

## 5.9 Population and Housing

This section summarizes the impacts to population & housing due to implementing either the Proposed Program or any of the Alternatives.

### 5.9.1 Significance Criteria

Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the CEQA Environmental Checklist contains only one question, which is relevant to the VTP program. The Program and Alternatives would be considered to create a significant effect if treatments:

- a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)

### 5.9.2 Determination Threshold

While there is no accepted percentage population increase to be used as a threshold, population change less than a certain amount can easily be considered negligible. An increase in population of less than 0.5% in the bioregion resulting from implementation of the program would be considered negligible.

### 5.9.3 Data and Assumptions

Implementation of VTP projects within a bioregion will temporarily increase the population of that region. In order to determine how much of an increase the Proposed Program represents, information about production rates and crew sizes were derived from the BLM Vegetation EIS and Table 5.12.2. Some workers would likely come from the local population and some of the same workers would likely work on more than one project annually. However, in order to assess the maximum potential impact from population change, it is assumed that a separate crew does each project and that all workers represent an increase in population.

Projects vary in size and in the details of implementation, but this analysis used the average project size of 260 acres and the average number of people needed to complete a project across the range of treatment variations. The number of projects by treatment type and bioregion from Table 2.5 was multiplied by the average number of people needed to complete a project for each of the treatment types to figure the number of people working annually on VTP projects in each bioregion. The total number of workers required to complete VTP treatments was then compared to the total population within the bioregion from Table 4.9.1 to see what proportion of the bioregion population workers on VTP projects represented.

### 5.9.4 Direct and Indirect Effects of Implementing the Program/Alternatives

A typical mechanical treatment involving bulldozers or masticating excavators would include two or three equipment operators and several swamper who drag brush into piles and/or clear difficult to access places with chainsaws. This type of crew would take about 50 days to complete the average project. Less common mechanical treatments would be mowing and chaining, which

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have a higher production rate and use fewer people. For this analysis, the more typical treatment with five workers is used to calculate the total annual population increase from mechanical treatments in a bioregion.

A typical hand treatment would involve a 5-person crew using either chainsaws or hand tools to hoe, pull, and cut brush. It would take one crew about 52 days to complete a project, but in some instances more crews would be utilized at once if they were available and the project needed to get done more quickly.

Prescribed burning utilizes the largest crew, but also requires the least time to complete a project. Typically two fire engines with three to five people are needed along with a command vehicle, support trucks and multiple igniters using drip torches. This works out to about 15 people on average to complete a project in 1.5 days.

The application of herbicides is usually done with a backpack sprayer or sometimes from an ATV. The typical project would use a crew of five people and take about 35 days to complete.

Herbivory or targeted grazing uses the least number of people to complete the average project because the animals do most of the work. Only two people would be necessary to tend the animals and provide vehicular support and supplies. The animals can typically treat 10 acres/day or 26 days for the average project.

Table 5.9.1 shows the results of this analysis. The potential change in population resulting from implementation of the Proposed Program is negligible in all bioregions except for the Modoc. This is largely due to the very small population in this bioregion. Since the bioregion does not face population pressures, this type of seasonal increase in workers would actually be beneficial to the economy. An increase in temporary housing might potentially be necessary to accommodate VTP workers, but this impact is not considered to be adverse.

For the rest of the bioregions, implementation of the program will not induce sufficient population change to cause a need for new housing, roads or infrastructure. Therefore, the impacts are considered less than significant.

This same finding applies to all the alternatives because they propose either a similar number of projects annually or fewer, causing even less of an impact on population than the Proposed Program.

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<b>Table 5.9.1 Annual Projects and Related Workers</b>								
Bioregion	Avg Annual Projects					VTP Workers	Total Bioregion Population	VTP Workers % of Total Population
	Prescribed Fire	Mechanical	Hand Treatment	Herbicide	Herbivory			
North Coast	52	18	10	9	10	985	363,350	0.3%
Modoc	46	16	9	8	9	873	44,275	2.0%
Sacramento Valley	64	22	12	11	12	1,209	2,123,750	0.1%
Sierra	87	30	16	15	17	1644	700,401	0.2%
Bay Area	32	11	6	5	6	602	6,994,500	0.0%
San Joaquin	24	8	4	4	5	450	3,302,792	0.0%
Central Coast	79	27	15	13	12	1,484	2,109,823	0.1%
Mojave	4	2	1	1	1	82	3,538,500	0.0%
South Coast	42	14	8	7	8	791	15,179,460	0.0%
Colorado Desert	16	5	3	3	1	297	150,900	0.2%

### ***5.9.5 Determinations Regarding Population and Housing***

The Proposed Program/Alternatives would not induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure). The impacts to population remain below the 0.5% threshold and are considered negligible.