

## 4.6 PUBLIC ACCESS AND RECREATION RESOURCES

### 4.6.1 Impact Criteria and Methodology

Impacts to recreational resources were assessed by determining the types of recreational uses in the project area, then evaluating these uses to determine their sensitivity to the short-term and long-term project effects. Consistency of project activities with the objectives and policies of the Countywide Plan and LCP related to recreational resources, as summarized in Section 3.6, also was considered.

The criteria listed below have been developed to address likely impacts on recreational uses in the project area and would include any violation of Marin County plans and policies regarding recreational resources. A discussion of the visual impact of the project machinery on the recreational experience is presented in the visual resources analysis. The project is considered to have a significant impact on recreational resources under any of the following conditions:

- It were to interfere with recreational uses of the beach, ocean, lagoon, or parks for a substantial length of time or it were to interfere with the public's right of access to the sea;
- It were to substantially prevent a year-round recreational use or substantially prevent a recreational use during peak season;
- It were to increase the use of recreation resources such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated;
- It were to require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment;
- It were to result in closure of countywide park and recreation facilities, if the need for these facilities still exists, in conflict with County Policy PR-2.3;
- It were to prevent or eliminate maintenance of dedicated trails or easements, unless other arrangements had been contractually agreed on, in conflict with County Policy TR-4; and
- It were to conflict with or be incompatible with recreation-related objectives, policies, or guidance of the Countywide Plan, the LCP, or management plans or policies of MCOSED or GFNMS.

### 4.6.2 Riparian Alternative

#### ***Significant but Mitigable Impacts***

##### ***Impact 4.6.1: Lagoon Recreation Access***

The presence of the pipeline in the lagoon would have an additional impact on recreational use of the lagoon. During the three-month construction period for each of the nine years of the project, the pipeline would run from the dredge to the end of the

Stinson Beach spit and then out to the disposal scow. During high tide the pipeline would float, and during low tide it would likely rest on the mudflats. Because the dredge would at least sometimes be at the north end of the lagoon, the pipeline would necessarily interfere with kayakers attempting to cross the lagoon. The pipeline might even completely close off access to certain areas of the lagoon for kayakers, depending on their entry point to the lagoon. If the dredge is excavating the North Basin, for instance, kayakers putting in along Highway 1 on the north end of the lagoon could find it impossible to cross over to the west side of Kent Island. However, these impacts would be limited to three months of the year, while kayakers use the lagoon nearly year-round, weather permitting, and could continue to kayak in other areas of the lagoon during excavation. In addition, there are other areas similar to Bolinas Lagoon outside the ROI that would continue to be available for kayaking, particularly Tomales Bay and Drake's Estero to the north.

Motorboats would be similarly affected by the presence of the pipeline; the residents of Seadrift put in their motorboats from the boat launch on the northwest of the Seadrift development. From there they can travel west to the lagoon inlet and out to sea. Regardless of the location of the dredge, the pipeline would cross directly in front of this route and prevent Seadrift boaters from leaving the lagoon. This would be a significant impact.

*Mitigation 4.6.1:* This impact on kayakers and Seadrift recreational boaters would be mitigated by submerging the pipeline at one or two places along its length within the lagoon. Kayaks draw only five inches of water, but motorboats draw no less than two feet. As part of PED, the pipeline would be anchored to the bottom of the lagoon as it crosses the Main Channel, and this location would be clearly marked by buoys in order to allow boaters to cross the pipeline at high tide. However, because motorboats draw two feet of water, and the pipeline is 12 inches in diameter, there would have to be at least three feet of water in the channel for motorboats to cross safely. It is possible that even in the deepest section of the Main Channel there would be insufficient water depth for motorboats to cross the pipeline during certain points in the tide cycle. This mitigation would, however, provide for some recreational access for motorboats and kayaks during the construction period.

### ***Less than Significant Impacts***

#### *Construction Impacts: Lagoon Recreation Access*

The presence of the dredge in the lagoon for up to three months per year for nine years would interfere to some extent with kayaking and other recreational activities in the lagoon. The physical presence of the dredge and associated machinery (siltation curtains and support boat, for instance) would prevent kayakers and anglers from entering whatever portion of the lagoon is being excavated. In addition, the dredge would indirectly interfere with recreational opportunities for kayaking, fishing, and wildlife viewing by whatever limited disturbance of wildlife might result from dredge activities. While dredge activities are being scheduled to limit fish and wildlife disturbance as much

as possible, it is unlikely that no wildlife would be disturbed, and thus this would be an impact not only on the wildlife, but on those who engage in wildlife viewing as a recreational activity. Dredging in the lagoon would be localized and temporary, and these impacts would therefore be considered less than significant.

Removal of the vegetation and upland soils from PGC Delta would be staged from the MCOSD property along Bolinas-Olema Road. This would interfere with access by bird-watchers and hikers to recreation opportunities on this MCOSD property. However, this interference would be confined to the period during which construction was actually ongoing in this area, which would be only a small time, compared to the overall length of the project. Alternate locations for these activities include wildlife viewing along the shores of the lagoon and the beaches and hiking along trails in the watershed and along the beaches.

Construction Impacts: Highway 1 Access

The excavation of the Highway 1 fills would probably result in temporary closures of at least one lane of Highway 1 during the project period. Because the Highway 1 fills are not a major element of the project, these closures are unlikely to last more than one season out of the possible nine seasons of project activity.

These closures would temporarily interfere with motorists' opportunities to stop and view wildlife in the lagoon. It might also interfere with kayakers' and anglers' access to the lagoon along that side. Finally, it would have an adverse impact on bicyclists' use of Highway 1. Because the excavation along Highway 1 is of limited duration, these impacts are not considered to be significant.

Using Winnebago Point as a staging area for the entire project would interfere with use of that location for wildlife viewing. However, this is not a significant location for recreation activity, and several other turnouts would continue to be available for motorists along Highway 1.

Construction Impacts: Beach and Bay Recreation Access

The pipeline across Stinson Beach Spit would be in place for three months per year for up to nine years. Actual installation and removal of the pipeline each year would be of limited duration, and the pipeline would be constructed so as not to block access to beachgoers, probably by use of a bridge or walkway installed over the pipeline. The presence of the pipeline could be considered an interference with the public's right of access to the sea, but the pipeline would occupy an area where the public's right of access is already somewhat limited (the property it crosses belongs to the Seadrift Homeowners' Association to the high tide line), and where the public's activities are restricted to passage rather than in-place recreation. Therefore, this impact is not considered a significant impact.

The presence of the pipeline in Bolinas Bay during project construction would be mitigated by submerging the pipeline, rather than floating it on the surface of the water.

This should result in minimal interference with boaters, kayakers, swimmers, and surfers during the project period.

The disposal scow in Bolinas Bay may interfere to a limited extent with boating, but it is expected to be anchored well outside the surf range and would be present only during construction periods. Boaters, kayakers, and surfers would be able to navigate around the scow with minimal difficulty.

*Long-Term Impacts: Lagoon Recreation Access*

Excavation of the Highway 1 fills would prevent their future use by motorists to turn off the highway and observe birds and seals along the eastern side of the lagoon. However, not all turnouts would be removed under this alternative, and wildlife-watchers would still be able to access the lagoon from the remaining turnouts, including Winnebago point, and via the MCOSD property on Olema-Bolinas Road.

Removing the PGC Delta upland would have long-term impacts on wildlife viewing in PGC Delta, but, as noted above, there are other locations to access Bolinas Lagoon for wildlife viewing.

There would be no long-term impacts to recreational activities in Bolinas Bay, unless the increased tidal prism were to be reflected in stronger currents flowing through the lagoon inlet. This might increase surf disturbance at the mouth of the lagoon.

*Consistency with Local Plans*

The project does not conflict with any recreation-related policies within the Marin Countywide Plan or Local Coastal Program. This alternative furthers Marin County Plan Policy EQ-4.7a, which provides for protection of the lagoon's fragile resources while preserving recreation access to the lagoon for recreation.

***Beneficial Impacts***

While habitat restoration is the primary goal of this alternative, recreational uses would benefit from it as well. Maintaining the relative proportions of upland, intertidal, and subtidal habitat would allow kayakers and wildlife-viewers to continue to enjoy recreational opportunities in the lagoon, to a greater extent than would be possible under the No Action Alternative. More areas of the lagoon would be open to kayaking, and the increased volume of intertidal and subtidal habitat could result in greater numbers and variations of fish available for recreational capture.

It is possible (but difficult to predict with certainty) that surfers and surf-kayakers in Bolinas Bay may benefit long-term from the project. An increase in the tidal volume in Bolinas Lagoon would likely result in a greater volume and velocity of water leaving the lagoon through the inlet and probably a wider deeper inlet. This could result in greater velocity or magnitude of standing waves at the mouth of the inlet and could affect the relative position or depth of sand bars farther out in the bay, thus changing surf patterns.

### 4.6.3 Estuarine Alternative

Recreation impacts as a result of the Estuarine Alternative include all the impacts identified above for the Riparian Alternative, as well as one additional impact specific to the Estuarine Alternative.

#### ***Significant but Mitigable Impacts***

##### *Impact 4.6.2: Lagoon Recreation Access*

The removal of seventeen additional acres of delta and upland habitat along Pine Gulch Creek under this alternative would substantially prevent year-round use of that area for hiking, walking, or wildlife viewing. Alternate locations for these activities include wildlife viewing along the shores of the lagoon and the beaches and hiking along trails in the watershed and along the beaches, but this is one of few areas along the lagoon where this type of habitat is open to the public. Additionally, County Policy PR-2.3 requires replacing closed or inaccessible trails if the demand for such trails still exists; failure to replace the lost trail would constitute a significant impact.

*Mitigation 4.6.2:* MCOSD would develop more trails to improve public access to lagoon frontage property after construction is complete. While seventeen acres of the delta and upland habitat would be removed, much of the reserve would be left in place, and MCOSD would build new trails or would provide educational materials to discuss the project and its projected benefits. This would mitigate the impact on recreation resources to less than significant.

### 4.6.4 No Action Alternative

#### ***Significant Impacts***

##### *Impact 4.6.3: Long-Term Impacts: Lagoon Recreation Access*

Failure to address sedimentation in Bolinas Lagoon is likely to have impacts on a variety of recreational uses in the lagoon. Fishing in the lagoon would be affected by the significant reductions in intertidal and subtidal habitat predicted by the Corps to result from taking no action to address sedimentation. According to local anglers, lagoon fishing has declined over the past 20 years, and this decline is attributed to the habitat loss in the lagoon. A continuation of this decline would be likely to result in reduced catch for anglers. The potential intermittent closures of the lagoon, predicted to begin in 2038, would have severe and long-term effects on recreational fishing in the lagoon.

Similarly, kayaking would be adversely affected by a reduction in subtidal and intertidal habitat and an expansion of upland habitat. Fewer areas of the lagoon would be available for kayaking, and fewer species of birds or wildlife would inhabit the lagoon for the kayakers to observe. Wildlife viewers would be affected by the lessened quantity and diversity of wildlife in the lagoon.

***Beneficial Impacts***

The Corps has predicted that under the No Action Alternative, the lagoon would acquire significantly more upland acreage at the expense of subtidal and intertidal habitat. While the Corps has not identified precisely where these habitat changes would take place, it is probable that the upland area in PGC Delta would continue to expand. This could result in limited beneficial impacts for wildlife viewers, hikers, and others recreationists who would be able to access the delta from the MCOSD property on the west side of the lagoon.