

## Chapter 4. General Management Direction

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### INTRODUCTION

This section describes the management objectives and policies adopted by SRCSD to govern land use on the Bufferlands. Guidance for managing the Bufferlands comprises four basic elements: principal management objectives, management policies, management alternatives, and management plan implementation. The principal management objectives form the underlying basis for this master plan and provide overall direction and purpose for management of the Bufferlands. The principal management objectives also provide guidance for SRCSD staff who need to evaluate whether an existing or proposed land use is compatible with the overall management direction for the Bufferlands. The management policies set forth criteria for evaluating alternative land use allocations and for developing alternative management regimes for the Bufferlands. The management alternatives outline a range of possible management regimes for the Bufferlands, representing varying levels of financial and staffing commitment; they are discussed further in Chapter 5.

### PRINCIPAL MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

Development of the principal management objectives in this master plan was guided by the vision, mission, and values of the Sacramento County Water Quality Division (see Chapter 1). Specific objectives were formulated to guide management of the Bufferlands and to provide the basis for development of general and land use-specific management goals and policies to govern land use on the Bufferlands. The principal objectives of Bufferlands management are:

- › to maintain the function of the Bufferlands, allowing continued Plant operation and expansion while maintaining Plant security, and ensuring the safety of SRCSD personnel and the surrounding public;
- › to provide and maintain extensive areas of open space, high-quality wildlife habitat, and other valuable natural resources on the Bufferlands;
- › to provide areas to mitigate environmental impacts associated with SRCSD projects;
- › to minimize conflicts and develop beneficial relationships with the local community;

- › to promote public enjoyment and appreciation of the Bufferlands through educational outreach; and
- › to generate lease revenues for the SRCSD in accordance with other Bufferlands management objectives.

## **MANAGEMENT POLICIES**

This section presents management policies intended to guide land use and management on the Bufferlands. These policies were developed to ensure that specific management goals are met. They provide a basis on which SRCSD staff can assess existing land uses and can evaluate and respond to proposals for alternative uses of the Bufferlands (see discussion of proposal evaluation process in Chapter 3). The Bufferlands management policies are equally applicable to uses proposed by the SRCSD and to uses proposed by other public or private entities.

Management policies for the Bufferlands fall into two broad categories: general policies and land use-specific policies. General policies apply to existing and proposed uses throughout the Bufferlands. Land use-specific policies apply to existing and proposed uses in areas designated for particular types of uses.

### **General Management Policies**

General management policies apply to all portions of the Bufferlands regardless of existing land use. The following sections articulate general Bufferlands management policies addressing various management areas. Each set of management policies is introduced by a brief discussion of the rationale for the policies, and by a goal statement.

#### **General Land Use**

The general land use policies ensure that existing and proposed land uses do **not constrain operation or expansion of the Plant in any way**, that they are consistent with this master plan and with other local land use plans, and that they maintain in perpetuity the primary characteristics of the Bufferlands.

*Goal: To prevent land use conflicts and promote beneficial relationships between the Plant and the local community.*

## **SRCSD Policies**

- › Ensure that future uses of the Bufferlands are consistent with this master plan.
- › Ensure that future uses of the Bufferlands are consistent with city and county general plans and zoning ordinances.
- › Ensure that future uses would not constrain operation or expansion of the Plant, including interceptors and outfalls, in any way.
- › Minimize the introduction of permanent structures on the Bufferlands.
- › Restrict or prohibit new residential uses on the Bufferlands.
- › Ensure that future land uses along the Bufferlands boundary are compatible with existing or proposed residential development.
- › Ensure that oil and gas leases are authorized only in areas where drilling activities are compatible with existing and planned land uses.
- › Ensure that grading, excavation, or any other construction activities in areas with existing easements are consistent with the easement descriptions.
- › Discourage grading, excavation, the addition of structures, construction, or any permanent changes in land use in areas containing major utilities or infrastructure (e.g., underground pipelines).
- › Discourage the removal of native trees and landmark trees consistent with County Tree Ordinance and General Plan policies.
- › Discourage development in areas classified or potentially classifiable as wetlands under Corps and EPA criteria, including vernal pools, seasonal wetlands, freshwater marshes, riparian forests, open water, and low-lying fallow lands within the Beach Lake floodplain.
- › Ensure that all activities that may affect special-status plant and animal species are consistent with the following: federal ESA policies protecting species that are federally listed or proposed for listing as threatened or endangered; California ESA (14 CCR 670.5) policies protecting species that are state-listed as threatened or endangered; and CEQA policies protecting plants that meet the definitions of rare or endangered (State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15380).

## **Public Safety and Security**

Because of the public safety issues associated with Plant operations, coupled with concerns regarding illegal access and illicit activities, formal public safety policies are considered essential to protect the general public and SRCSD staff from injury and/or illness and to prevent vandalism or destruction of SRCSD property. Key elements of these policies include flood control, fire protection, vector control, and access control.

*Goal: To protect human life and property and provide for public safety.*

### **Policies**

#### Flood Control

- › Ensure that all land uses within designated floodways and 100-year floodplain zones are managed in conformance with county, state, and federal ordinances limiting floodway and floodplain alterations, construction within floodways, and protection of floodplain structures.
- › Encourage flood control measures that preserve or enhance natural riparian habitat, protect water quality and soils, and recharge groundwater aquifers.

#### Fire Protection

- › Coordinate with local fire protection agencies to provide an appropriate level of fire protection for the Bufferlands.
- › Implement fire and fuels management activities to reduce fire hazard to protect human life, properties, water quality, and sensitive natural resources.
- › Consider, in reviewing land use proposals, the severity of natural fire hazards, the potential for damage from wildland and structural fires, the adequacy of fire protection services and emergency access, and the availability of an adequate water supply and pressure for firefighting.

#### Vector Control

- › Manage mosquito populations at safe levels.
- › Ensure that all activities affecting mosquito populations (e.g., controlling water levels, stocking with mosquitofish) are compatible with Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito and Vector Control District policies.

## Hazardous Materials Releases

- › Comply with policies and regulations set by the Risk Management Program (RMP) for all Acutely Hazardous Materials (AHM) used onsite that meet or exceed regulatory threshold planning quantities. The RMP will detail procedures for handling hazardous materials releases and providing for the safety of Plant personnel and the adjacent community.
- › Maintain mechanisms (e.g., fencing, locked gates, signage, security patrol) for controlling public access on the Bufferlands.

## **Public Use**

The Bufferlands provides a broad spectrum of opportunities for public use. Surrounded mostly by urban and residential development, the Bufferlands is accessible to visitors and provides a unique opportunity for people to enjoy a variety of passive nature-oriented activities.

*Goal: To provide public use opportunities that are consistent with other management objectives for the Bufferlands.*

### **Policies**

- › Encourage, as feasible, public use opportunities on the Bufferlands.
- › Provide mechanisms for controlling unsupervised public access.

## **Environmental Education**

The Bufferlands, with its diverse assemblage of wildlife habitat and its accessible location, provides many opportunities for environmental education and interpretation. The environmental education policies promote outreach activities to educate the public about the goals and objectives of the Bufferlands and the importance of protecting and enhancing the area's sensitive wildlife habitats and other resources.

*Goal: To provide increased opportunities for environmental education and public outreach that are consistent with other management objectives for the Bufferlands.*

### **Policies**

- › Encourage, if feasible, opportunities for environmental education to take place at the Bufferlands.
- › Strive to expand the public's knowledge and understanding of the Bufferlands and the values it has to offer.

## **Research and Development**

Over the years, a variety of research projects has been conducted by students, interns, and members of the Bufferlands staff. These studies have resulted in the development of a significant body of information on the natural resources of the Bufferlands, representing important baseline data that can be used by future researchers to assess and guide management activities on the Bufferlands. The research and development policies for the Bufferlands actively promote and foster research, including inventory and monitoring, that will contribute to SRCSD's basic understanding and knowledge of the Bufferlands' resources and provide information to guide management activities.

*Goal: To provide research and environmental education opportunities on the Bufferlands.*

### **Policies**

- › Promote focused research projects by Bufferlands staff (as staffing levels permit) that can provide information to guide management activities.
- › Promote focused research projects by outside researchers such as college and university students that can provide information to guide management activities.
- › Incorporate environmental education into appropriate Bufferlands research activities.
- › Participate in regional data exchange with other resource agencies and organizations (e.g., DFG, USFWS, The Nature Conservancy) as appropriate for research and management purposes.

## **Cultural Resources**

Several cultural resource sites have been identified within the Bufferlands. These sites include remnants of prehistoric Native American occupation as well as historic ranching and farming operations. In addition, undiscovered cultural resources may be present on the Bufferlands. Cultural resources will be protected by policies requiring review of existing documentation before undertaking management actions and by complying with existing laws and regulations.

*Goal: To protect important cultural resources on the Bufferlands.*

### **Policies**

- › Ensure that any activities affecting known or potential cultural resource sites are consistent with CEQA cultural resource policies (Public Resources Code, Sections 20183 and 20184).
- › Minimize impacts on cultural resources by identifying and avoiding or, if avoidance is not feasible, mitigating impacts on cultural resources.

- › Provide for renovation and reuse, where appropriate, of historic buildings on the Bufferlands.
- › Provide for appropriate research and educational uses of the Bufferlands with respect to cultural resources.

## **Aesthetic Resources**

The natural features of the Bufferlands provide a valuable aesthetic resource for people who reside and work on adjacent lands. Vegetation removal, facility construction, Plant operation, landscape maintenance, and other management activities can have significant aesthetic effects on the Bufferlands. The aesthetic resource management policies address important, sensitive aesthetic areas and provide a framework for management of these key resources.

*Goal: To maintain important aesthetic features on the Bufferlands and limit the negative aesthetic effects of Plant activities on the general public and the surrounding community.*

### **Policies**

- › Maintain and protect the general open space character and visual qualities of the Bufferlands.
- › Require that new recreation, interpretive, and other facilities be designed to blend with the natural aesthetic character of the Bufferlands.
- › Encourage reuse of existing facilities to maintain the natural aesthetic character of the Bufferlands.
- › Require that any new facilities be sited to avoid or, if avoidance is infeasible, to minimize disturbance of large stands of mature, healthy trees and individual healthy trees of notable size and age.
- › Require the use of landscaping for onsite activities and encourage the use of landscaping for adjacent offsite development activities to protect and enhance the scenic quality of the Bufferlands and to screen undesirable views.

## **Water Quality**

The water quality management policies involve activities that SRCSD will undertake to protect and enhance onsite surface and groundwater quality and to address potential impacts from lands upstream of the Bufferlands.

*Goal: To protect and enhance surface and groundwater quality on the Bufferlands.*

## **Policies**

- › Minimize sedimentation and erosion by controlling grading, preserving trees and other vegetation, and siting access roads appropriately.
- › Prohibit development of facilities that involve the use of toxic chemicals or other polluting substances in areas where substances could come into contact with floodwaters, permanently or seasonally high groundwater, or flowing creeks.
- › Examine, to the extent feasible, existing and potential water-quality impacts from lands upstream of the Bufferlands.
- › Ensure that any use of reclaimed wastewater is consistent with RWQCB policies.

## **Land Use-Specific Management Policies**

To facilitate development of land use-specific policies, the Bufferlands was divided into five types of major land use areas based on existing land use, current management scheme, and similarity of natural features (topography, hydrology, vegetation type). These are: managed wildlife habitat areas, open space areas, leased areas, the horticultural area, and the Plant infrastructure area (Figure 4–1). The following section describes the goals and policies governing land use in these areas.

### **Managed Wildlife Habitat Areas**

The Managed Wildlife Habitat Areas are areas within the Bufferlands that are actively managed for wildlife habitat (Figure 4–1). The management policies for managed wildlife habitat areas emphasize protection of threatened and endangered species; enhancement and/or restoration of plant and animal communities, and provision of active public use opportunities where such use does not conflict with the protection of sensitive biological resources.

*Goal: To maintain and enhance biological resource values on the Bufferlands through active management and integration with other resource management practices.*

## **Policies**

- › Maintain, enhance, and where feasible, restore, plant and animal communities, populations, and species.
- › Apply an adaptive management strategy that incorporates inventory, management, monitoring, and research.

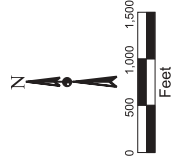


Figure 4-1

# Major Land Use Areas

## LEGEND

- Plant Property Boundary
- Plant Process Area Boundary
- Managed Wildlife Habitat Area
- Open Space
- Leased Area
- Horticultural Area
- Process Facilities



- › Coordinate all management activities (e.g., disking, prescribed burning, water quality improvement) to ensure that sensitive biological resources are protected.
- › Identify key habitat areas necessary for the protection and management of special-status plants and animals. In addition, the SRCSD shall provide buffer areas to protect special-status plant populations and reduce disruption of nesting and roosting areas for raptors, herons, egrets, and other sensitive wildlife species.
- › Enhance habitat, where financially feasible, for threatened and endangered species.
- › Identify high-priority sites for habitat restoration based primarily on the value of restored habitats and their location relative to important wildlife use areas and corridors.
- › Encourage the restoration and/or enhancement of managed wildlife area habitats as mitigation for SRCSD projects.
- › Develop a cooperative management agreement with the Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge for the Managed Wildlife Habitat Areas.

## **Open Space Areas**

The open space areas are areas within the Bufferlands that are actively managed to provide an open-space buffer between the Plant process area and adjacent landowners, and passively managed for wildlife habitat (Figure 4-1). The management policies for open space areas emphasize the protection of public health and safety and the preservation of sensitive biological and cultural resources.

*Goal: To protect and enhance the general open space character of the Bufferlands.*

### **Policies**

- › Maintain open space areas to minimize fire hazards and protect sensitive biological and aesthetic resources.
- › Preserve open space areas for the protection of public health and safety, preservation of biological resources, and provision of recreational opportunities.
- › Prohibit grading or construction activities within 100 feet of the cultural resource site located northeast of Black Crown Lake.
- › Maintain and protect the general character and visual qualities of the Open Space Areas.
- › Encourage the restoration and/or enhancement of managed open space area habitats as mitigation for SRCSD projects.

## **Leased Areas**

The leased areas within the Bufferlands are managed under mineral, facility, or residential leases (Figure 4–1). The management policies of the leased areas provide a framework for review and modification of lease agreements and easements when these entitlements are to be renewed.

*Goal: To maintain historic land uses while ensuring that leases do not create excessive management costs or conflict with Plant operation or other Bufferlands management objectives.*

### **Policies**

- › Limit use of areas located within the Plant expansion zone (southern and southeastern portions of the Bufferlands) to short-term agricultural leases subject to cancellation at the option of SRCSD.
- › Work with the Public Works Real Estate Division to ensure that lease revenue is fair and equitable and provides a benefit to SRCSD.
- › Ensure that, where feasible, lessees employ surface water supplies rather than groundwater.
- › Administer current and proposed lease agreements and easements to ensure that these entitlements are consistent with other Bufferlands management objectives and with CEQA.
- › Ensure that all lease agreements consider potential public safety or nuisance issues that could result from Plant or lessee operations.
- › Discourage the conversion of agricultural lease areas for non-open space uses.
- › Discourage the conversion of agricultural areas that provide nesting, roosting, or foraging habitat for special-status species.
- › Encourage agricultural and grazing practices that benefit wildlife species.

## **Horticultural Area**

The horticultural area consists of the area known as the Trail of Trees (Figure 4–1). This area is actively managed to ensure the continued survival and viability of the approximately 6,500 native trees that were planted there in 1994. The management policies for the horticultural area emphasize the continued maintenance of existing plantings and the potential future installation of additional horticultural plantings.

*Goal: To maintain the Trail of Trees as an important example of Central Valley plant communities and as an aesthetic resource.*

## **Policies**

- › Continue irrigation and tree maintenance as necessary to ensure the continued survival of a representative assemblage of Central Valley plant species.
- › Replace trees as required to maintain a representative assemblage of Central Valley plant species.
- › Encourage the use of native shrubs and/or herbaceous species in any future plantings.
- › Coordinate all management activities (e.g., future plantings, irrigation system installation) to ensure that sensitive biological resources are protected.

## **Plant Process Facilities**

The Plant process facilities consist of the demonstration constructed wetlands treatment facility and the biosolids demonstration plot and crop application field (Figure 4–1). The management policies for the Plant process facilities emphasize the continued operation of the constructed wetlands facility and the modification and review of operation agreements for the biosolids test plot.

*Goal: To maintain areas for temporary operation while ensuring that the uses do not conflict with other Bufferlands management objectives.*

## **Policies**

- › Ensure that such operations are consistent with the policies that govern land use in the leased areas.
- › Coordinate future operation of the constructed wetlands facility with other management activities (e.g., habitat restoration, water quality improvement, research and development).