

### 5.8.1 OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY

*This section evaluates impacts of the implementation of the proposed Master Plan Update on existing recreational facilities including improvements proposed for the construction and operation of new wells and a water treatment plant. Construction of the proposed wells along the Santa Ynez River and the water treatment plant within Alisal Commons could pose temporary safety impacts to recreation users. These potentially significant impacts would be reduced to less than significant with the proposed mitigation measures (Class II). All other impacts are less than significant (Class III).*

### 5.8.2 DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

Policies from the City's General Plan Parks and Recreation Element<sup>1</sup> were used to evaluate impacts on recreational facilities.

### 5.8.3 APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

#### 5.8.3.1 Local Regulations

##### *City of Solvang*

###### **General Plan**

The City's General Plan sets forth the City's goals and policies for development. The *Parks and Recreation Element*<sup>2</sup> sets forth the City's goals and policies with respect to recreation. The following goals, policies, and actions from the General Plan are relevant to recreation from the proposed project:

Goal 1:                               The Solvang Parks and Recreation Department will strive to create and maintain a parks and recreation system which provides important environmental, social, personal, and economic benefits central to the City's residents.

Policy 1.1:                           The Solvang Parks and Recreation Department is committed to providing and/or facilitating quality recreational services, including programs, classes, special events, and facilities to all members of the community in a courteous and efficient manner.

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<sup>1</sup> City of Solvang, *City of Solvang General Plan Parks and Recreation Element* (October 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Goal 2: Provide and maintain park facilities with a range of recreational opportunities for all ages, as close as possible to where people live.

Policy 2.1: Continue to maximize the use of each park facility by creatively adapting the recreation opportunities available, as community needs change and evolve.

## County of Santa Barbara

### *Comprehensive Plan Open Space Element*

The Open Space Element<sup>3</sup> of the County of Santa Barbara Comprehensive Plan identifies parks and recreation, recreation trails, and scenic highway corridors as important open space for outdoor recreation. The Open Space Element describes both archaeological sites and historic sites as recreational open space.

**Archaeological Sites.** Archaeological sites are a non-renewable resource and, according to the Conservation Element, “Archaeologists regard the remaining sites as the non-living equivalent of an endangered species.” In Santa Barbara County, archaeological resources include shell middens, rockshelters, lithic scatters, caves, pictographs, and petroglyphs, each of which represents separate and distinct activities of the aboriginal inhabitants. Unfortunately, many sites have been destroyed and, unless protective actions are taken, existing sites are also in jeopardy, either from the depredation by vandals and souvenir collectors or the unintentionally destructive acts of developers.

**Historic Sites.** Similar to archaeological sites, historic sites provide cultural links with the past, and are classified as Open Space for Outdoor Recreation.

### *Santa Ynez Valley Community Plan*

The Santa Ynez Valley Community Plan establishes goals and policies for recreation, including parks and trails.<sup>4</sup> The following goal and policies are listed in the Plan:

GOAL PRT-SYV: Protect and provide public recreational opportunities for residents and visitors, consistent with the goals and policies of the County Open Space and Agricultural Elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

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<sup>3</sup> County of Santa Barbara, Comprehensive Plan, Open Space Element, adopted May 1979, republished May 2009, p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> County of Santa Barbara, Santa Ynez Valley Community Plan, adopted October 6, 2009, pp. 98 to 108.

- Policy PRT-SYV-1: The County shall strive to provide new recreation and park facilities and new trails. New trails shall be limited to non-motorized vehicle use and shall be considered on public and private property including public roads.
- Policy PRT-SYV-2: All trails developed by and/or dedicated to the County shall be multi-use (hiking, cycling, equestrian).
- Policy PRT-SYV-3: The County shall ensure that trails provide users with a recreational experience appropriate to the quiet, rural nature of the area.

#### 5.8.4 EXISTING CONDITIONS

The proposed Additional Reach of Diversion would allow water supply to be withdrawn from the Santa Ynez River, downstream of the Alisal Bridge for approximately 1.5 miles. The proposed well installation sites are within this area and are adjacent to the Santa Ynez River. Suburban density residential development and agricultural uses lie immediately to the north of the proposed well locations.

The area proposed for construction of a water treatment plant is located within the Alisal Commons open space area, west of Alisal Road. Existing suburban density residential development lies to the west and north; a golf course lies to the east, across Alisal Road; and the Santa Ynez River lies to the south.

Other features of the proposed Master Plan Update would be constructed throughout the City and vicinity, as shown on **Figure 2.0-3, City of Solvang Water System**. Recreational resources for residents in the City consist of local and regional parks in the Santa Ynez Valley under City, County, and State jurisdiction. The City is generally considered the hub of the Valley community and provides recreational opportunities for users all over the Santa Ynez Valley. Hans Christian Andersen Park and Sunny Fields Park are the primary parks in Solvang used by Valley residents. As of 2008, the City maintains about 60 acres of neighborhood and community parks.

#### *Existing City Parks*

The following information regarding City parks is based on the City's Parks and Recreation Element of the City of Solvang General Plan.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> City of Solvang, *City of Solvang General Plan Parks and Recreation Element* (October 2009).

### **Alisal Commons**

Alisal Commons is a passive use area that encompasses 2-acres of gently sloping land adjacent to Alisal Road overlooking the Santa Ynez River and Alisal Ranch Property. A pedestrian path runs from Alisal Road to Glen Way. The area is landscaped with drought tolerant plants and a drinking fountain. The proposed water treatment facility site is located within this area. The location of this facility, including the existing trail, is shown on **Figure 2.0-9, Proposed Water Treatment Plant Location**.

### **Hans Christian Andersen Park**

The Hans Christian Anderson Park is 50+-acre day-use Park is bounded by Chalk Hill road to the north and State Highway 246 to the south. The park is located 0.4 mile from the center of town and is within walking distance from Solvang Elementary School. Current facilities include four standard tennis courts, an equestrian trail, one main playground and a smaller, secondary playground, a passive play area, horseshoe pits, picnic areas, and restrooms. A skate park and additional parking spaces were added in 2006. The Park offers a unique interaction with the natural landscape through distinct topography and riparian habitat of Adobe Creek consisting of oak woodland and coastal scrub communities. Approximately 48 percent of the city is within half a mile-walking radius from Hans Christian Andersen Park.

### **Solvang Park**

The 1.14-acre Solvang Park is centrally located on Mission Drive (State Highway 246) between First Street and Park Way. The park features a bandstand, sheltered picnic areas with tables and benches, a restroom, the City Christmas tree, open lawn, and small open play area.

### **Sunny Fields Park**

The 6.2-acre Sunny Fields Park was annexed into the City in 2005. The site is in the northeast portion of the city on Alamo Pintado Road. The neighborhood park includes a softball field, large open grass area, a playground, picnic areas, a horseshoe pit, restrooms, parking and walking trails.

### **Other Recreational Facilities and Potential Future Parks**

Other recreational facilities in the City include open space areas and privately owned recreation lands. Privately owned recreation lands include the Alisal Golf Course and Ranch Resort (10,000 acres), Mission Meadows Open Space (4.22 acres), and Nyborg Estates and Recreation Area.

The City maintains a potential park and facility project list that is regularly updated and prioritized with input from the community. The current potential park list includes improvement of bicycle and pedestrian circulation along Alisal Road southbound over the Santa Ynez Bridge with Class I or Class II bike lane and pedestrian path. Other potential parks include a community garden, equestrian trail improvements along Adobe Creek, pocket parks south of Mission Drive, and trail improvements within Hans Christen Anderson Park.

The City's Parks and Recreation Element also defines special places within the City. According to the City riparian open spaces along the Santa Ynez River, Alisal Creek, Adobe Creek, Alamo Pintado Creek and other locations are unique assets in the City that can enrich the lives of residents, protect sensitive natural resources, and draw visitors to the area.

Existing bicycle paths in the City include State Highway 246, Alamo Pintado Road, Chalk Hill Road, and sections of Alisal Road.<sup>6</sup>

### *Parks in Santa Ynez Valley Community Area*

The nearest County park to the City is the Santa Ynez Park, approximately 2 acres within the Santa Ynez Township, east of the City along State Route 246. Recreational opportunities in the Santa Ynez Park include picnic and barbecue areas, horseshoe pits, playground equipment, open grass areas, and a sand volleyball court. In addition, two active use parks are located in the City of Buellton, including the 3.5-acre Oak Park, and 10-acre River View Park.<sup>7</sup> Regional parks include future Santa Ines Mission Mills State Park, Nojoqui Falls County Park, Santa Ynez County Park, Santa Rosa County Park, and Cachuma Lake Recreation Area, and comprise about 9,100 acres.

#### **5.8.5 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

In order to assist in determining whether a project would have a significant effect on the environment, the *California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines* identify criteria for conditions that may be deemed to constitute a substantial or potentially substantial adverse change in physical conditions.

Specifically, Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines* (Environmental Checklist Form) lists the following threshold, under which a project may be deemed to have a significant impact on recreation if it would:

- Substantially damage recreational resources or facilities.
- Result in a substantial reduction in recreational use or activities.

<sup>6</sup> Santa Barbara County Association of Governments, *Draft Regional Bicycle Plan* (April 2008).

<sup>7</sup> County of Santa Barbara, *Santa Ynez Community Plan EIR*, (October 2009).

## 5.8.6 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The environmental impact analysis presented below is based on determinations made in the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for issues that were determined to be potentially significant with mitigation incorporated, or for issues identified by reviewing agencies, organizations, or individuals commenting on the NOP that made a reasonable argument that the issue was potentially significant (see Responses to NOP, **Appendix 1.0**).

### 5.8.6.1 Substantially damage recreational resources or facilities.

#### *Impacts*

##### **Construction**

##### *Master Plan Update*

Implementation of the proposed Master Plan Update would result in the construction of new water facilities, a water treatment facility, and planned storage facilities for the City's water distribution system that could take place within areas identified for existing and future recreational uses. If facilities under the Master Plan Update are constructed within recreational areas, construction activities under the Master Plan Update could cause damage to these resources. Construction impacts to recreational resources could include aesthetics, noise, and air quality. Construction activities under the Master Plan Update would be typically short in duration. For instance, several hundred feet of pipeline can be constructed within one day, and construction projects typically last one week. Given the temporary nature of construction activities under the Master Plan Update, construction impacts would be less than significant.

##### *Proposed Wells and Water Treatment Facility*

As part of the Master Plan Update, the City proposes to install new wells to withdraw groundwater along the Santa Ynez River in Wells Sites A and B (see **Figure 2.0-5**). The proposed well sites are not located within or near existing recreation facilities, and therefore they would not substantially damage any such facilities. There would be no impact.

The proposed water treatment facility would be constructed within the Alisal Commons area and would be sited on the existing pedestrian path, which would prevent use of the path for recreational use. As part of the proposed project, the pedestrian path would be relocated, which would reduce the project's potential to damage this recreational resource. In addition, the potential construction impacts associated with the proposed water treatment facility in the Alisal Commons area are analyzed throughout this EIR. The impact would be less than significant.

### *Water Right Permit*

The proposed water right Permit 15878 would allow the Existing Reach of Diversion to extend downstream of Alisal Bridge to include the Additional Reach of Diversion as shown on **Figure 2.0-4** for approximately 1.5 miles, which could result in installation of wells in more areas adjacent to the Santa Ynez River.

The proposed changes to water right Permit 15878 would also allow for continued pumping of groundwater up to a maximum rate of 5 cubic feet per second (cfs); however, according to modeling by Stetson Engineers and presented in **Appendix 5.1**, the continued groundwater pumping would not have a substantial effect on surface flows. To the extent that the pumping could indirectly affect other areas used for fishing, those impacts are evaluated in **Section 5.3, Fisheries Resources**. Impacts would be less than significant.

### **Operation**

Implementation of the proposed Master Plan Update would not directly result in short-term or long-term growth in the City's water service area, and therefore, it would not directly increase the use of recreational facilities. Implementation of the proposed Master Plan Update could result in construction of facilities within recreational areas such as the Alisal Commons open space area. The operational impacts associated with the proposed Master Plan Update, including the proposed wells and water treatment plant, are analyzed throughout this EIR. With implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, potential operational impacts to the environment would be reduced to less than significant.

### *Mitigation Measures*

No mitigation measure is required.

### *Residual Impacts*

Impacts would be less than significant (Class III).

### **5.8.7.2 Result in a substantial reduction in recreational use or activities.**

### *Impacts*

#### **Construction**

The proposed project would result in the construction of new water facilities (including wells and pipelines), a water treatment facility, and planned storage facilities for the City's water distribution

system. To the extent that construction activities would take place in or near existing recreation areas, closure of some areas may be required. Although the trail and park closures would be temporary and limited in area, construction activities could result in temporary public access impacts. Although a temporary inconvenience, impacts to recreational amenities during construction would be less than significant.

As part of the Master Plan Update, the City proposes to install new wells to withdraw groundwater along the Santa Ynez River in Wells Sites A and B (see **Figure 2.0-5**). Well installation would require drilling equipment adjacent to the Santa Ynez River, which is considered a recreational area. However, the installation of each well would take only five days and the area of construction would be limited to a relatively small area. Construction activities could pose a safety threat to potential recreational users of the river; the impact would be potentially significant.

The proposed water treatment plant site would involve construction activities within Alisal Commons open space area. The construction activities would include a staging adjacent to the proposed plant site where equipment and materials would be stored. Construction activities would occur over a nine-month period, during which the public would not have full access to the existing pedestrian trails or entire open space area. The potential for public to encounter hazards during construction in the Alisal Commons open space area and trails represents a potentially significant impact.

The proposed Additional Reach of Diversion would result in the modification of the City's existing water right Permit 15878 to extend the Existing Reach of Diversion to include areas downstream of Alisal Bridge, as shown in **Figure 2.0-4, Existing and Proposed Diversion Reaches**. Changes to the water right Permit 15878's Existing Reach of Diversion would not affect any recreational uses within the City. There would be no impact.

There are no recreational facilities within unincorporated areas of the County that would be impacted by any of the proposed components of the Water System Master Plan Update. There would be no impact.

### **Operation**

The proposed Master Plan Update would also result in the construction of new water facilities and planned storage facilities for the City's water distribution system. If any of these facilities are located within areas designated by the City for recreational use, operation of the facilities could reduce use of these areas for recreation. However, the structures to be constructed under the proposed project would be limited in size and the operation of the facilities would not preclude the use of parks and open space.

The proposed Master Plan Update provides for new wells that would be located adjacent to the Santa Ynez River in Wells Sites A and B downstream of Alisal Bridge. Depending upon the final location of these individual wells, they could intrude into recreational areas along the Santa Ynez River that are used for passive recreation purposes. However, each well would be located within an approximate 10-foot by 10-foot fenced enclosure, which would not preclude the use of the river areas for recreational enjoyment. The impacts of the proposed wells would be less than significant.

The proposed water treatment plant would comprise about 0.05 acre of area or 3 percent of the 2-acre Alisal Commons open space area and would displace some of the existing pathways that access the area. Although the new water treatment facility would displace the existing pedestrian path, the path would be relocated as part of the project and operation of the facility would not preclude use of this path for passive recreational use in the long-term. Therefore, operation of the proposed water treatment plant would not result in a substantial reduction in the use of the Alisal Commons open space area for recreation. Impacts would be less than significant.

The proposed Additional Reach of Diversion as shown on **Figure 2.0-4** would result in the operation of additional wells downstream of the Existing Reach of Diversion as provided for in water right Permit 15878. The Additional Reach of Diversion downstream of Alisal Bridge would have no impact on recreational uses.

### ***Mitigation Measures***

The following mitigation measures shall be implemented:

- REC-1**            The City shall require implementation of public safety measures in designated parks, open space and recreational areas during construction including:
- Construction signs shall be posted at construction work sites to alert the public of construction activities, and
  - Safety fencing shall be installed around the perimeter of the staging area(s) and construction zone(s) to prevent recreational users and pedestrians from accessing the area(s). If fencing a portion of a designated park, open space or recreational area for construction and/or staging is not feasible, the park, open space or recreational area shall be closed for the duration of construction until all equipment and materials are removed and the site is inspected by the City to determine its ability to be designated safe for recreation uses.

### ***Residual Impacts***

Residual impacts would be less than significant with mitigation (Class II).

## **5.8.7 CUMULATIVE ANALYSIS**

### **Cumulative Impacts**

The cumulative context for the evaluation of potential cumulative impacts on recreation is the Santa Ynez Valley. Growth in the City of Solvang and the Santa Ynez Valley would increase the demand for recreational areas and facilities, which could lead to the degradation of facilities and require construction and allocation of new facilities.

The proposed project would result in temporary impacts related to construction within recreational areas in the City and within unincorporated Santa Barbara County areas, but would not have a substantial effect on long term use of recreational areas. The proposed project would not result in any population growth that could contribute to demands for recreational areas. Therefore, the project would not contribute to any cumulative use of recreational facilities and the cumulative impact would not be considerable.

### **Cumulative Mitigation Measures**

No mitigation is required.

### **Residual Cumulative Impacts**

Impacts would be less than significant (Class III).