Chapter 34
Community Benefits Program Analysis

34.1 Introduction

The Community Benefits Program is a set of commitments made by project proponents and created in coordination with the local community to address local effects that may occur as a result of the Delta Conveyance Project. These commitments are intended to go beyond traditional concepts of "environmental mitigation" to foster goodwill and address the adverse effects local communities may encounter during long construction periods. The Community Benefits Program Framework (Framework) (described in Appendix 3G, *Community Benefits Program Framework*) outlines the steps that the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) will undertake in development of the Community Benefits Program, including ensuring opportunities for meaningful community participation. The Community Benefits Program would be a component of the proposed Delta Conveyance Project. As such, after completion of the CEQA process, if DWR determines it appropriate, approval of the Delta Conveyance Project would include approval of the Community Benefits Program. Actions approved in the future through the Community Benefits Program may require additional environmental review and permitting, including CEQA; this chapter provides information on potential impacts from Community Benefits Program actions.

The Community Benefits Program for the Delta Conveyance Project is one of three distinct but complementary processes intended to address effects within the local communities, as described in Appendix 3G. The other two processes are regulatory mitigation, which is used to address Delta Conveyance Project environmental impacts related to specific regulatory requirements (e.g., CEQA), and an Ombudsman Program (Chapter 3, *Description of the Proposed Project and Alternatives*, Section 3.20, *Ombudsman*), which provides a clearinghouse and single point of contact to streamline information, support, and applicable construction-impact-related claims and ensure just compensation as a result of direct construction-related effects.

The goal of the Community Benefits Program is to define a set of commitments made by project proponents and created in coordination with the local community to create lasting, tangible, and valuable economic and social benefits to the residents, businesses, and organizations experiencing Delta Conveyance Project effects. Two main components for the Community Benefits Program are being proposed to meet the program objective.

- The Delta Community Fund.
- Economic Development and Integrated Benefits.

These components, implemented as part of the proposed Delta Conveyance Project, would work in conjunction to provide benefits associated with direct project activities and support community benefits independent of the project.

The Community Benefits Program would establish a fund with the objective of funding actions that can help to protect, enhance, and sustain the unique cultural, historical, recreational, agricultural, and economic values of the Delta as an evolving place, in a manner consistent with the coequal

goals.[1] The fund could be used to implement actions that have been identified through community outreach to date and are described in Appendix 3G.

The Economic Development and Integrated Benefits program would include benefits that would be realized through construction of the Delta Conveyance facilities and may include the following.

- Economic development through targeted hiring programs and business participation programs.
- Integrated project benefits or *leave-behinds* through commitments to create multipurpose project facilities or repurpose and leave behind certain construction-related project features for the community.

The actions that could be implemented as a result of the Community Benefits Program would be in addition to environmental mitigation for impacts from the Delta Conveyance Project disclosed in the preceding chapters and would also be separate and in addition to mitigation and commitments made through the government-to-government Tribal consultation process.

While CEQA requires analyzing reasonable, foreseeable future components of a project, it only requires analyzing them at a level of detail that is commensurate with the detail available for the project. Because the actions that could be funded or integrated into the project as part of this program have not yet been specifically identified, this analysis discloses potential impacts that could be anticipated based on available information but does not include CEQA significance impact determinations because, at this stage, it is unknown which specific activities would be approved, and their design, location, or scale are unknown. As actions are funded or integrated with the construction of the project, they will undergo project-level CEQA review and any other required regulatory processes before they would be implemented.

For the purposes of this analysis, the concepts identified in the Framework (Appendix 3G) have been grouped based on the types of potential impacts that could result from those activities. While these concepts were developed for the fund component of the program, they include ideas that could be co-sited or integrated with the construction of the Delta Conveyance Project (economic development and integrated benefits). The following are actions that would be expected to have no direct or indirect physical effect on the environment because they would not involve making any physical changes to the environment.

- Targeted hiring programs and business participation programs.
- Swimming and water safety lessons open to all Delta residents.
- Development of jobs associated with the Sacramento River.
- Community assistance to develop ideas and write funding proposals.
- Early planning, engineering, or architectural expertise to meet community need.
- Marketing of the region for tourism.

[1] In November 2009, the Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta Reform Act (Delta Reform Act) was passed. The Delta Reform Act established the State policy of coequal goals for the Delta: "The 'coequal goals' means the two goals of providing a more reliable water supply for California and protecting, restoring, and enhancing the Delta ecosystem. The coequal goals shall be achieved in a manner that protects and enhances the unique cultural, recreational, natural resource, and agricultural values of the Delta as an evolving place" (Water Code § 85054). The coequal goals were developed to provide policy direction for state agencies as they move forward on various actions that would support achievement of the goals.

- Marketing and tourism grants to hire staff members who could work with agriculture businesses.
- Incentivizing of agricultural innovations.
- Environmental education.
- In-person, long-term, comprehensive, hands-on agricultural education.
- Workforce development with an emphasis on youth and people with disabilities.
- Paid internship opportunities.
- Funding for efforts to modify county regulations that would encourage vacation-rental-by-owner operations in the Delta.

The Community Benefits Program could also be used to either fund a program or augment the funding of existing programs that support the above actions. It is expected that many of these programs will have already undergone required environmental review and analysis necessary for implementation, but if they have not, additional environmental review will likely be required.

Although the Community Benefits Program also lists subsidence, algal blooms, pollutants, and saltwater intrusion as potential issues to be addressed through the Delta Community Fund, the specific actions that might be undertaken have not yet been identified by the community and therefore are not analyzed here. If ideas to address these issues are proposed through the Community Benefits Program, additional environmental review would be required prior to approval and implementation.

34.2 Potential Community Benefits

Potential benefits from potential actions implemented as a result of the Community Benefits Program include expansion and enhancement of habitat for fish and wildlife, improvements to public recreation, preservation of open space, flood protection, transportation improvements, improved air quality, and economic growth (described in greater detail in Appendix 3G).

Investments in large infrastructure actions such as roadway improvements could help improve air quality by providing funding to pave dirt roads and reduce dust dispersion. Investing in roadway improvements and adding dedicated roadways for agricultural use, either through the Delta Community Fund or Economic Development and Integrated Benefits, could also reduce congestion and improve the flow of traffic into and out of the region, which could support recreation and the economic vitality of the Delta. Maintaining and improving levees could increase flood protection and help increase the climate resiliency of the Delta by reducing risks to life and property during flood events. Construction of a community center and visitor and education centers could provide important gathering spaces for cultural, social, and educational events. Currently, the more rural areas of the Delta have limited gathering places that can accommodate large groups and provide modern amenities such as Wi-Fi access.

Improvements to recreational and cultural facilities could provide expanded access to recreation as well as preserve the cultural and ethnic heritage of the Delta. Recreational areas provide a place for people to enjoy the outdoors and exercise, which result in physical and mental health benefits. Recreational areas and cultural heritage attractions could also increase tourism. Tourism benefits

the local economy as travelers patronize local restaurants and businesses. Recreational and cultural areas are also socially important in the Delta and provide a tangible reflection of the community's shared values.

Investments in community services could offer expanded and improved access to law enforcement, fire departments, and code enforcement. Expanding these services could reduce crime, illegal dumping, and other nuisances in the region that degrade recreational experiences, harm businesses and agriculture, and adversely affect the quality of life for residents. Investments in additional bus routes could provide residents with greater access to jobs and recreational amenities. Addressing homelessness and providing sanitary facilities could help address hazards and threats to human health associated with waste generated by the unhoused population.

Revitalization of rural main streets and restoration of culturally important places could help encourage tourism and business growth, which could strengthen local economies and communities. Investments in maintenance of schools and other public places could contribute to the improved health, safety, and general well-being of residents.

Actions that could protect or restore habitat, including land acquisitions and transfers in the Delta region, could provide opportunities to protect native and special-status wildlife species habitat and improve the Delta ecosystem. Investments in fish screens and similar efforts to reduce entrainment could contribute to improved survival rates for fish species. Conservation of habitat and conversion of agricultural land to habitat could also contribute to a net decrease in greenhouse gas emissions, which could improve air quality and have a potentially positive contribution to climate change. Conservation of agricultural land could help preserve the agricultural heritage of the region and enhance Delta open space, habitat areas, and visual quality. Efforts to remove invasive species in the Delta could likely have long-term beneficial impacts on the ecological health of the Delta and could improve the quality of recreational experiences. Removal of invasive species in waterways could improve dissolved oxygen levels, increase turbidity, and improve native habitats for aquatic species (Department of Parks and Recreation 2018:7-18).

Activities to promote tourism in the Delta could increase economic activity, help local businesses, and contribute to the tax base. Tourism could expand existing employment opportunities, bring new jobs to the region, and increase personal income. Increasing employment opportunities by targeting hiring programs, jobs training, and other workforce development could help increase and stabilize the local population, which could help to maintain and grow Delta communities.

34.3 Impacts

The following analysis of potential actions that could be implemented as a result of the Community Benefits Program uses a level of evaluation commensurate with the information available at this time (CEQA Guidelines Section 15146). Because many details are not known at this time, the actions and activities analyzed in this chapter may require subsequent project-level environmental analysis, any applicable permitting, and approval before implementation. This analysis discloses potential impacts that could be anticipated based on available information but does not include CEQA significance impact determinations because, at this stage, it is unknown which specific activities would be approved, and their design, location, or scale are unknown. The sections below group potential actions into categories for which the following similar impacts may occur: infrastructure investments, investments to improve Delta waterways, community service investments, habitat

conservation and land transfers or acquisitions, and tourism investments. Each section below focuses on areas in which a potential impact has a high likelihood of occurring should the described activities occur; where there is no obvious impact mechanism, the resource impacts are not evaluated.

34.3.1 Infrastructure Investments

The Community Benefits Program could be used to support implementation of the planning and development of a range of infrastructure actions to benefit the local Delta community. Although no specific actions or locations have been identified, such local infrastructure investments could include the following.

- Community Investments
  - Multiple-use community center.
  - Visitor and education centers.
  - Improvements to roads, including paving existing roads to reduce dust.
  - Wastewater and clean potable water facilities or connections to existing facilities.
  - Levee improvement and other flood protection actions.
  - Electric power improvements.
  - Data communications infrastructure location or improvements.
  - Housing actions near agricultural areas.
  - Infrastructure and revitalization actions in main street corridors (maintenance of or improvements to sidewalks, boardwalks, and public spaces and grants to building owners for renovations).
  - Infrastructure maintenance of and improvements to schools and other public use facilities, such as libraries and existing community centers.
- Habitat Conservation and Restoration
  - Purchase of land and construction of habitat enhancements.
  - Addition of fish screens to diversions, such as Elk Slough Project.
- Recreation Investments[2]
  - Recreation facilities (e.g., boat docks, hiking trails, bird watching areas, biking trails).
  - Connection of existing pedestrian and bike trails and green spaces.
  - Creation of new pedestrian and bike trails.
  - Creation of new motorized or nonmotorized boat and fishing access.
  - Improvement or creation of campgrounds and shaded picnic areas.
  - Reopening of Delta Shores Meadows State Park.

[2] Chapter 3, Section 3.21, *Potential Daivs-Dolvig Act Actions*, discusses similar but separate recreational investments that could be funded through the Davis-Dolwig Act.

- Support of fish hatcheries for sport fish species.

- Cultural Investments
  - Support of efforts to identify and promote the heritage of cultural landscapes in the Delta region.
  - Support of efforts to identify and restore threatened or demolished places that represent the cultural or ethnic heritage of the Delta region.
  - Development of interpretative signs to educate recreational users about the Delta and connect Indigenous cultures and histories to the landscape.

Construction activities carried out for the larger infrastructure investments in the Delta region that could take multiple years would likely involve the use of some of the following: heavy equipment for excavation, grading, trenching, hauling, soil compaction, material stockpiling, clearing of vegetation, and dewatering and use of slurry or cutoff walls. In addition, development of certain types of actions in the Delta region that would create new facilities and structures could change existing land uses and possibly add larger buildings or other development features to the existing landscape; these actions would need to acquire appropriate land use authorizations prior to construction. Depending on the action and location, these actions could cause environmental effects related to ground disturbances, visual character and quality, aquatic and biological resources, generation of noise and air quality pollutants, increased traffic, public services, growth inducement, agricultural resources, and hazardous materials. Smaller infrastructure investments that could likely take 1 year or less to construct, such as connecting existing trails, converting construction roads to pedestrian or biking routes and creating new facilities such as campgrounds could change the existing land uses and visual character of the existing landscape. The types of construction activities that could be expected to improve recreational and cultural facilities in the Delta region could cause environmental effects related to ground disturbances, visual character and quality, aquatic and biological resources, generation of noise and air quality pollutants, increased traffic, agricultural resources, and hazardous materials, and could change the existing land uses.

The infrastructure and main street corridors and improvements to existing facilities actions that would likely be medium- to small-scale construction actions could be located in areas of the Delta that are already developed, such as rural town centers and existing public facilities, and could involve the use of heavy equipment for excavation, grading, hauling, and demolition. Maintaining or improving existing town centers and public facilities would not change the land uses and visual character of the existing landscape. The duration of these types of construction activities would likely be less than 1 year. These types of activities could cause environmental effects related to ground disturbances, generation of noise and air quality pollutants, increased traffic, hazardous materials and pollutants, housing, public services, and utilities. Because these activities are assumed to be in existing semi-developed areas, there would be no impacts on aquatic and biological resources or agricultural resources.

34.3.1.1 Ground Disturbances

Construction activities related to many of the actions listed above inherently involve ground disturbance, such as excavation, grading, trenching, soil compaction, and material stockpiling. Activities associated with constructing boat access, fishing piers, building demolition or restoration, and other small- to medium-scale construction actions would likely involve smaller levels of ground disturbance, because these actions are expected to be medium to small in scale. Depending on

location, activities could involve construction of medium-size structures, such a fishing piers and boat ramps for nonmotorized watercraft and small buildings to house equipment and support campground amenities.

Ground disturbing activities could result in a loss of topsoil, erosion, and changes in existing drainage patterns and could result in local (on-site) ponding, siltation, and changes in runoff flow rates and velocities. Actions could include mitigation measures to develop and implement erosion and sediment control plans as well as mitigation measures to reduce runoff and sedimentation that would avoid or minimize erosion and siltation effects; mitigation measures to implement a topsoil salvage and reapplication plan would reduce loss of topsoil.

Construction would likely involve typical construction techniques and would be required to conform to seismic standards and other development requirements. Facilities would be designed to address the site-specific geologic conditions as well as the impacts that the geologic environment would have on the facility. Facility location and design would be expected to also address avoidance of fault zones, unstable ground (e.g., liquefaction, lateral spreading, slope failure), and withstanding anticipated seismic shaking. Engineering design parameters would vary according to underlying geologic materials, such as competent bedrock or less competent and loose sedimentary (e.g., alluvial) deposits.

Cultural resources (built-environment historical resources and archaeological resources) and Tribal cultural resources can be found in several areas throughout the Delta. Depending on location, ground-disturbing activities required for construction could unearth, expose, or destroy certain resources. The construction of aboveground facilities could add new features to the settings of existing built-environment resources.

Construction of new facilities in the Delta that would result in ground-disturbing activities could destroy unique paleontological resources. Depending on location, ground-disturbing activities could occur in geologic units sensitive for paleontological resources and thereby unearth, expose, or disturb paleontological resources. Alternatively, if activities occur in already-developed areas, impacts paleontological resources may not occur or would be relatively minor because of the previous disturbance.

Depending on facility type, construction could require some amount of aggregate for building foundations, concrete in walls, or associated roads. Depending on location, the surface footprint of these facilities could be located over existing aggregate resources, oil and natural gas wells, or underlying oil and natural gas fields. Such footprints would have the potential to cause abandonment of those resources at the specific location. However, potential impacts could be avoided or minimized through siting and design considerations. Alternatively, if construction activities occur in already-developed areas, impacts on existing aggregate resources, oil, or natural gas wells may not occur or would be relatively minor because of previous disturbance.

Construction or rehabilitation of existing buildings would likely involve typical construction techniques and would be required to conform to seismic standards and other requirements. Actions would be designed to address the site-specific geologic conditions as well as the impacts that the geologic environment would have on the facility. Facility location and design would also address avoidance of fault zones, unstable ground (e.g., liquefaction, lateral spreading, slope failure), and withstanding anticipated seismic shaking. Design parameters would vary according to underlying geologic materials, such as competent bedrock or less competent and loose sedimentary (e.g.,

alluvial) deposits. Minimal ground disturbance would occur because these actions would take place in previously disturbed areas.

34.3.1.2 Visual Character and Quality

The visual landscape of the Delta region is a combination of undeveloped islands and low-lying tracts of land surrounded by waterways and levees with pastoral lands, industrial agricultural facilities, and rural development. Introduction of new structures, such as a wastewater treatment facility or a multiple-use community center, could change the visual character and quality of the particular area. Depending on the exact location and type of structure, certain types of actions could substantially degrade the existing visual character and quality for residents, businesses, roadway uses, and recreationalists. Introduction of new structures could have a substantial adverse effect on scenic vistas or damage scenic resources. New facilities and structures could also create a new source of light or glare that could adversely affect views in the area. Impacts on visual resources could be avoided or minimized through careful siting and design considerations of potential actions. However, even with mitigation, it is possible that impacts on visual character and quality could be substantial.

Depending on the location and type of action, connecting existing trails and creating new recreational facilities could change the visual character and quality of the area. Depending on the exact location and type of structure, such as new boat access or fishing piers, these actions could degrade the existing visual character and quality for residents, businesses, roadway uses, and recreationalists. Because these structures are expected to be small relative to the Delta landscape, it is unlikely that they would have substantial adverse effects on scenic vistas or damage scenic resources. Because recreational facilities are built to enhance scenic and recreational resources, these types of actions are expected to be designed to avoid the introduction of significant sources of light or glare that would adversely affect views in the area. Although construction of recreational facilities could have localized effects on visual quality and character, it would likely be possible to reduce or avoid potential impacts through careful siting and design considerations of potential actions.

34.3.1.3 Aquatic Biological Resources

Construction activities associated with in-water types of actions, such as construction fish screens, boating and recreational facilities, or levee improvements, could include excavation, dewatering, or possibly use of slurry or cutoff walls during construction. Levee improvements, for example, could have impacts on aquatic species due to temporary disturbance and degradation of habitat during construction. Excavation near the shoreline could cause environmental effects on fish because of sedimentation, turbidity, and disturbance of contaminated sediment. Accidental spills or leakage of contaminants during construction could also create substantial effects on aquatic resources. In addition, certain work along the levees can result in a permanent loss of riparian habitat and vegetation to meet existing policies regarding levee vegetation.

In-water construction activities associated with construction of boat access or fishing piers could include limited dewatering and use of slurry or cutoff walls during construction. These activities could have adverse effects on aquatic species due to temporary disturbance and degradation of habitat during construction. Accidental spills or leakage of contaminants during construction could also have significant impacts on aquatic resources. Because these structures are likely to be small relative to the available aquatic habitat in the Delta and because the duration of construction would

likely be short, these impacts are not expected to be extensive and would be localized to the area of disturbance.

Mitigation measures to limit in-water construction activity to periods of the year that minimize effects on fish would reduce temporary impacts associated with construction. Impacts on fish from increases in turbidity during in- or near-water construction and maintenance activities could be minimized through adherence to applicable federal, state, and local regulations and implementation of site-specific erosion and sediment control plants. Mitigation measures such as development of a spill prevention, control, and countermeasure plan would reduce or avoid impacts associated with discharge of contaminants during construction. Mitigation to compensate for temporary or permanent vegetation and habitat loss would likely reduce impacts associated with removal of riparian habitat and vegetation, should they occur.

34.3.1.4 Terrestrial Biological Resources

Depending on the location of certain types of actions, construction activities such as vegetation removal, grading, dewatering, stockpiling, soil compaction, and use of heavy equipment could adversely affect natural communities both in the short and long term. Construction of new facilities could result in temporary disturbances to habitat and vegetation as well as permanent loss of habitat, depending on location.

Impacts on terrestrial biological resources could be minimized or avoided through thoughtful siting and design considerations for potential actions. Permanent loss of habitat that results from construction of certain types of actions could be offset through compensatory mitigation. Temporary disturbances of natural communities and terrestrial resources could be minimized with the adoption of construction best management practices for biological resources and appropriate work awareness training to educate construction personnel on the types of sensitive resources in the study area, including sensitive timing windows for covered species, applicable environmental rules and regulations, and specific training on the measures required to avoid and minimize effects on natural communities.

34.3.1.5 Noise

Operation of heavy equipment associated with construction activities, such as excavation, vegetation removal, grading, dewatering, stockpiling, soil compaction, and haul trucks, would result in a temporary increase in noise. In addition, construction of recreational fishing and boating facilities and other more substantial structures would likely require pile driving. Depending on the location, noise from equipment would have the potential to expose sensitive receptors (e.g., residences, outdoor parks, schools, agricultural areas), noise-sensitive land uses (e.g., recreational areas, places of worship, libraries, hospitals), and terrestrial and aquatic species to temporary excessive noise. In addition, construction of facilities such as a wastewater treatment facility or a community center could expose sensitive receptors to permanent changes in noise levels.

Implementation of construction best management practices, a noise abatement plan, and species-specific noise abatement measures could minimize and reduce temporary noise-related effects on sensitive receptors, noise-sensitive land uses, and biological resources. Careful design of potential actions could minimize potential changes to permanent noise levels.

34.3.1.6 Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases

Construction equipment exhaust, employee vehicle exhaust, and dust from grading, clearing, and excavation activities would temporarily generate emissions of pollutants, such as ozone precursors (reactive organic gases and nitrogen oxides), carbon monoxide, particulate matter 10 microns in diameter or less, particulate matter 2.5 microns in diameter or less, and sulfur dioxide. Pollutant emissions are highly dependent on the total amount of disturbed area, the duration of construction, and the intensity of construction activity. In addition, the quantity and types of heavy-duty equipment substantially affect emissions generated by vehicle exhaust. Should these emissions exceed the applicable air district thresholds or federal *de minimis* thresholds, the exceedance could be considered a substantial impact on air quality.

Action design considerations, such as use of electric vehicles and adoption of construction best management practices, could reduce potential air quality or greenhouse gas emissions. Mitigation measures to control dust and offset construction-generated pollutants could help reduce potential air quality or greenhouse gas emissions. However, it is possible that even with the implementation of mitigation measures, impacts on air quality could be substantial.

34.3.1.7 Traffic

Increased traffic volumes could result from truck trips associated with construction of potential actions. In addition, temporary road closures and detours associated with construction of roadway improvements may be required and could have substantial impacts on vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and traffic volumes and patterns. Depending on the infrastructure improvement location, potential increases in VMT and circulation system effects could be localized and have a substantial effect on regional roadway, capacity, or traffic patterns. Development of site-specific construction traffic management plans and demand management plans could reduce potential traffic impacts. In addition, mitigation measures to modify hours of construction activity on congested roadways could also reduce the severity of potential impacts. However, even with mitigation, it is possible that impacts on traffic could be substantial.

34.3.1.8 Public Services and Utilities

Construction of new facilities, such as a community center, housing near agricultural areas, electric power improvements, and a wastewater treatment facility, could have impacts on public services and utilities, such as solid waste management, water and wastewater management, water supply and water treatment, electricity and natural gas utilities, and communications utilities.

Depending on location, construction of new infrastructure and facilities could affect public utility facilities that are located underground or aboveground along the local roadways or intersect with major infrastructure components, such as bridges or overpasses, requiring relocation of the components. These types of actions could also require the expansion of electrical or natural gas transmission or distribution systems, new or expanded stormwater drainage facilities, or expansion of communications facilities (telephone, cell phone, cable). These large infrastructure actions could also create an increased need for new fire protection, police protection, or ambulance services or facilities.

Potential impacts on water supply and wastewater managers, electric and gas utility providers, and communications service providers could be avoided or minimized through coordination with public

service and utility providers and site-specific avoidance measures. Additional mitigation could include the relocation of construction of new or expanded facilities.

Construction of new structures or rehabilitation of existing structures is unlikely to result in substantial increases in population growth, which could have impacts on public services and utilities, such as solid waste management, water and wastewater management, water supply and water treatment, electricity and natural gas utilities, and communications utilities. Depending on location, construction of new buildings or revitalization of existing buildings in rural town centers could adversely affect public utility facilities that are located underground or aboveground in areas that are already developed. Community infrastructure investments that result in new visitor, education, or community center structures could require the expansion of electrical or natural gas transmission or distribution systems, new or expanded stormwater drainage facilities, or expansion of communications facilities (telephone, cell phone, cable). These types of community infrastructure actions could also create an increased need for new fire protection, police protection, or ambulance services or facilities. In these cases, where these potential actions would occur outside of currently developed areas, they may be inconsistent with current land use plans.

Actions resulting in the relocation or construction of new or expanded facilities could have substantial environmental impacts. If actions result in an increase in fire protection, police protection, or ambulance services such that new or physically altered facilities would be necessary, it may not be possible to entirely avoid or mitigate potential impacts.

34.3.1.9 Water Quality

Excavation activities could discharge contaminants to surface waters or disturb existing bioaccumulative constituents such as mercury and selenium. The development and implementation of erosion and sediment control plans, as part of required mitigation, and compliance with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System and Regional Water Quality Control Board permit requirements would likely reduce or avoid effects on water quality.

34.3.1.10 Agricultural Resources

Depending on location, environmental effects could result if the construction of new facilities, such as a community center, visitor centers, campgrounds, and potable and wastewater treatment facilities, as well as carbon sequestration actions, results in the conversion of Important Farmland. These impacts could be avoided and minimized by siting actions, where available and feasible, on lower-quality farmland.

34.3.1.11 Hazardous Materials

Construction activities could expose workers to hazardous materials, such as petroleum and other chemicals used to operate and maintain construction equipment. Additionally, excavation, grading, and trenching have the potential to release potentially hazardous materials. Pre-construction surveys and sampling would help to identify and avoid potential hazardous materials. Potential impacts could be further avoided and minimized through mitigation measures that would specify safe handling and disposal of potentially hazardous material excavated during construction and through mitigation measures to develop and implement a hazardous materials management plan to help contain and remediate hazardous spills should they occur.

34.3.2 Investments to Improve Delta Waterways

The Community Benefits Program could be used to support implementation of actions that could improve the experience of residents of the Delta and recreationalists using the Delta, as well as address known challenges in the Delta that detract from or degrade the quality of the Delta. Activities to improve Delta waterways could include the following.

- Support of efforts to remove invasive aquatic vegetation.
- Support of efforts to remove abandoned vessels.

Additionally, the Delta Community Fund could, for example, support programs such as the California Department of Parks and Recreation, Division of Boating and Waterways' Aquatic Invasive Plant Control Program (AIPCP) to manage aquatic invasive plants in the Delta region by working to support a comprehensive, flexible, practical, inclusive, efficient, and effective approach to managing aquatic invasive plants in the Delta while minimizing environmental and ecosystem impacts and supporting public health and the economy (Department of Parks and Recreation 2018:ES-3).

Another example of a program that could be supported by the Delta Community Fund is the California State Lands Commission's Abandoned Vessel Program (established in 2012), which is designed to provide for removing and disposing of abandoned and trespassing vessels on waterways under the commission's jurisdiction.

Similarly, the Delta Community Fund could provide support for the California Department of Parks and Recreation, Division of Boating and Waterways' Surrendered and Abandoned Vessel Exchange program (SAVE), which is used for removing and disposing of abandoned recreational vessels and includes the Abandoned Watercraft Abatement Fund and the Vessel Turn-In Program.

34.3.2.1 Water Quality

Should the Delta Community Fund support such programs, removal and disposal of abandoned vessels could result in the release of pollutants into the environment; however, under the SAVE program grantees are required to ensure that hazardous wastes are dealt with appropriately.

Although it is possible that pollutants could be released into the environment during the process of removing abandoned vessels, this impact would likely be short term. Allowing abandoned vessels to remain in waterways is likely to allow pollutants such as sewage, oil and fuel, detergents, solvents, paints, and plastic into the environment over a much longer period. The release of these pollutants over a longer duration is more likely to cause serious harm to fish and wildlife compared to the potential short-term impacts of removing abandoned vessels. Removing abandoned vessels would ultimately improve water quality and also improve the quality of recreational experiences in the Delta.

34.3.3 Community Services Investments

The Community Benefits Program could be used to support implementation of actions dedicated to improving and expanding community services in the Delta region. Community service investments could include activities that would accomplish the following efforts.

- Address homeless encampments.
- Increase law enforcement throughout the Delta.

- Help counties and towns deal with illegal dumping and theft.
- Address housing code violations related to Sacramento County and Federal Emergency Management Agency issues.
- Increase fire protection capacity.
- Ensure that recreation areas remain safe and clean and benches and shade are provided.
- Clean up trash and garbage.
- Facilitate multiagency funding of the Isleton Community Plan.
- Ensure access to reliable high-speed internet.
- Increase bus service to major cities and towns.
- After construction, dedicate construction roads to agricultural transport.

The Community Benefits Program could support existing community services by providing necessary funds to increase staff or expand existing services. Additional staff and resources would help ensure that recreation and park areas are clean and well maintained, code violations are addressed, crime and illegal dumping are reduced, and additional sheriff and fire department staff are available to respond to calls. The Community Benefits Program could also support additional bus routes and public transit in the Delta region. Potential community service investments that include the expansion of community and public services would fall into the community infrastructure investments group. Community service investments for this analysis are not expected to be extensive enough to require the construction of new facilities. Because no new facilities are anticipated as a result of expanded services, few or no environmental impacts would be anticipated. However, the addition of vehicles associated with expanding community services could possibly have environmental effects on air quality and transportation.

The Community Benefits Program could be used to provide satellite internet service in areas where cable or fiber optic internet service is unavailable. Because satellite services do not require additional infrastructure, no environmental effects would be expected.

The Community Benefits Program could be used to support the development of facilities to address homeless encampments in the Delta region. A shelter or encampment could include sanitary and trash facilities, shade structures or temporary shelters, and facilities (including lighting) for staff and security. The shelter or homeless encampment could be sited to avoid affecting sensitive habitat and species and nearby properties or interfering with existing uses. Establishment of a shelter or fenced homeless encampment, depending on location, could have environmental effects related to ground disturbances, visual character and quality, traffic, and air quality.

Once construction of the Delta Conveyance Project is complete, the Community Benefits Program could support the conversion of certain construction roads into dedicated agricultural roads. Impacts associated with the construction of roads and gates would be similar to those as discussed in Section 34.3.1*, Infrastructure Investments*. Gate locks could be placed in such a way that multiple agricultural users could have access to the roads. Because agricultural production is not expected to change as a result of access to “leave-behind” construction roads, there would be no net change in traffic or emissions. Therefore, no environmental impacts would be expected as a result of the conversion of construction roads to dedicated agricultural roads.

34.3.3.1 Ground Disturbances

Establishment of a shelter or homeless encampment could require grading and excavation. It is expected that ground disturbances would be small in scale but could result in impacts on soils and mineral, cultural, and paleontological resources, as discussed in Section 34.3.1. Construction impacts could be mitigated by selecting a site that is already graded and, if possible, already improved with impervious surfaces.

34.3.3.2 Visual Character and Quality

Depending on location, the development of a shelter or homeless encampment could have adverse effects on the visual character and quality of the area. Depending on the exact location and type of facility established, these facilities alter the existing visual character and quality for residents, businesses, roadway uses, and recreationalists, such that it may be considered a substantial degradation. Establishment of a shelter or encampment could create a new source of light or glare, which could adversely affect views in the area. Impacts on visual resources could be avoided through careful siting and design considerations of potential projects. However, even with mitigation, it is possible that impacts on visual character and quality could be substantial.

34.3.3.3 Noise

Operation of heavy equipment associated with construction activities, such as excavation, grading, and haul trucks, would result in a temporary increase in noise. Noise from equipment would have the potential to expose sensitive receptors (e.g., residences, outdoor parks, schools, agricultural areas) and noise-sensitive land uses (e.g., recreational areas, places of worship, libraries, hospitals).

Implementation of construction best management practices, a noise abatement plan, and site-specific noise abatement measures could minimize and reduce temporary noise-related effects on sensitive receptors and noise-sensitive land uses. Permanent changes to noise levels could occur as a result of additional bus routes, garbage routes, or homeless camps but would not be expected to be substantial.

34.3.3.4 Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases

Operation of heavy equipment associated with construction activities such as excavation, grading, and haul trucks could generate emissions of pollutants, such as ozone precursors (reactive organic gases and nitrogen oxides), carbon monoxide, particulate matter 10 microns in diameter or less, particulate matter 2.5 microns in diameter or less, and sulfur dioxide. Additional vehicles to support increased law enforcement and fire protection staff, additional garbage collection and bus services, and staff and delivery vehicle trips to a homeless shelter or encampment could also generate additional emissions or greenhouse gases. Should these emissions exceed the applicable air district thresholds or federal *de minimis* thresholds, the exceedance could be considered a substantial impact on air quality.

Vehicles expected to be used for these activities could include a small number of heavy-duty trucks but are likely to be midsized trucks and passenger vehicles, with some relying on gasoline, some on diesel, some on natural gas, and some on electricity. The number of additional vehicle and truck trips associated with these activities is likely small relative to current and anticipated vehicle trips in the Delta region. It is unlikely that an increase in vehicle emissions as a result of increased community services would exceed regional air district thresholds.

34.3.3.5 Traffic

Increased traffic volumes could result from an increase in community services. Additional vehicle miles traveled (VMT) associated with an increase in law enforcement and fire protection staff, additional garbage collection and bus services, and staff and delivery vehicle trips to a homeless shelter or encampment could increase congestion on some roadways. However, the additional traffic expected from these activities would likely be small relative to current and anticipated traffic volumes.

34.3.4 Habitat Conservation and Land Transfers or Acquisitions

The Community Benefits Program could support actions that conserve or restore habitat or otherwise improve habitat conditions for aquatic and terrestrial species that rely on the Delta. Activities could include the following.

- Protection of golden eagle habitat in the hills behind Clifton Court.
- Funding to farmers to convert some of their land to habitat, in conjunction with the Natural Resources Conservation Service.
- Incentivizing of wildlife-friendly agriculture.
- Support efforts to convert agricultural land to habitat or other use that could participate in carbon markets.

The Community Benefits Program could also support actions to acquire easements for habitat, agricultural, or cultural preservation, including the following.

- Wildlife easements.
- Land acquisition and purchase easements essential to connect the refuge habitats throughout the Delta.
- Land acquisition to protect habitat from urban encroachment.
- Funding for easements for a greater variety of habitat types than are funded by the Natural Resources Conservation Service Wetlands Reserve Program.
- Land and easement purchase to preserve agricultural lands
- Financing for abandoned lands.
- Land purchase for history and culture.

The primary effect of habitat conservation and land acquisitions and transfers would be that land currently used for agriculture could be converted to open space to provide habitat for both terrestrial and aquatic species, including new wetlands. This type of land acquisition and transfer may include management activities such as the flooding of agricultural fields to support habitat for targeted species. Potential impacts due to implementation of the non-construction activities, including easements for farmers to convert some of their land to habitat, incentivizing wildlife-friendly agriculture, and providing assistance with conversion to agriculture that can participate in carbon markets are described below.

Altered drainage patterns and water quality conversion of agricultural land to habitat could include seasonal flooding to support habitat for targeted species. These types of management activities could alter existing drainage patterns and could result in local (i.e., on-site) ponding, erosion and siltation, and changes in runoff flow rates and velocities. Development of erosion and sediment control plans would avoid or minimize erosion and siltation effects, and implementation of measures to reduce runoff and sedimentation would prevent an increase in runoff volume and rate. Discharge of drainage water from seasonal flooding could result in contaminants to surface waters or disturb existing bioaccumulative constituents such as mercury and selenium. The development and implementation of erosion and sediment control plans, as part of required mitigation, and compliance with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System and Regional Water Quality Control Board permit requirements would likely reduce or avoid effects on water quality. With mitigation, impacts associated with altered drainage patterns and water quality are unlikely to be substantial.

34.3.4.1 Visual Character and Quality

The visual landscape of the Delta region is a combination of undeveloped islands and low-lying tracts of land surrounded by waterways and levees with pastoral lands, industrial agricultural facilities, and rural development. Changes to the visual character and quality from protecting existing habitat, changing agricultural crops, and converting some agricultural land to habitat, could have beneficial effects on the visual character and quality of the Delta. Agricultural crops are often changed in response to changing markets, climate, and availability of resources. Protecting existing habitat could enhance the visual character, and changing some agricultural uses to habitat would be consistent with existing land uses in the Delta.

34.3.4.2 Aquatic Biological Resources

Implementation of the non-construction activities, including easements for farmers to convert some of their land to habitat, incentivizing wildlife-friendly agriculture, and providing assistance with conversion to agriculture that can participate in carbon markets, would be expected to have beneficial effects on aquatic biological resources, by increasing protecting exiting habitat or increasing the availability of habitat.

Land transfers could result in the conversion of land to aquatic habitat; converted land is expected to be low-quality habitat before conversion and little to no impact on aquatic species would be expected. If an increase in aquatic habitat occurs through the development of additional wetlands and riparian habitat, this creation of new or improved aquatic habitat could result in beneficial effects on native fishes and other aquatic special-status species.

34.3.4.3 Terrestrial Biological Resources

Implementation of non-construction activities, including easements for farmers to convert some of their land to habitat, incentivizing wildlife-friendly agriculture, and providing assistance with conversion to agriculture that can participate in carbon markets, would all likely be beneficial for terrestrial biological resources.

Land transfers could result in the conversion of land to terrestrial habitat for wildlife species; converted land is expected to be low-quality habitat before conversion and little to no impact on terrestrial species would be expected. If an increase in terrestrial habitat occurs through conversion

of agricultural or open space lands, this creation of new or improved habitat could result in beneficial effects on native wildlife and special-status species.

34.3.4.4 Public Health

Implementation of the non-construction activities, including easements for farmers to convert some of their land to habitat, incentivizing wildlife-friendly agriculture, providing assistance with conversion to agriculture that can participate in carbon markets, and facilitating land transfers and acquisitions, could result in an increase in the surface area of water in the study area as a result of management action, including potential flooding of previously dry fields to support habitat for targeted species. This increase in the surface area of water in the Delta could potentially increase the amount of mosquito breeding habitat, which could have an adverse effect on public health. These effects could be avoided or minimized by designing areas to allow for water to flow through the new habitat, thus reducing the potential for standing water. Where standing water is still present, mitigation could include coordinating with local vector control districts regarding appropriate measures to reduce mosquito populations.

34.3.4.5 Agricultural Resources

Implementation of non-construction activities, including easements for farmers to convert some of their land to habitat, incentivizing wildlife-friendly agriculture, and providing assistance with conversion to agriculture that can participate in carbon markets, could result in conversion of Important Farmland. These impacts could be avoided and minimized by siting actions, where available and feasible, on lower-quality farmland.

These actions could result in conversion of Important Farmland, which would be considered a substantial impact. These impacts could be avoided and minimized by selecting locations, where available and feasible, on lower-quality farmland.

34.3.5 Tourism Investments

The Community Benefits Program could be used to support activities that would promote tourism and to strengthen the economy of the Delta region. Activities could include the following.

- Economic development to increase tourism (recreation, eco-tourism, and agritourism).
- Marketing efforts to increase tourism.

Increasing tourism in the Delta could result in increased motor vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic and needs for additional services and utilities and housing and potentially result in an increase in population. Increasing tourism could also result in the need for new facilities, which could result in changes in land use. Construction that would result from an increase in tourism would result in impacts on ground disturbance, visual character and quality, biological resources, noise, and air quality similar to those discussed in Section 34.3.1 and are not discussed further here.

34.3.5.1 Traffic

Increasing tourism in the Delta could result in increased motor vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic. Depending on location, potential adverse traffic impacts would likely be localized but could have a substantial effect on regional roadway, capacity, or traffic patterns. Development of site-specific construction traffic plans and demand management plans could reduce potential traffic

impacts. In addition, traffic impacts could be mitigated to some extent by increasing public transit, encouraging tourists to park and ride via van or bus to multiple locations, and entering into agreements to modify roadways and intersections to allow for greater volumes of traffic. Increasing tourism could also result in increased bicycle and pedestrian traffic in the Delta and increased conflicts with motor vehicles; this impact could be mitigated in part by enhancing bicycle and pedestrian trails and signage.

34.3.5.2 Public Services and Utilities

Increasing tourism could result in the need for additional facilities in the Delta; these facilities could have impacts on public services and utilities, such as solid waste management, water and wastewater management, water supply and water treatment, electricity and natural gas utilities, and communications utilities. Depending on location, construction of new tourism-focused facilities could substantially affect public utility facilities that are located underground or aboveground along the local roadways or that intersect with major infrastructure components, such as bridges or overpasses, requiring relocation of the components. These types of actions could also require the expansion of electrical or natural gas transmission or distribution systems, new or expanded stormwater drainage facilities, or expansion of communications facilities (telephone, cell phone, cable). These actions, along with increased numbers of tourists in the Delta, could also create an increased need for new fire protection, police protection, or ambulance services or facilities.

Potential impacts on water supply and wastewater managers, electric and gas utility providers, and communications service providers could be avoided or minimized through coordination with public service and utility providers and site-specific avoidance measures. Additional mitigation could include the relocation or construction of new or expanded facilities. Even with mitigation, if actions result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded facilities, impacts may be substantial. If actions result in an increase in fire protection, police protection, or ambulance services such that new or physically altered facilities would be necessary, impacts may be substantial.

34.3.5.3 Land Use

If increased tourism results in the need for new facilities or housing, this increase could result in changes to land use in the region. Because much of the open space in the Delta is currently used for agriculture, construction of tourism facilities and new housing could result in conversion of agricultural land uses. Where facilities could be constructed within existing communities, it is unlikely that they would be inconsistent with current land uses and plans. Where available and feasible, lower-quality farmland or farmland with lower habitat values could be chosen to reduce or avoid impacts to Important Farmland. However, even with mitigation, impacts may be substantial.

34.3.5.4 Population and Housing

Increased tourism could create more jobs in the Delta, which could result in population growth that is not currently planned in the Delta region. This growth could result in the need for more housing in the Delta, which may not always be consistent with local land use policies. Development of new housing could also have impacts on public services and utilities, such as solid waste management, water and wastewater management, water supply and water treatment, electricity and natural gas utilities, and communications utilities.

Depending on location, construction of new housing could adversely affect public utility facilities that are located underground or aboveground in areas that are already developed. New housing could require the expansion of electrical or natural gas transmission or distribution systems, new or expanded stormwater drainage facilities, or expansion of communications facilities (telephone, cell phone, cable). Additional housing and population could also create an increased need for new fire protection, police protection, or ambulance services or facilities.

Potential impacts on water supply and wastewater managers, electric and gas utility providers, and communications service providers could be avoided or minimized through coordination with public service and utility providers and site-specific avoidance measures. Additional mitigation could include the relocation of construction of new or expanded facilities. Even with mitigation, if projects result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded facilities, impacts may be substantial. If actions result in an increase in fire protection, police protection, or ambulance services such that new or physically altered facilities would be necessary, impacts may be substantial.