

4.14 Recreation

4.14.1 Introduction

This section discusses recreational resources that could be affected by the proposed program. The recreation analysis focuses on recreational opportunities within state parks, public and private trails, and other recreational facilities. The VTP program has the potential to operate on state parks and has the potential to affect recreational use. Similar fuel reduction and other vegetation management projects are likely to occur on federally managed public lands that also support recreation.

Outdoor recreation is an important attribute for all public forests and rangelands as well as some private forest and rangelands in California. In addition to the scenic value of these lands, various types of outdoor recreation on forests and rangelands are a significant component of the quality of life for many Californians and a major attraction for many out-of-state visitors. With over half of all land in California in public ownership and available for recreation, California has a wide array of opportunities.

4.14.2 Extent of Area Available for Recreation

The major suppliers of outdoor recreation on forests and rangelands in California include the USFS, the National Park Service (NPS), U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), California State Park System, and local governments. Other minor public providers include the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), public utility companies, and various departments of the California Resources Agency. Local, county, and regional providers are another source for wildland outdoor recreation but the boundaries between wildland recreation and urbanized recreation become hard to define. With urban areas containing over 81 percent of the California's population, these local areas are a dominant provider of recreation, especially open space aesthetics. Table 4.14.1 provides a summary of area available for wildland recreation by bioregion.

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Table 4.14.1 Public Land Available for Wildland Recreation (thousands acres)							
Bioregion	Forest	Woodland	Grassland	Shrub	Desert	Interior water bodies and wetlands	Total
Bay Area/Delta	107	62	89	122	(L)	69	524
Central Coast	253	531	281	1,392		63	2,552
Colorado Desert	4	74	56	195	4,006	217	4,569
Modoc	1,620	547	59	2,155	61	15	4,807
Mojave	31	475	62	347	14,455	89	15,880
Klamath/North Coast	5,522	97	74	982		39	6,858
Sacramento Valley	3	28	61	7		25	171
San Joaquin Valley	21	66	308	42	50	233	558
Sierra	6,349	768	211	2,295		28	11,839
South Coast	452	152	97	1,595		22	2,460
Statewide	14,362	2,800	1,297	9,131	18,572	799	50,218

4.14.3 Use of Recreational Areas

Table 4.14.2 provides a summary of recreational use by land management category. In terms of visits, the State and regional parks account for approximately two-thirds of all outdoor recreation visits on public lands; however, these same parks only make up four percent of the total public land available for outdoor recreation. With the exception of the large Yosemite and Sequoia-Kings Canyon Parks in the Sierra, most visits to National Parks are only partial day visits and have similar use patterns to State and regional parks. The USFS, along with the two large National Parks in the Sierra, supply the largest land base for multi-day outdoor recreational activities. BLM has the second largest holding of lands open for recreation, the majority of which are in desert areas. BLM is also expanding the range of recreational opportunities available on its holdings along rivers and coastlines. In terms of where outdoor wildland recreational activities occur, 50 percent of all visits and 40 percent of all hours of use occur on 13 percent of public land adjacent to major metropolitan areas.

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Table 4.14.2 Visits*, Recreational Visitor Days**, and Area by Public Outdoor Recreation Provider				
Major providers	Million acres	Million visits	Estimated RVD per visit	Million RVDs
NPS – rest of state	7.1	20	0.6	12
National Park Service - GGNRA	0.1	14	0.4	5.6
U.S Bureau of Land Management	15	8	1.5	12
U.S. Forest Service - rural national forests	15	21	4.4	92.4
U.S. Forest Service - metro national forests	5	7	1.2	44.4
California Department of Fish and Game	1	1.2	1	1.2
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service- National Wildlife Refuge	0.4	1	1	1
California State Parks	1.1	39.8	0.75	29.9
California State Parks - Southern California beaches V/LA/O/SD	0.05	17.8	0.4	7.1
California State Parks - other beaches	0.1	7.8	0.4	3.1
East Bay Regional Park District	0.1	14	0.4	5.6

* "Visits" refers to a single trip by a person regardless of length of stay.

** "Recreational Visitor Day" (RVD) is a visit by one person for a 12-hour length of stay

BLM – U.S. Bureau of Land Management; DFG – California Department of Fish and Game; NPS – National Park Service; NWR – National Wildlife Refuge; RVD – recreation visitor day; USFS – U.S. Forest Service

Source: Compiled by FRAP from NPS, 2010; USFS, 2010; DFG, 2010; California Department of Parks and Recreation, 2010

The forest and rangeland bioregions account for 52 percent of California's total developed campgrounds inventory. Among forest and rangeland bioregions, the Klamath/North Coast is the most heavily privatized region with private campgrounds comprising 75 percent of the total developed campground inventory. The Sierra, Modoc, and Central Coast have the highest ratios of public developed campsites of the bioregions within California. The Sierra bioregion led all bioregions with 30,500 developed campsites. The North Coast bioregion followed with 17,196 developed campsites (Dean Runyan Associates, 2000b).

In reviewing Table 4.14.3, the importance of private campground providers is apparent. Private campgrounds account for 63 percent of all developed campsites in California and nearly 55 percent of all developed campsites found in the major forest and rangeland bioregions (Dean Runyan Associates, 2000b).

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Table 4.14.3
Percent of Ownership of Campgrounds, By Bioregion 2001-2009

Bioregion	Private	City-County	State Parks	BLM	COE	RCLM	USFS	NPS	Utilities	Total
Bay /Delta	71	9	20							100
Central Coast	49	10	24		7		9	1		100
Klamath/Nort	75	4	14	< 1	2		4	1	< 1	100
Modoc	55		5	1			32	4	3	100
Sierra	42	5	6	1	4	1	32	9	1	100
Statewide	63	6	10	1	2	< 1	13	4	< 1	100

COE – Army Corps of Engineers; BLM – U.S. Bureau of Land Management; NPS – National Park Service; USFS – U.S. Forest Service; BOR-Bureau of Reclamation

Notes: Inventory refers to developed campsites only. However, services provided at developed campsites vary. Regions were allocated into California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection bioregions and are as follows: Bay/Delta includes San Francisco Bay Area region, North Coast includes Klamath/North Coast region, Modoc includes Shasta-Cascade region, and Sierra includes Gold Country and High Sierra regions.

The proximity of the recreational area to major cities is another factor that can greatly affect usage. Table 4.14.4 shows the dramatic difference in recreation use when wildland parks are located near a major urban center. Annual visitors per acre to Muir Woods are nearly ten times greater than the visit intensity at Armstrong Redwoods State Park which is only 80 miles from the San Francisco Bay Area. With the San Francisco Bay Area only 20 miles away, Muir Woods has the largest annual visitation of 1.3 million visitors and the smallest amount of acres for redwood parks located near the San Francisco Bay Area.

Table 4.14.4
Use per Acre for Selected Redwood Parks

Selected Redwood Parks	Acres	Annual visitors 2009/10	Annual visitors per acre	Miles from San Francisco Bay Area
Muir Woods	549	1,311,000	2,388.0	20
Armstrong Redwoods	752	668,568	889.1	80
Samuel P. Taylor	2707	129,967	48.0	40
Henry Cowell Redwoods	4,376	292,000	66.7	50
Big Basin	17,478	907,000	51.9	40
Jedediah Smith Redwoods	10,165	177,000	17.4	400
Del Norte Coast Redwoods	6,325	43330	6.9	380
Humboldt	53,672	399260	7.4	210
Redwood National Park	80,665	418,820	5.2	340

Source: Compiled by FRAP from California Department of Parks and Recreation, 2010; NPS, 2010

4.14.4 Description of Recreation Provided by Land Ownership

The following section describes the extent of land available for recreation on state, federal, local government, and private lands. Additional information on visitation and usage is provided as well.

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California Department of Parks and Recreation

The State Park system encompasses over 1.4 million acres of land and consists of 277 parks and recreational areas. Of primary concern are the State Parks located in natural and wild land geographic settings associated with forest and rangeland ecosystems. Just over half (139) of the parks can be considered to have wildland settings with forest and rangeland vegetation. The number of forest and rangeland parks and associated facilities has remained relatively stable over the last ten years. Table 4.14.5 identifies representative state parks, located within each geographic region that could be included in the proposed program.

**Table 4.14.5
Representative State Parks in Geographic Regions Included in the Proposed Program**

<u>State Park</u>	<u>Size (acres)</u>	<u>Activities</u>
North Coast		
Humboldt Redwoods State Park	51,000	Hiking, horseback riding, camping, and picnicking
Big Basin Redwoods State Park	18,200	Hiking, camping, and picnicking
Annadel State Park	4,920	Hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, and picnicking
Central Coast		
Henry Coe State Park	79,500	Hiking, backpacking, camping, picnicking, horseback riding, and fishing
Mt. Diablo State Park	17,000	Hiking, horseback riding, camping, and picnicking
Shasta/Sierra		
Calaveras Big Trees State Park	6,500	Camping, hiking, and picnicking
Yuba River Project	7,500	Hiking, picnicking, gold panning, and kayaking
D. L. Bliss	1,596	Camping, hiking, and picnicking
Auburn State Recreation Area	42,000	River rafting, kayaking, hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, and off-road vehicle activities
South Coast		
Cuyamaca Rancho State Park	24,600	Camping, hiking, horseback riding, and picnicking

Table 4.14.6 summarizes wildland park use within the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) system. Wildland parks (those selected by FRAP to be located within forests and rangelands) use was estimated at just over 89 million visits in 2009. Visits to State Parks remained stable between 2001 and 2009.

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**Table 4.14.6
Visits* on Selected California Department of Parks and Recreation Parks Considered to be Forests and Rangelands by Bioregion and Statewide, 2001-2009 (thousand visits)**

Bioregion	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Bay Area/Delta	5,468	4,694	4,283	3,496	3,587	3,641	3,753	3,182	2,829
Central Coast	2,236	2,519	2,286	2,254	2,444	2,598	2,439	2,749	1,796
Klamath/North Coast	4,119	374	3,115	2,604	2,498	2,659	2,819	2,869	2,144
Modoc	243	204	190	168	173	186	182	175	164
Mojave	8	8	9	7	8	6	5	3	8
Sierra	1,580	1,594	1,471	1,369	92	116	918	103	908
South Coast	2,246	2,082	1,632	2,091	1,989	2,039	1,265	1,469	1,148
Statewide	15,900	11,475	12,986	11,989	10,791	11,245	11,381	10,550	8,997

* "Visits" refers to a single trip by a person regardless of length of stay.

Source: Compiled by FRAP California Department of Parks and Recreation, 2010

California Department of Fish and Game

The California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) manages over 1 million acres of recreational land, of which land with forest and rangeland settings approximates 600,000 acres and includes bighorn sheep habitat, deer habitat, grassland/upland habitats, special habitats, and threatened and endangered species habitats.

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) manages eight State Forests covering over 71,000 acres. CAL FIRE recreation facilities include over 190 campsites, 58 picnic sites, and two visitor centers. Most utilization of State Forests is categorized as day use; however, nearly all State Forests provide facilities for overnight camping. CAL FIRE expects acquire additional land increasing the number of acres of State Forests.

California State Lands Commission

The California State Lands Commission (CSLC) manages and protects important natural and cultural resources on certain public lands within the state and the public's rights to access these lands. The public lands under the Commission's jurisdiction are of two distinct types—sovereign and school lands. Sovereign lands encompass approximately 4 million acres. These lands include the beds of California's naturally navigable rivers, lakes and streams, as well as the state's tide and submerged lands along the state's more than 1,100 miles of coastline, extending from the shoreline out to three miles offshore. School lands are what remain of the nearly 5.5 million acres throughout the state originally granted to California by the Congress in 1853 to benefit public education. The state retains surface and mineral ownership of approximately 468,600 acres of these school lands

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and retains the mineral rights to an additional 790,000 acres. Today, revenues generated from school lands benefit California's retired teachers.

Conservancies

The main goals of California conservancies are to protect, preserve, and enhance natural habitat corridors while providing public access and unique recreational opportunities to everyone. Conservancies provide recreational opportunities in the form of nature trails, wildlife viewing, and outdoor education. Conservancies are unique in that they provide recreation in biologically diverse areas where maintaining ecological integrity of the area is the most important component for management. The State funds several conservancy programs that acquire land and easements for recreation and habitat protection purposes. The major conservancies related to forest and rangeland recreation include Baldwin Hills Conservancy (1,200 acres), California Tahoe Conservancy (148,000 acres), Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy (1.25 million acres), San Gabriel & Lower Los Angeles Rivers & Mountains Conservancy (569,000 acres), San Joaquin River Conservancy (5,900 acres), Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (17,000 acres) and the State Coastal Conservancy (100,000 acres). The San Diego River Conservancy was established in 2002 and has begun major restoration projects along the San Diego River.

The large acreages refer to the overall area within which the conservancies conduct acquisitions and projects rather than lands owned by the conservancies. Conservancy acreage has been growing since the emergence of the concept in the early 1990s. Recent initiatives will provide considerable additional funding for expanded acquisition and management by conservancies.

City, county, and regional parks and open space districts

Local parks in California, including city parks, were estimated to cover nearly 600,000 acres in the late 1980s. Local parks with wildland settings and forest and rangeland vegetation are only a part of the total 600,000 acres of local parks listed. A portion of these lands, especially city parks, are developed settings with irrigated grass and other developed facilities. Wildland local parks are predominately found in the Bay/Delta, Central Coast, and South Coast bioregions and are particularly prevalent in areas adjacent to the San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego County urban areas. Local park acreage is considerably less extensive in the more rural regions of the State that already have large areas of federal land. The total area of local parks with forest and rangeland settings has not been identified because complete information from all likely providers is not yet summarized.

Private Land

Some private recreation land could be affected by the program. Considerable outdoor recreation occurs on privately owned forests and rangelands. Recent surveys suggests that around half of all owners of non-industrial forest and rangeland properties in the Pacific Coast states (California, Oregon and Washington) allow their land to be used for recreation by their extended family and friends (Teasely et al., 1999). With only 11 percent of private land open to use by anyone, private lands are not a replacement for public lands available for recreation by the general public. With over four million acres of non-industrial forest land and an even larger area in small to medium rangeland parcels in California, private lands still represent a significant portion of the area available for outdoor recreation, especially in areas with limited public land and where potential

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users live in the same communities as the landowners.

U.S. Forest Service

The USFS manages 20 national forests covering over 20 million acres within California. This includes 51 wilderness areas (4.2 million acres), 2,467 lakes and reservoirs, over 13,000 miles of rivers, and 13,400 miles of maintained trails. Developed facilities include 105 marinas, 32 swimming sites, 819 campgrounds, 213 picnic areas, 6,500 recreation areas, 33 ski areas, 65 interpretive sites, and 514 organized camps. These areas span a vast array of recreational opportunities. Table 4.14.7 provides a summary of the most common types of recreation.

Activity	Percent of visitors (metropolitan national forests)	Percent of visitors (Non-metropolitan national forests)	Percent of all visitors
Backpacking	1.7	1.7	1.7
Bicycling	5.2	4.3	4.5
Cross-country Skiing	0.7	4.4	3.5
Developed Camping	5.6	9.3	8.4
Downhill Skiing	19.8	32.2	29.1
Driving for Pleasure	15.1	18.9	18.0
Fishing	6.0	11.3	10.0
Gathering Forest Products	1.8	2.5	2.3
Horseback Riding	0.5	.8	0.7
Hunting	0.8	2.8	2.3
Motorized Trail Activity	4.5	3.1	3.5
Motorized Water Activities	2.7	6.3	5.4
Nature Center Activities	6.8	5.2	5.6
Nature Study	9.0	6.2	6.9
Non-motorized Water	1.0	3.3	2.7
OHV Use	5.9	3.5	4.1
Other Motorized Activity	0.2	11.4	8.6
Other Non-motorized	4.8	11.4	9.8
Picnicking	11.4	10.8	11.0
Primitive Camping	0.9	2.1	1.8
Relaxing	34.6	38.9	37.8
Resort Use	0.6	3.3	2.6
Some Other Activity	9.4	3.9	5.3
Viewing Natural Features	36.7	48.5	45.6
Viewing Wildlife	32.3	34.6	34.0
Visiting Historic Sites	7.7	6.6	6.9
Backpacking	1.7	1.7	1.7
Bicycling	5.2	1.8	2.7
Cross-country Skiing	0.7		0.2

National Park Service

The National Park Service (NPS) includes 23 parks, monuments, recreation areas, and seashores covering over seven million acres. The NPS has parks in all regions of California and collects some of

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the most consistent statistics on number and length of visits. In addition to the large national parks in the Sierra Nevada and the desert, the NPS maintains a number of parks in or adjacent to large urban areas. The Golden Gate National Recreation Area in and around San Francisco is the most visited national park site. Yosemite National Park is one of the most internationally renowned parks of the National Park Service.

U.S. Bureau of Land Management

In the fast-growing west, the demand for outdoor recreational opportunities has soared. This is reflected in the seven percent increase in the estimated recreational visits to U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands, which rose from approximately 50 million visits in 1998 to 54 million visits in fiscal year 2000. As western cities and towns grow closer to formerly remote BLM lands, more domestic visitors and international travelers are turning to these lands as their outdoor recreational playground and as a sanctuary for rest and solitude.

On the 15.2 million acres of BLM lands, nearly all lands are classified as forest, range, or desert. While the BLM has land in nearly every county in California, the geographic concentrations of land are found in the desert and northeast areas. BLM operates 87 developed recreation sites with 2,256 campsites, 160 picnic sites, and two boat ramps. Lands administered by the BLM are a major source of off-highway motor vehicle recreation. Additionally, BLM has large recreation holdings in the California desert (DPR, 1994).

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) operates multi-purpose water supply projects, which develops recreation, fish, and wildlife enhancements at project sites. BOR supplies over 340,000 acres of land and water for recreation purposes. Of the 55 project sites, BOR has identified 31 that have forest and rangeland wildland conditions. Of these 31 sites, only three (New Melones Lake, Lake Berryessa, and Folsom South Canal Trail) are actually administered by BOR. All other BOR sites are actually administered by other agencies.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages an extensive national wildlife refuge (NWR) system across the United States. Within California there are almost 40 wildlife refuges alone that cover over 300,000 acres (Table 4.14.8). Refuges vary in size from less than 10 acres for the Farallon Islands NWR to over 40,000 acres for the Tule Lake NWR in northeast California. Many of the National Wildlife Refuges are strategically located along major bird migration corridors and provide necessary resting and protective habitat during their migration. In addition, many refuges provide habitat for threatened and endangered species.

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Table 4.14.8 Acres of National Wildlife Refuges by Bioregion		
Bioregion	National Wildlife Area	Acres
Bay Area/Delta	Antioch Dunes NWR	53
	Don Edwards San Francisco Bay NWR	24,069
	Ellicott Slough NWR	159
	Farallon NWR	8
	Marin Islands NWR	123
	San Joaquin NWR	35
	San Pablo Bay NWR	2,028
	Stone Lakes NWR	1,208
Total Acres		27,684
Central Coast	Bitter Creek NWR	13,089
	Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes NWR	2,495
	Hopper Mountain NWR	1,872
	Salinas River NWR	365
Total Acres		17,821
Colorado Desert	Coachella Valley NWR	3,597
	Sonny Bono Salton Sea NWR	31,790
Total Acres		35,387
North Coast/Klamath	Castle Rock NWR	14
	Humboldt Bay NWR	2,040
	Lower Klamath NWR	2,424
Total Acres		4,477
Modoc	Clear Lake NWR	13,200
	Lower Klamath NWR	44,066
	Modoc NWR	7,028
	Tule Lake NWR	37,609
Total Acres		101,903
Sacramento Valley	Butte Sink NWR	717
	Colusa NWR	4,081
	Delevan NWR	5,796
	North Central Valley	2,317
	Sacramento NWR	10,917
	Sacramento River NWR	9,316
	Sutter NWR	2,713
Total Acres		35,858
San Joaquin Valley	Bitter Creek NWR	14,721
	Grasslands WMA	12,704
	Kern NWR	10,616
	Merced NWR	4,206
	Pixley NWR	6,396
	San Joaquin NWR	6,700
	San Luis NWR	17,637
Total Acres		72,979
Sierra	Blue Ridge NWR	887
Total Acres		887
South Coast	Hopper Mountain NWR	2,363
	San Diego Bay NWR	472
	San Diego NWR	7,714
	Tijuana Slough NWR	470
Total Acres		11,019
Statewide Total		308,016