing conditions of Plan Area resources (described in Chapter 2), systemwide and regional planning (discussed in Chapter 3), and potential environmental impacts from Plan implementation (analyzed in Chapter 5) were all updated where appropriate. A Notice of Completion (NOC) was filed with the California State Clearinghouse and a NOA was filed in the Federal Register, and all interested agencies, organizations, and persons were notified of the re-release of the Plan. A comment period began concurrently with the release of the RMP/GP and Draft EIS/EIR.

The Plan is intended to provide coordinated direction for the development and management of recreation lands, waters, and facilities under Reclamation ownership and CSP management. The Plan will serve as the basis for guiding recreation and resource management activities for the next 25 years in a manner that maintains and enhances public and resource benefits. Although the Plan does not address water operations or power generation, it will provide management guidance in a manner that maintains consistency with the purpose of the water storage and distribution and power generation facilities.

The Plan contains policies (in the form of goals and guidelines) and a description of the desired future condition of Plan Area lands and waters for recreation, and resource use and management. NEPA and CEQA require Reclamation and CSP to explore a range of alternative management approaches and the environmental effects of these actions. Four management alternatives are evaluated and compared in this document.

The Plan will be adopted by Reclamation and the State Park and Recreation Commission (SPRC), after which the Plan will be implemented. Implementation of the RMP by Reclamation and CSP will be guided by existing and future laws, Executive Orders, regulations, and policies and guidelines, and is designed to supplement existing direction provided by these sources.

1.1.1 Plan Program and Policy

1.1.1.1 Resource Management Plan Program and Policy

The Mid-Pacific Region, South-Central California Area Office of Reclamation is conducting a multiyear effort to prepare an RMP for each of its major facilities. This effort is guided by federal legislation and policies to ensure that federal lands are managed to serve a wide range of public uses. Pursuant to the Reclamation Recreation Act of 1992, Title 28 (Public Law 102-575) and the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (Title 40 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1500-08), Reclamation is required to develop RMP and EIS documents for its major facilities. The Reclamation Recreation Act directs Reclamation to "provide for the development, use, conservation, enhancement, and management of resources on Reclamation lands" (Public Law 102-575, Title 28 [2805(c)(1)(A)]). RMPs are Reclamation's blueprints for resource management decisions to guide Reclamation, managing partners, and agency cooperators and to inform the public about resource management policies and actions to be implemented over the life of the RMP.

Reclamation's resource management policy is to provide a broad level of stewardship to ensure and encourage resource protection, conservation, and multiple uses, as appropriate. Management practices and principles established in this RMP, in accordance with federal laws, regulations, and policies, provide for the protection of fish, wildlife, and other natural resources, cultural resources, public health and safety; and applicable uses of Reclamation lands and water areas, public access, and outdoor recreation.

1.1.1.2 General Plan Program and Policy

In accordance with California Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 5002.2 and Sections 21000 et seq., CSP is required to prepare a GP and EIR for the lands that it manages prior to the development of major facilities, in this case, the San Luis Reservoir SRA. The purpose of a GP is to guide development activities and management objectives at the SRA. In accordance with the requirement, this joint Plan establishes general management policies for lands classified as SRAs in the Plan Area.

PRC Section 5019.56 classifies state recreation units, which include SRAs, according to the following definition:

> State recreation units consist of areas selected, developed, and operated to provide outdoor recreational opportunities. The units shall be designated by the Commission by naming, in accordance with Article 1 (commencing with Section 5001) and this article relating to classification.
>
> In the planning of improvements to be undertaken within state recreation units, consideration shall be given to compatibility of design with the surrounding scenic and environmental characteristics.
>
> State recreation units may be established in the terrestrial or non-marine aquatic (lake or stream) environments of the state and shall be further classified as one of the following types:
>
> (a) State recreation areas, consisting of areas selected and developed to provide multiple recreational opportunities to meet other than purely local needs. The areas shall be selected for their having terrain capable of withstanding extensive human impact and for their proximity to large population centers, major routes of travel, or proven recreational resources such as manmade or natural bodies of water. Areas containing ecological, geological, scenic, or cultural resources of significant value shall be preserved within state wildernesses, state reserves, state parks, or natural or cultural preserves, or, for those areas situated seaward of the mean high tide line, shall be designated state marine (estuarine) reserves, state marine (estuarine) parks, state marine (estuarine) conservation areas, or state marine (estuarine) cultural preservation areas.
>
> Improvements may be undertaken to provide for recreational activities, including, but not limited to, camping, picnicking, swimming, hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, boating, waterskiing, diving, winter sports, fishing, and hunting.
>
> Improvements to provide for urban or indoor formalized recreational activities shall not be undertaken within state recreation areas.

1.2 Introduction to the Plan Area

1.2.1 Location and History

San Luis Reservoir SRA encompasses more than 27,000 acres and contains two geographically separate areas:

- San Luis Reservoir and O'Neill Forebay and adjacent lands north and south of State Route (SR) 152, and

- Los Banos Creek Reservoir and adjacent lands approximately 8 miles to the southeast (Map 1).

San Luis Reservoir consists of about 12,700 water surface acres and 65 miles of shoreline; O'Neill Forebay, 2,210 water surface acres and 14 miles of shoreline; and Los Banos Creek Reservoir, approximately 485 water surface acres and 12 miles of shoreline.

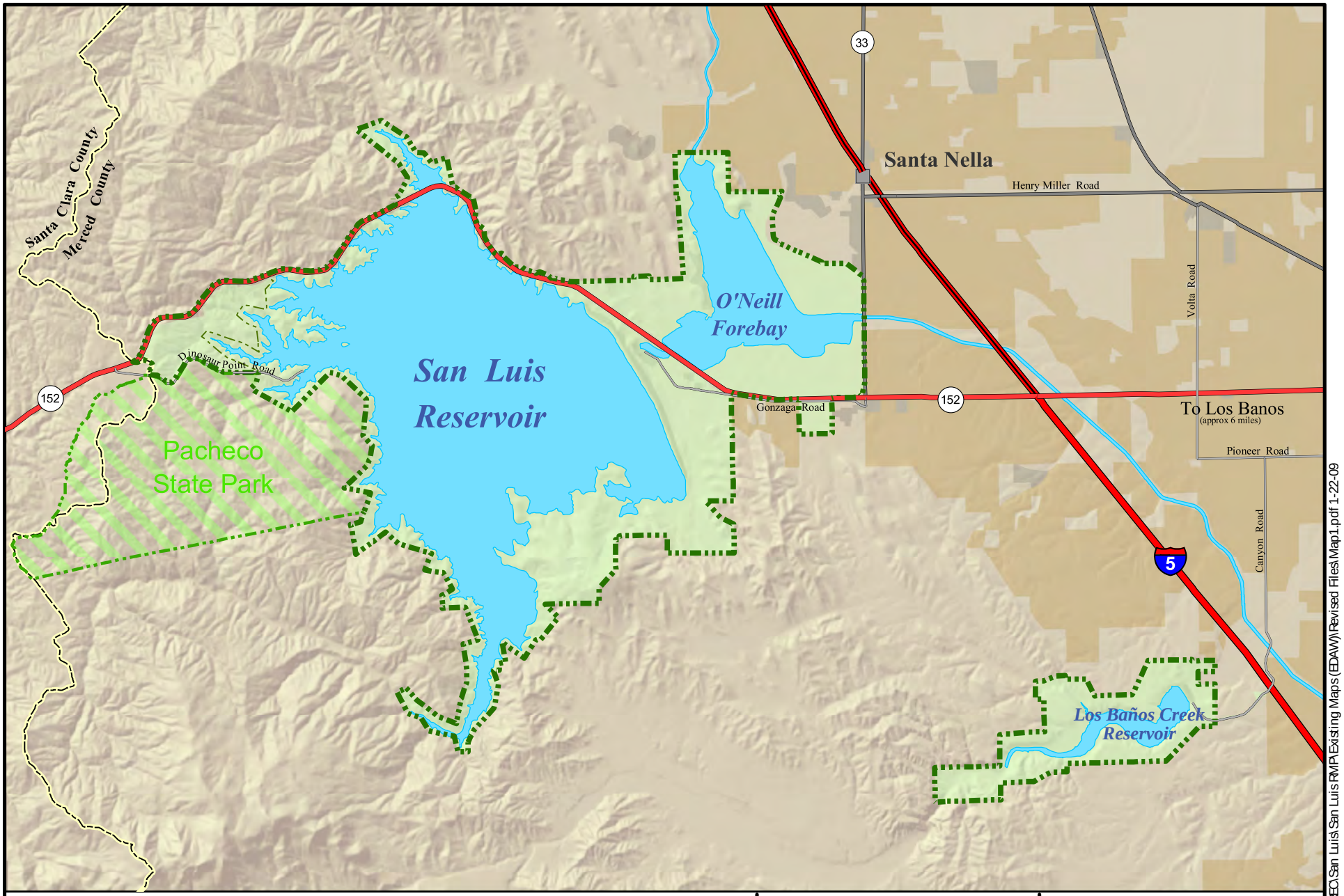
San Luis Reservoir and SR 152 are in the latitudinal center of the State of California. The western portion of SR 152 provides access to Interstate 5 (I-5), which is approximately 1 mile east of the Plan Area. State Route 33 (SR 33) and the unincorporated community of Santa Nella are 2 miles northeast of San Luis Reservoir. Other nearby cities are Los Banos, approximately 6 miles east of Plan Area, and Gilroy, 38 miles to the west. The Plan Area is in the foothills of the Diablo Range and bordered on the west by the hilly terrain that separates the range from the San Joaquin Valley.

Construction on San Luis Reservoir began in 1963 and was completed in 1967, with planned joint use by the California State Water Project (SWP) and the Central Valley Project (CVP). Reclamation constructed the reservoir and owns the land, and DWR operates the water storage and conveyance facilities. San Luis Reservoir was built as part of the system of reservoirs, aqueducts, power plants, and pumping stations operated under SWP and CVP. The reservoir has a capacity of 2 million acre-feet and is the largest off-stream reservoir in the United States. Water stored in San Luis Reservoir is pumped through O'Neill Forebay from the Sacramento–San Joaquin River Delta (Delta), which in turn is fed by the California Aqueduct and the Delta-Mendota Canal (DMC). The function of San Luis Reservoir is to store and regulate water pumped from the Delta for use in the San Joaquin Valley and southern California.

Los Banos Creek Reservoir was completed in 1965 to prevent storm runoff from flooding the California Aqueduct and the DMC. The reservoir has a capacity of 34,600 acre-feet.

As part of the land acquisition undertaken by Reclamation for the CVP and upon completion of the water storage facilities, a series of legal agreements among various agencies were executed to manage the land areas. Additionally, right-of-way agreements were executed between Reclamation and various utility interests, including Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E), California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and Chevron Oil. The agreements and associated correspondence are summarized in Appendix A. The primary result of the agreements was that the management of recreation and associated facilities was transferred to CSP.

Key dates for the development of recreational facilities and management by CSP are as follows:



Scale 1 : 126,720
1" = 2 mi

Plan Area

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

San Lui

Map 1
Location Map

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- **May 1965**—San Luis Reservoir and Forebay Recreation Development Plan (Bulletin No. 117-7)
- **June 1966**—San Luis Reservoir and Forebay Recreation Development Plan, Appendix C: Fish and Wildlife Development Plan (Bulletin No. 117-7)
- **April 8, 1969 (Amended July 2, 1982)**—Agreement between the United States of America and the State of California for the Construction and Operation of the Initial Recreation Facilities of the San Luis Unit (Contract No. 14-06-200-4353A)
- **November 1971**—General Development Plan, San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area
- **February 1986**—General Plan Amendment, San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area

Previous planning documents for the Plan Area are described further in Section 3.1 and Appendix A.

1.3 Purpose and Need

Planning for San Luis Reservoir, O'Neill Forebay, and Los Banos Creek Reservoir was developed in a series of documents dating from 1962 to 1985, including a General Plan that was adopted in 1971 and revised in 1985. Resource management and recreation interest and the types and level of use have changed over the last several decades.

An updated Plan is needed to account for changes in the physical and regulatory environment as well as projected population growth in the state that may affect the level of recreational services and facilities that are needed. Additionally, a Plan for managing resources based on currently available information for natural and cultural resources and the associated regulatory framework is necessary for the long-term stewardship of these resources. Upon approval, this Plan will supersede the previous plans. The new Plan will have a planning horizon of 25 years; however, it can be modified by an amendment or totally revised, if warranted, before the end of the planning period.

Needs that the new Plan will address are as follows:

- Enhancing natural resources and recreational opportunities without interrupting or conflicting with reservoir operations;
- Providing recreational opportunities to meet the demands of a growing population with diverse interests;
- Ensuring diversity of recreational opportunities and quality of the recreational experience;
- Protecting natural, cultural, and recreational resources while providing resource education opportunities and stewardship; and

- Providing updated management considerations for establishing a new management agreement between Reclamation and CSP for the "administration, operation, maintenance and development" of the Plan Area, pursuant to the federal Water Project Recreation Act of July 9, 1965, and PRC Sections 5002–5002.4 and 5094.2.

1.3.1 Purpose/Objectives

As required under NEPA, a proposed action such as adoption of the RMP requires a statement of the action's purpose and need. Under CEQA, a statement of objectives of the GP is also included.

The purposes of the Plan are as follows:

- Provide for the orderly use, development, and management of Plan Area lands and waters for recreation and other uses;
- Provide for the protection and management of natural, recreational, aesthetic, and cultural resources and for safety and security measures for the protection of visitors and resources;
- Ensure that management of quality recreational facilities and opportunities is compatible with other environmental resources and that management planning is based on expressed public need and the ability of the land and water resources to accommodate improved facilities and increased visitor use; and
- Propose uses that are compatible with Reclamation's core mission of delivering water and generating power.

1.3.2 Subsequent Planning Actions

The Plan includes recommendations for various resource management actions and facility improvement projects. These are specific actions that may be implemented to meet Plan goals. The management actions and projects are defined at a conceptual or programmatic level in this Plan. More detailed descriptions of the actions and project will be developed during the planning horizon. The responsibility for funding, designing, and implementing (or constructing) the management actions and improvement projects will be specified in the management agreement between Reclamation and CSP.

Site-specific NEPA and/or CEQA review may be required for new or expanded facilities or activities identified in the Plan because most actions have been identified at a conceptual level only and do not have specific locations or footprints. Any subsequent environmental documents would tier off and be consistent with the Plan's programmatic EIS/EIR. Some recreational uses and natural resource management actions identified in the Plan may not require additional environmental review because the environmental analyses of these actions are adequately addressed in this EIS/EIR, or the actions are exempt from environmental review.

More information regarding project-specific environmental compliance documentation is presented in Chapter 5. Securing any permits required for

implementation projects would also be part of subsequent planning actions. Finally, the Plan may need to be amended if any new acquisitions are added to the existing Plan Area or if any other circumstances make parts of the current Plan no longer applicable.

According to the *California State Parks Department Planning Handbook* (last revised April 2010), District Superintendents must obtain a determination from the Planning Policy and Programming Committee (PPPC) whenever there is a question of whether a proposed development, redevelopment of an existing facility, or institution or alteration of a program/activity is consistent with a unit's general plan, or is permitted without a plan amendment under PRC Section 5002.2.

When the number of changes or the magnitude of the change is great, a general plan revision would be considered instead of an amendment. While an amendment becomes a permanent addition to a general plan document, a revision completely replaces an existing general plan with a revised general plan. A general plan revision follows the same process and format as a full general plan (DPR 2010).

According to the Reclamation RMP Guidebook, the need for an amendment or revision to an RMP would be determined by the scope and significance of the needed adjustment. Reclamation offices have the discretion to determine if a needed change is an amendment or simply routine maintenance (and official documentation and notification is not necessary).

1.3.3 Plan Area Ownership and Management

Reclamation owns most of the land surrounding the reservoirs; however, other agencies are involved in operating and managing these lands (Map 2). The agencies include CSP (recreation management), DWR (reservoir and water distribution operations), and DFW (San Luis and O'Neill Forebay Wildlife Areas and Upper and Lower Cottonwood Wildlife Areas). The San Luis and O'Neill Forebay Wildlife Areas are managed by DFW but are on Reclamation-owned lands, and therefore are in the Plan Area. Upper and Lower Cottonwood Wildlife Areas are on lands that are owned and managed by DFW, and therefore are not in the Plan Area. The San Luis and O'Neill Forebay Wildlife Areas were set aside during the construction of the reservoirs as mitigation for habitat that was lost from the development of the CVP. Appendix A includes a summary of legal agreements detailing the transfer of management of wildlife mitigation lands to DFW. A smaller mitigation parcel known as Jasper-Sears, located near the Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) Use Area, is also owned and managed by DFW and is not part of the Plan Area. Additionally, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) uses a fire station building on Reclamation lands for fire protection.

The Plan does not address or include management direction or actions for DFW- or DWR-managed facilities or activities within the Plan Area.

1.4 Contents of the Plan and EIS/EIR

This document serves as the Plan and programmatic EIS/EIR for the Plan Area. The programmatic EIS/EIR is included to provide an analysis of effects that may result from implementation of the Plan. The EIS/EIR will be used to inform decision makers and the public about the environmental consequences of the adoption of the Plan, consistent with the requirements of NEPA/CEQA. The Plan and EIS/EIR are organized as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction provides information about the location and history of the Plan Area, the purpose and need for the Plan, and Reclamation and CSP planning processes.

Chapter 2: Existing Conditions describes the Plan Area's current physical and social setting based on available data, including land use; physical, biotic, cultural, aesthetic, and recreational values; and existing facilities.

Chapter 3: Planning Influences describes the previous planning documents for the Plan Area, systemwide and regional planning influences affecting the Plan Area, and issues that are addressed in the Plan.

Chapter 4: Plan Overview contains the goals and guidelines that will guide future management and operation of the Plan Area. This chapter also includes the purpose and vision of the Plan, and describes geographic-based management zones, the proposed Plan alternatives, and carrying capacity of the Plan Area.

Chapter 5: Environmental Analysis contains the environmental impact analysis for the Plan's programmatic EIS/EIR, pursuant to NEPA and CEQA.

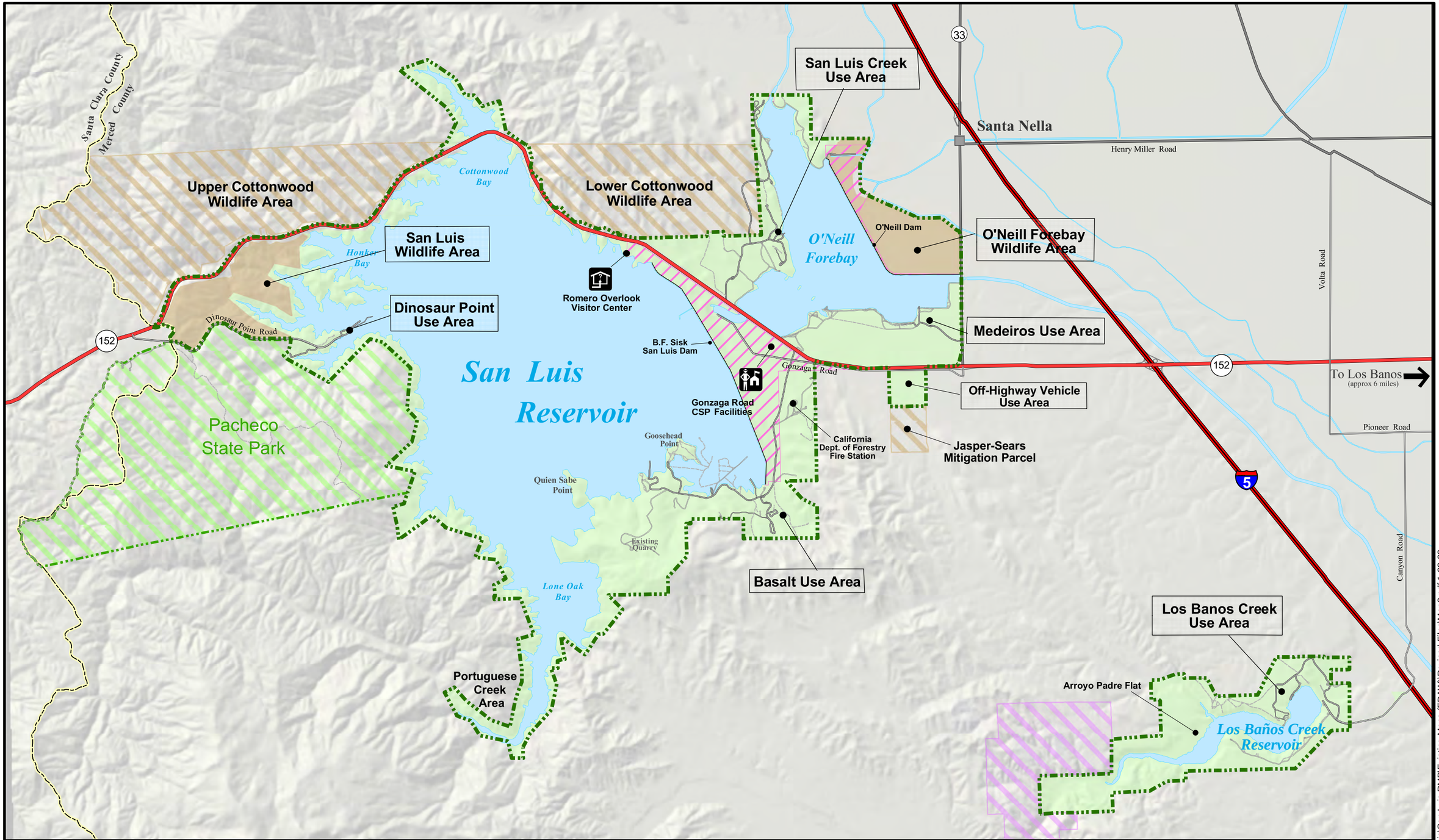
Chapter 6: Consultation, Coordination, and Distribution is an outline of the public involvement program and agency consultation undertaken for this project as well as agency distribution

Chapter 7: References contains a list of the organizations and persons consulted during the preparation of this document and a list of references.

Chapter 8: Glossary of Terms defines the key terms that are used in this document.

Chapter 9: Report Contributors is a list of the preparers of the Plan and EIS/EIR.

The EIS/EIR prepared for the Plan is programmatic in scope and therefore does not contain project-specific analysis for any of the projects recommended in the Plan. Specific projects will undergo subsequent NEPA and/or CEQA review as described in Section 1.3.2.



Source: USGS DRG

1 0.5 0 1 2 Miles

Scale 1 : 79,200
1" = 1.25 miles

N

Land Management and Ownership Status

- CSP and DWR managed (USBR owned)
- DFG managed (USBR owned)
- Joint Use Area
- Pacheco State Park
- DFG owned and managed
- DWR owned

Boundaries

- Plan Area

U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation

California State Parks

San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area

MAP 2
Ownership & Management

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