

# 3.11: POPULATION AND HOUSING

## Introduction

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This section describes the population and housing character of the proposed project area and the applicable regulations pertaining to population and housing. This section also discusses potential impacts to population and housing resources associated with the proposed project.

## Environmental Setting

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### REGIONAL SETTING

#### Population

**Butte County.** Butte County has a population of 203,171 (Census, 2000) and is predominantly rural, with the exception of the cities of Chico and Oroville and their surrounding suburban areas. The County experienced a population increase of approximately 12 percent between 1990 and 2000. Table 3.11-1 provides a summary of the socioeconomic characteristics of both Butte and Colusa Counties.

**Colusa County.** Colusa County has a population of 18,804 (Census, 2000) and is predominantly rural, as are most of the counties in the Sacramento Valley. The City of Colusa (county seat) occupies the largest concentrated population in the County. The County has historically been one of the slowest growing areas in California. However, between 1990 and 2000, the County population grew by approximately 15 percent.

## Housing

**Butte and Colusa County.** Population in both Butte and Colusa Counties is quite sparse. Housing consists primarily of single-family dwellings associated with agricultural activities and multiple occupancy dwellings associated with the hunting clubs.

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**Table 3.11-1: Socioeconomic Characteristics of Butte and Colusa Counties**

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	<b>Butte</b>	<b>Colusa</b>
1990 Population	182,120	16,275
2000 Population	203,171	18,804
2000 Housing Stock	87,634	7,142
2000 Housing Vacancy Rate (%)	5.8	10.8
1998 Per Capita Income	\$20,838	\$20,287
2000 Civilian Employment	81,800	7,280
2000 Average Unemployment (%)	7.0	17.6

SOURCE: WGSJ 2001 PEA

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## Regulatory Setting

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### FEDERAL, STATE, AND REGIONAL SETTING

There are no federal or state goals, objectives, or policies that govern the potential population and housing effects that could result from the Wild Goose Gas Storage Project.

### LOCAL SETTING

#### Butte County

The Housing Element of the Butte County General Plan includes the following policies that are relevant to the proposed project and project alternatives to preserve or protect local population and housing:

**A-2.** The County will continue to annually monitor zoning to ensure that sufficient land is zoned at various densities to meet the County's regional share of housing.

**B-1.** Establish affordable housing goals, to be negotiated, for large-scale developments, which contain a mixture of residential densities.

#### Colusa County

The Housing Element of the Colusa County General Plan has one goal related to housing:

“Encourage an adequate supply of safe, sanitary, and attractive housing in all communities in Colusa County, affordable to a wide range of income groups.”

The Colusa County General Plan contains the following policies within the Housing Element to preserve or protect population and housing:

**HO-1.** The County general plan shall designate a sufficient amount of residential land to support the housing needs identified in the housing element...

**HO-2.** Within those areas shown in the Land Use Element as “Urban Residential” ...a range of zoning designations should be used to encourage a mixture of residential densities.

**HO-8.** Residential builders and developers should be encouraged to provide for the inclusion of dwelling units suitable for sale or rent to low and moderate income households within their projects...

**HO-18.** New mobile home parks should be encouraged in R-3 and R-4 areas...

**HO-20.** Colusa County should encourage the protection of the existing rental housing supply.

The Land Use Element of the Colusa County Plan has one goal:

“Maintain the efficient and harmonious use of land in the county, promoting a well-organized and orderly development pattern, avoiding random, haphazard growth, protecting public health and safety, and accommodating the orderly growth of population and employment.”

The Colusa County General Plan contains the following policies within the Land Use Element to preserve or protect population and housing:

**LU-31.** Sufficient vacant areas should be designated for residential development to meet the housing demand that can reasonably be expected from new local industry...

## Environmental Analysis

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### AREAS OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

The areas of potential environmental concern that may be associated with implementation of the proposed project include the potential to:

- Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly or indirectly
- Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere
- Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

### THRESHOLD OF SIGNIFICANCE

The proposed project would be considered to have a significant effect on the environmental if it would:

- **Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly or indirectly.** The proposed project would have a significant effect if implementation of the proposed project would cause population to exceed historic growth.

- **Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.** The proposed project would have a significant effect if it were to necessitate development of new subdivisions, resulting in much higher residential densities or if implementation of the proposed project resulted in population increases that would result in removal of a substantial number of existing houses from the local housing pool (i.e. substantially affect the local housing market).
- **Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.** The proposed project would have a significant effect if it would result in displacement of a substantial number of people or affect regional vacancy rates. If the proposed project resulted in removal of a substantial portion of property away from homeowners, forcing them to move off of their land to maintain an equivalent standard of living, this would also be considered a significant impact.

## IMPACT DISCUSSION

It is assumed that potential impacts to population and housing would be similar across project components (well pad, remote facility, loop pipeline, etc.) due to the rural environment and sparse population of the project area. The following discussion describes potential impacts in general terms for the entire project area.

### **Impact 3.11-1: Potential for Substantial Population Growth in the Area, Either Directly or Indirectly**

*Construction.* Approximately 303 construction workers would be required during the 20-month construction period of the proposed project. Workers from the local area would be contracted to perform most of the construction work. An estimated 80 specialized nonlocal workers would be hired during the construction period, with an estimate of 40 nonlocal employees working on the project at any one time. Because these non-local workers would be in the area only for the duration of their particular phase, they would not become permanent residents. The project construction would not directly induce population growth in Butte or Colusa County.

The proposed project would create a need for temporary housing for up to 80 people during the 20-month construction period estimated by WGS. Nonlocal workers would be in the area only during project construction and would then move on to construction projects in other locations.

Because of the relatively short construction period, most nonlocal workers can be expected to use hotel/motel accommodations or park their recreation vehicles at local campgrounds or RV parks. No demand for permanent housing should occur. East of the Sacramento River, the communities most likely to accommodate transient workers are Chico, Gridley, Yuba City, and Marysville. Chico contains the largest stock of housing and visitor accommodations in the project vicinity. West of the Sacramento River, the communities most likely to accommodate transient workers are Colusa, Willows, and Williams. The current inventory of hotel/motel rooms and camping sites within commuting distance of the project components is shown in Tables 3.11-2 and 3.11-3.

Total available lodging options within commute distance of the project are 2,695 rooms/sites. Assuming the worst-case scenario of one room or campsite per nonlocal worker during the peak construction period, a maximum total of 40 hotel/motel rooms or

campsites would be needed for about three months during the summer of 2003. The estimate of rooms/sites needed for construction workers is considered conservative. If workers share rooms, fewer motel/hotel rooms or campsites would be needed than are estimated. Because this demand represents less than two percent of the available rooms or campsites, the impact of project construction on transient accommodations would not be significant.

**Table 3.11-2: Communities Within Commuting Distance (70 Miles) of Project Construction**

Community	Population (January 2000)	County	Distance to Project (highway miles)	Estimated Number Hotel/Motel Rooms
Chico	53,600	Butte	40 <sup>1</sup>	950
Oroville	12,550	Butte	22 <sup>1</sup>	150
Yuba City	35,550	Sutter	28 <sup>1</sup>	350
Marysville	12,250	Yuba	31 <sup>1</sup>	100
Sacramento	406,000	Sacramento	70 <sup>1</sup>	*
Williams	3,130	Colusa	19 <sup>2</sup>	308
Willows	6,400	Glenn	13 <sup>2</sup>	340
Colusa	5,500	Colusa	20 <sup>2</sup>	20
<b>Total</b>				<b>2,218</b>

\* Sacramento is not likely to be an accommodations choice for transient workers for the project.

<sup>1</sup> Project distance calculated from the Remote Facility Site.

<sup>2</sup> Project distance calculated from the Delevan Interconnect Facility.

SOURCE: WGSJ 2001 PEA

**Table 3.11-3: Recreational Areas and Camping Facilities in the Project Study Area**

Camping Facility	Distance to Project <sup>1</sup> (Highway miles)	Number of Campsites
Live Oak Riverfront Park	6	22
Colusa-Sacramento River State Recreation Area	30	14
Lake Oroville State Recreation Area	21	287
Collins Lake Recreational Area	30	154
<b>Total</b>		<b>477 sites</b>

<sup>1</sup> Project distance calculated from the Remote Facility Site

SOURCE: WGSJ 2001 PEA

*Operations.* An increase of an estimated four employees would be required for the operation of the expanded facilities. An increase of four employees would not

significantly add to the permanent population or increase existing housing of Butte or Colusa County.

Based on the number of available hotel, motel, RV parks, camping sites, rental properties, and available housing in Butte and Colusa Counties, the increase in demand for housing associated with the project is expected to be accommodated regardless of the phase of the project or the time of the year. Therefore, the impact of the proposed project is less than significant.

**Level of Significance Without Mitigation.** The impact on population would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures.** No mitigation is required

**Impact 3.11-2: Potential to Displace Substantial Numbers of Existing Housing, Necessitating the Construction of Replacement Housing Elsewhere**

The proposed project would not displace or relocate any existing housing units or current residents during the construction or operation phases of the project. Residential land requirements associated with the proposed project are described in Section 3.9 Land Use and Planning. Permanent land rights would be required in the form of easements for the pipeline route and either long-term leases or fee purchases for the aboveground components. Easement areas established within residential areas for the proposed project would be returned to their previous uses following completion of project construction. It is not expected that the land requirements for the proposed project would result in removal of a substantial portion of property away from homeowners. Therefore, this impact of the proposed project is expected to be less than significant.

**Level of Significance Without Mitigation.** The impact of the project would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures.** No mitigation is required

**Impact 3.11-3: Potential to Displace Substantial Numbers of People, Necessitating the Construction of Replacement Housing Elsewhere**

The proposed project would not displace or relocate any existing housing units or current residents during the construction or operation phases of the project. Therefore, this impact of the proposed project is expected to be less than significant.

**Level of Significance Without Mitigation.** The impact of the project would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures.** No mitigation is required.