

3.9: LAND USE AND PLANNING

Introduction

This section discusses the existing and proposed land uses in the project area and the relevant and applicable land use plans and policies in Butte and Colusa Counties. The section describes CPUC's analysis of the compatibility of the proposed project with land uses and land use plans and policies, including agricultural land uses.

Environmental Setting

The project area was reviewed through aerial photography, field reconnaissance, and a review of planning documents. The project area may be characterized as a mosaic of agricultural fields and orchards. In addition to agriculture, other land uses in the vicinity of the project include grazing, scattered light-industrial uses, single-family residences, and recreation.

REGIONAL SETTING

The project study area is located primarily within two counties situated in the Great Central Valley. In its most common delineation, the Central Valley has 18 counties, over 42,000 square miles, is 400 miles long and averaging fifty miles in width. Butte and Colusa Counties are within the Central Valley-North subregion. This subregion is less intensively farmed and much less urbanized than the other two subregions. The area has greater water availability, more open space, and less development activity (PG&E 1997).

Agriculture is the dominant land use in the project area. Agriculture and related activities occupy 43 and 61 percent of lands within Butte and Colusa Counties, respectively (<http://govinfo.library.orst.edu/cgi-bin/usaco-list> 1992). Large acreage fields dedicated

to the production of rice characterize lands west of Highway 99. Row crops and orchards lie along the east and west sides of the Sacramento River. To the west of the river, rice fields dominate the area up to Interstate 5, where they are again interspersed with row crops extending to the Delevan Interconnect Facility.

The total amount of prime farmland¹ in Butte and Colusa Counties covers more than 800,000 acres, which constitutes approximately 59 percent of those counties' total agricultural land acreage and 38.5 percent of their total land base. Total annual sales of agricultural products in the project area are approximately \$6 million annually (California DOF 1999).

LOCAL SETTING

Butte County Existing Conditions

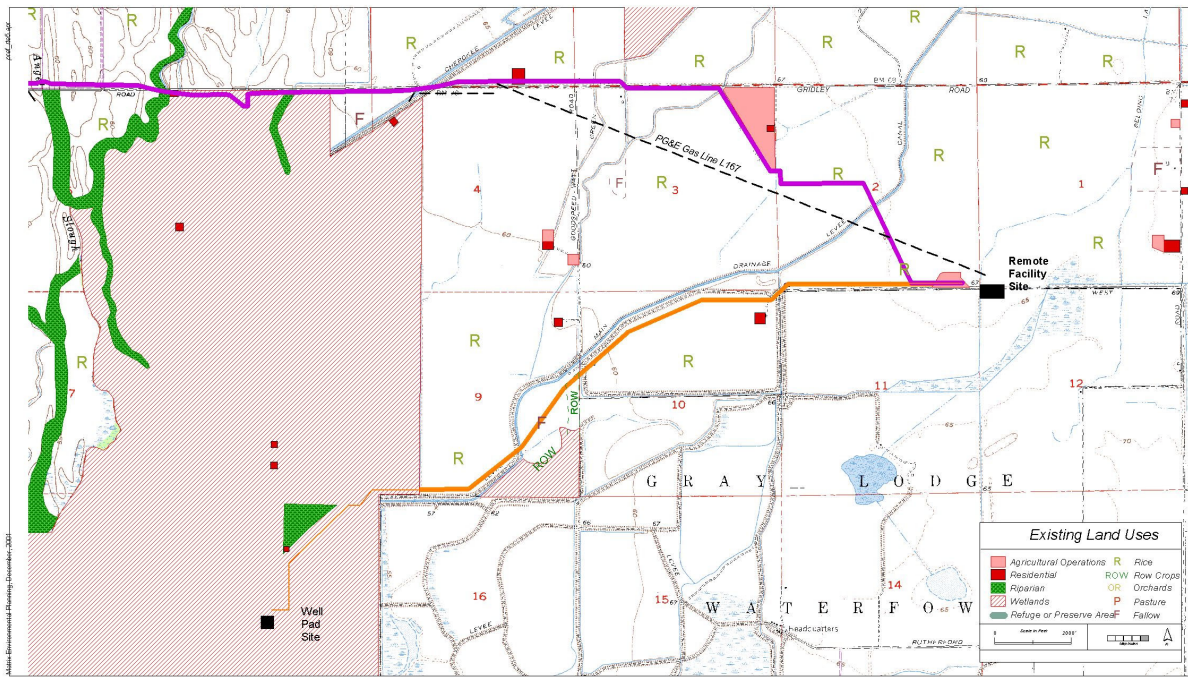
The Agricultural Element and the Land Use Element of the Butte County General Plan encourage the protection and enhancement of agriculture and prime agricultural lands (Butte County 1995, 2000). The portion of the project study area within Butte County is designated "Orchard" and "Field Crop" land. This designation generally allows orchard and crop production as the primary uses, with hunting, water-related recreation, resource extraction and processing as secondary uses. Non-agricultural uses may be considered where buffers can be incorporated into the design of the alternative land use. Butte County also has an Energy Resource Policy, which encourages the development of natural gas fields. Implementation of these land use policies is provided for in the county zoning ordinance.

Agriculture. The project study area is zoned for agriculture with a 40-acre minimum parcel size (A-40). The Butte County Zoning Ordinance allows gas wells, including re-injection wells, and the erection, construction, alteration, or maintenance of gas transmission facilities. Both the Butte County General Plan and Zoning Ordinance are available at their website (www.buttecounty.net) by following links to Development Services and Planning Division.

The project study area within the County is currently used for agriculture and resource management. The existing land uses shown in Figures 3.9-1 a-e are based on aerial photo interpretation, field truthing where accessible by vehicle, and views from low-level

¹ Prime farmlands are defined in the California Government Code 51201(c) as: (1) all land that qualifies for rating as class I or class II in the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service's land use capability classifications; (2) land that qualifies for rating 80 through 100 in the Storie Rating Index; (3) land that supports livestock used for the production of food and fiber and has an annual carrying capacity equivalent to at least one animal-unit per acre as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture; (4) land planted with fruit- or nut-bearing trees, vines, bushes, or crops that have a nonbearing period of less than five years and will normally return during the commercial bearing period on an annual basis from the production of unprocessed agricultural plant production not less than \$200 per acre; and (5) land that has returned from the production of unprocessed agricultural plant products an annual gross value of not less than \$200 per acre for three of the previous five years.

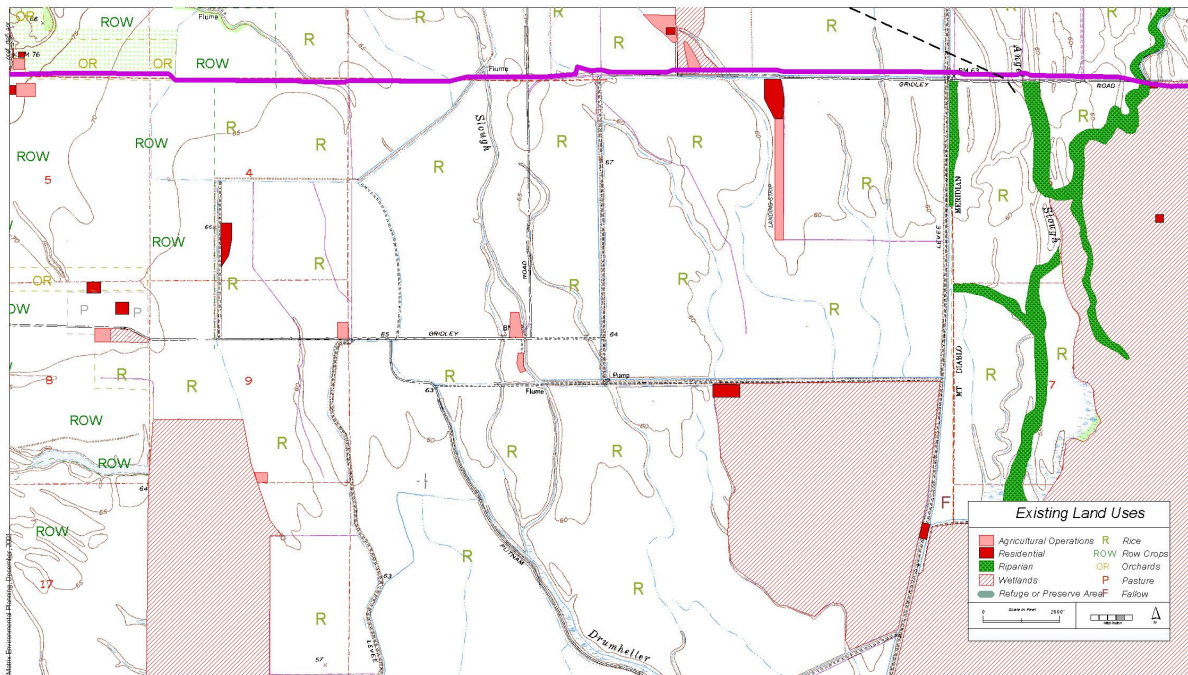
Figure 3.9-1a: Existing Land Uses in Project Area



SOURCE: MHA 2002

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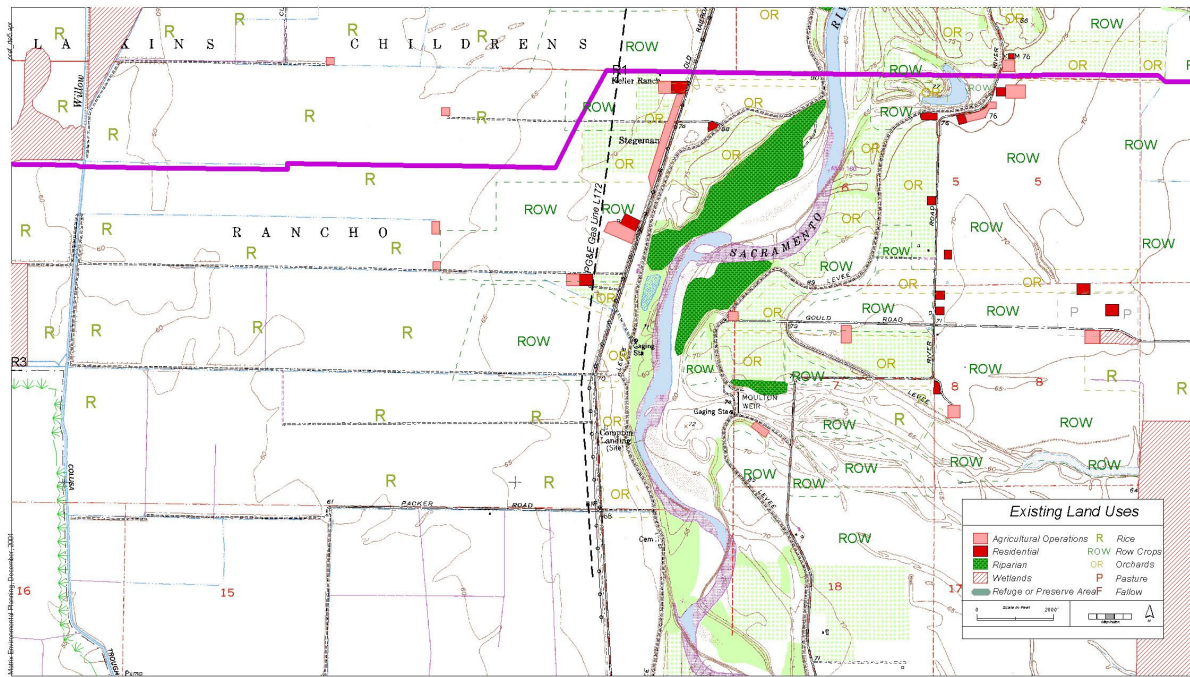
Figure 3.9-1b: Existing Land Uses in Project Area



SOURCE: MHA 2002

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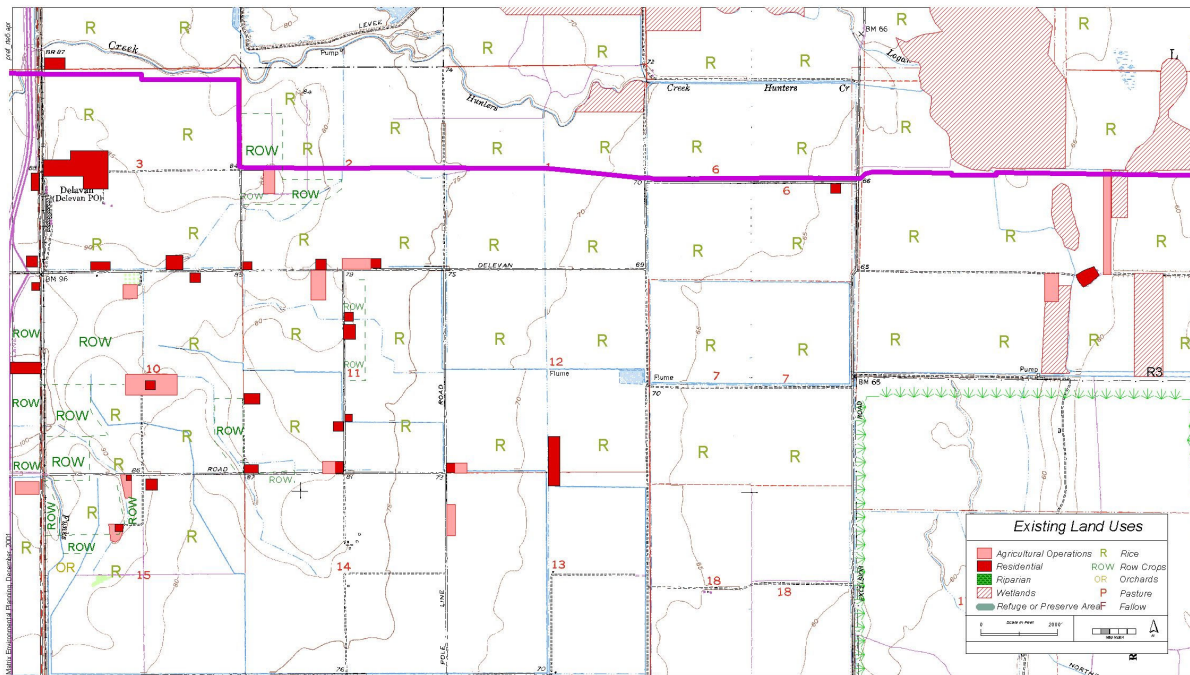
Figure 3.9-1c: Existing Land Uses in Project Area



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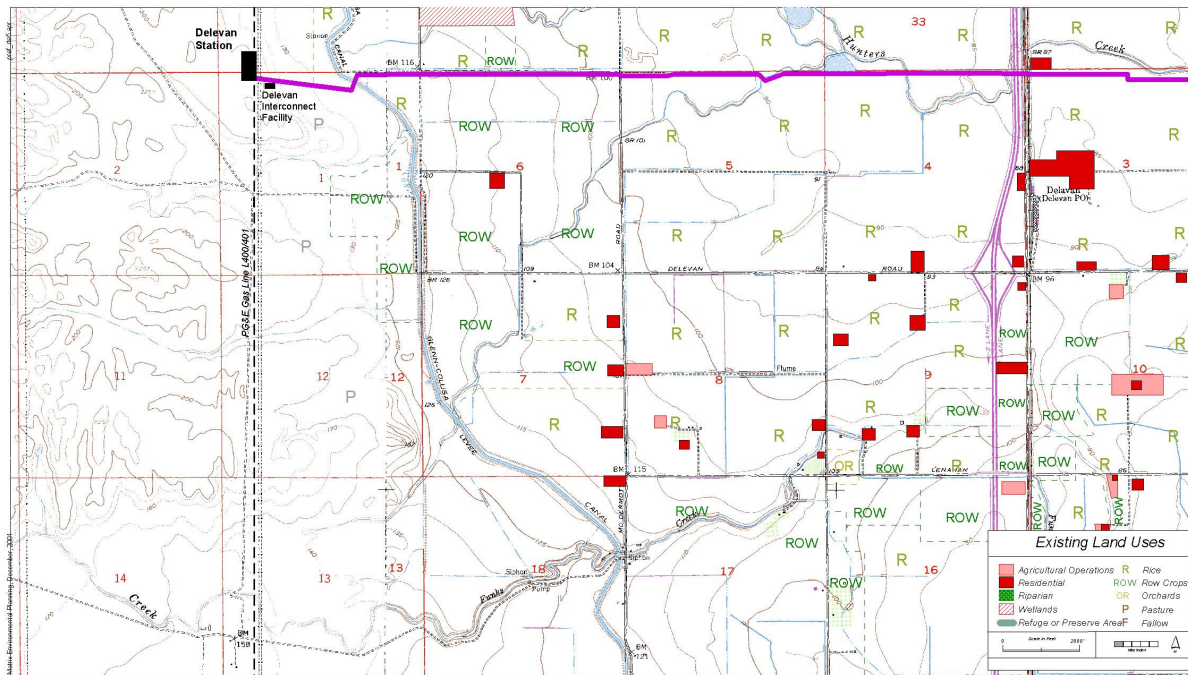
Figure 3.9-1d: Existing Land Uses in Project Area



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Figure 3.9-1e: Existing Land Uses in Project Area



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airplane flights where not vehicle-accessible. There are no approved or proposed (future) land use changes in the project study area. The area is predominately agriculture and would be expected to continue to be so for the foreseeable future of 5 to 10 years. Prior to a different or more intense development pattern in the project area the counties would be required to amend their respective General Plans and Zoning Ordinances, which would be accompanied by independent environmental analyses at that time.

Large-acreage farms dedicated almost entirely to rice production characterize the western edge of Butte County. Irrigation water from canals and ditches is introduced at the high end of the fields to allow sequential flooding of down-gradient fields. Dikes separate fields, and water level and movement is controlled by check boxes. The rice fields in the vicinity of the Remote Facility Site have been leveled, allowing large tracts to be farmed more efficiently with higher production rates. Additional agriculture operation areas identified in Figure 3.9-1 include open equipment storage, silos, barns, shops, and similar support buildings.

According to the modern soil survey for Butte County recently completed by the US Natural Resource Conservation Service, the majority of the lands devoted to rice farming are now considered “prime agricultural lands” because they are irrigated. During previous regulatory approval of the initial WGSJ project development, however, these lands were not considered prime due to the poor drainage characteristics of the soil.

Some project lands may be located within the Land Conservation Act (LCA); Agricultural preserve maps indicate those areas are being obtained and are presented in Figure 3.2-1a-b. Soil maps are included as Attachment 8 to the Wetland Delineation Report (Essex Environmental 2001) that is part of the WGSJ Army Corps of Engineer’s application. The Soil Conservation Service Soil mapped the land-use capability classifications (1967).

Residential. Scattered residences in the project study area are either single-family homes associated with farming operations or hunting clubs with multiple housing units. There are a total of four individual residences and one hunting club with a residence within 220 yards of the proposed project facilities in Butte County. Three of these residences along the proposed Line 400/401 Connection Pipeline and two are along the proposed Loop Pipeline (dwelling units within 220 yards of these facilities were identified based on 2000 aerial photography and were field verified). The proposed pipeline alignments generally pass through areas consisting of dispersed rural residences.

A small private airstrip is located along Gridley Road approximately 2 miles from the intersection of West Liberty Road. One of the residences discussed above is associated with this airstrip.

The one hunting club located along the Line 400/401 Connection Pipeline route consists primarily of between 20 and 30 travel trailers, many of which are parked at the club year-round. The club is located on Gridley Road approximately one mile west of the Butte Sink and use of the club is almost exclusively limited to the waterfowl-hunting season.

Resource Management and Recreation. The California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) manages the Gray Lodge Wildlife Management Area just south of the Remote Facility Site and the Upper Butte Basin Wildlife Management Area north of the project in the Butte Sink. These areas provide wildlife viewing opportunities and hunting as part of their primary function of waterfowl and habitat management. Private-governmental cooperative programs provide recreational hunting for waterfowl and upland game birds

(pheasant) on some of the private lands in the project vicinity, and many property owners lease their rice fields to hunters during the fallow fall and winter months. Duck hunting season typically starts in early- to mid-October and concludes by the end of January. Pheasant season is usually one month long, beginning in early- to mid-November. There is no local, state, or federal recreation areas in the Butte County portion of the project study area.

Several parcels in the project study area are wetland habitats managed for recreational hunting by private hunting clubs. The management of these lands includes grading and vegetation manipulation to create, maintain, or enhance waterfowl habitat. In addition, controlled flooding of these areas on a seasonal basis contributes to the resource and habitat values.

At several locations in Butte County, private rice-producing farmland has been returned to managed wetlands through the grading and vegetation management techniques described above. One such parcel, the Piper's Patch club adjacent to the Cherokee Canal, has granted the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) a conservation easement, which ensures the property will be maintained in perpetuity for the benefit of migratory waterfowl. Both the Loop Pipeline and the Line 400/401 Connection Pipeline route cross the Piper's Patch property. According to the terms of the conservation easement, the USFWS must approve the granting of any rights (e.g. pipeline easement) on properties covered by its easement. WGSJ would need to obtain the necessary USFWS approvals for any conservation easement lands affected by the proposed project components.

There are no known Habitat Conservation Plans (HCP) or Natural Community Conservation Plans (NCCP) in the project study area. The proposed project was designed to avoid wildlife refuges in the area.

Colusa County Existing Conditions

As in Butte County, the principal policy of the Land Use Plan for Colusa County is to promote harmonious land use and preserve and enhance agriculture. The land use designation for the majority of the land within the project study area is Agriculture (A-G). Land within this designation is generally used for orchard and crop production. Secondary uses in A-G areas include oil and natural gas drilling, non-intensive recreation, agricultural industry, and agricultural support uses, providing that these uses do not interfere with the viability of agriculture or create environmental hazards.

The two zoning districts, which encompass the majority of the project study area in Colusa County, are Agricultural Preserve (A-P) and Exclusive Agriculture (E-A). Two other zoning districts in the project study area, Rural Service Center (RSC) and Designated Floodway (DF), also occur. The north-south strip along Interstate 5 near the Delevan Road interchange is designated RSC. This is an area of small, predominantly residential settlements. Commercial and residential uses are permissible within this area, provided that they conform to the zoning requirements for such uses. The agricultural areas along the Sacramento River and the Colusa Drain have a zoning overlay classification of DF, as designated by the State Reclamation Board of the Department of Water Resources.

The Colusa County zoning ordinance provides a general allowance for pipelines and associated facilities in all zoning districts, following Planning Commission review and approval of site, route, and facility plans as part of a land use permit.

The project study area within Colusa County in the vicinity of the proposed Line 400/401 Connection Pipeline, the valve lot(s), and the Delevan Interconnect Facility are composed of agricultural lands, riparian lands, and managed wetlands. There are no approved or proposed (future) land use changes in the project study area. The area is predominately agriculture and will continue to be so in the future for at least the next 5 to 10 years. Prior to a different or more intense development pattern in the project area amendment of the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance, which would be accompanied by independent environmental analyses at that time.

Agriculture. Large farms dominate most of the project study area in Colusa County. The land is primarily flat and used for rice production, orchards, and row crops. Rice is the dominant crop in the county; however, near the Sacramento River, there are fruit and nut orchards as well as row crops. The annual grasslands found west of the Glenn-Colusa Canal are used for cattle grazing (Figure 3.9-1).

Agricultural preserve maps that indicate which project lands may be located within the Land Conservation Act (LCA) are included in the Agriculture section (Figure 3.2-1a-b).

Residential. There are a total of six individual residences within 220 yards of the proposed project facilities in Colusa County, one of which is associated with a private airstrip. Residential uses within this portion of the project study area are primarily related to farming operations.

Resource Management and Recreation. In the Colusa County section of the project study area, the USFWS manages two national wildlife refuges – the Delevan and the Sacramento. These areas provide wildlife viewing opportunities and hunting as part of their primary function of waterfowl and habitat management areas. Private-governmental cooperative programs provide recreational hunting for waterfowl and upland game birds (pheasant) on some of the private lands in the project vicinity, and a few property owners lease their rice fields to hunters during the fallow fall and winter months. There are no local, state, or federal recreation areas in the Colusa County portion of the project study area.

Several parcels in the project study area are wetland habitats managed for recreational hunting by private hunting clubs. The management of these lands includes grading and vegetation manipulation to create, maintain, or enhance waterfowl habitat. In addition, controlled flooding of these areas on a seasonal basis contributes to resource and habitat value. A large managed wetland complex exists north of the proposed Line 400/401 Connection Pipeline route in the Colusa Trough about midway between the Sacramento River and Interstate 5.

A Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) has been initiated in April 2001 by the USFWS for the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge (SRNWR). The southern boundary of the town of Princeton for the SRNWR is less than 0.5 miles north of the project study area. The project study area falls within the Sacramento River Conservation Area (SRCA). The goal of the Conservation area is to restore and protect a continuous riparian corridor along the Sacramento River between Keswick Dam in Shasta County and Verona in Sutter County at the confluence of the Feather River. Further discussion of the guiding

principles, along with the recommendations for the portion of the Sacramento River in the project study area are provided in Chapter 3.4: Biology.

Regulatory Setting

The main tools used in land use regulation are the planning documents, ordinances, and permitting procedures employed by the local agencies. The general plan assembles the local jurisdiction's basic land use doctrine and regulates future land use decisions. Zoning ordinances govern the type and intensity of land uses and set standards for development within a city or county.

FEDERAL SETTING

No federal regulations apply to potential impacts on land use in the project area.

STATE/REGIONAL SETTING

No state or regional regulations apply to potential impacts on land use in the project area.

LOCAL SETTING

Butte County

The Butte County General Plan Land Use Element includes a series of policies that are relevant to the proposed project:

- 1.2.a:** Plan for future development of all incorporated and unincorporated areas with county boundaries.
- 1.2.b:** Consult with incorporated cities and neighboring counties in the development of planning proposals for areas of mutual concerns.
- 1.5.a:** Seek wide public participation in development of land use policies and proposals.
- 1.7.c:** Encourage development in and around existing communities with public facilities.
- 2.1.c:** Allow a wide range of agricultural and necessary accessory uses in crop production areas.
- 2.4.d:** Require proof of adequate water supply for all new development.
- 2.4.e:** Conservation of water and energy will be considered in approving plans for new development.
- 2.7.b:** Encourage the development of natural gas fields and other fossil fuel sources.
- 2.7.d:** Promote conservation of energy resources in reviewing proposed developments.
- 5.1.b:** Provide a circulation system and plan that is consistent with and will support existing and proposed patterns and densities of land use.
- 5.3.b:** Require adequate drainage improvements for new development.
- 5.4.a:** Encourage expansion of private utility systems consistent with County plans and policies.

6.1.a: Maintain public health and safety by requiring proper location and design for uses with offensive odors, dust, smoke, light, traffic, vibration, explosives, pollutants, insects and similar blighting influences.

6.5.d: Regulate development to facilitate survival of identified rare or endangered plants and animals.

6.7.a: Identify and evaluate all cultural resources impacted proposed projects before approval and development.

7.1.a: Consider fire hazards in all land use and zoning decisions, environmental review, subdivision review and the provision of public services.

7.3.a: Limit development in areas with significant drainage and flooding problems until adequate drainage or flood control facilities are provided.

Colusa County

The Colusa County General Plan includes a series of policies that are relevant to the proposed project:

LU-4: Agriculture and resource management should be the primary land uses outside of the designated communities. Freestanding subdivisions isolated from existing communities and lacking urban services should be prohibited.

LU-7: The proposed development pattern should protect the scenic values of Colusa County. More restrictive design standards should be developed within the communities to encourage visually attractive development and lessen the visual impact of existing non-conforming uses.

LU-9: The proposed development pattern should protect the integrity of agriculture and shall not in any way create a hardship for the county's farmers. Lands presently in agricultural uses that do not adjoin existing communities should be protected through the county's land use regulations. In addition, the CEQA Initial Study checklist should consider the potential impact of proposed development on existing and adjoining agricultural operations and on water supply.

LU-12: Potential conflicts between airports or landing strips and surrounding land uses shall be avoided by closely regulating future development in take off and approach zones.

LU-17: Multiple uses (grazing, forestry, and recreation) should be allowed on conservation lands so long as environmental resources are protected.

LU-18: Public lands in the National Forest and Wildlife Refuges should be protected from encroachment by activities on adjacent lands that could damage environmental quality. Agriculture, in kind, should be protected from encroachment by activities on adjacent National Forest and Wildlife Refuge lands.

LU-20: Lands designated for General or Upland Agriculture should continue to be used for agriculture for at least the duration of the planning period (1987-2010). Such period may be extended by future revisions of the plan.

LU-25: Exploration and extraction of oil, gas, and other mineral resources should be conducted in such a way that conflicts with agricultural uses are minimized and permanent interference with agricultural operations is avoided, and in a way that is consistent with the land use compatibility requirements of the Williamson Act, for those lands that are now under contract.

LU-28: Preservation of agricultural land under the Williamson Act should be an option available to all those who qualify.

LU-44: The County Chamber of Commerce, Farm Bureau, Board of Supervisors and Economic Development Commission should work together to determine the types of business and industry appropriate to enhance the county's economy, and endeavor to bring such industries into the county. First priority should be given to businesses that are compatible with Colusa County agriculture and enhance the quality of life in Colusa County.

LU-52: Cooperation and coordination between the city councils of incorporated cities and Colusa County shall be encouraged. Proposed projects outside the primary spheres of influence but within three miles of the city boundaries of Colusa or Williams shall be jointly reviewed by the appropriate city and the county.

LU-57: In those instances where development is appropriate as provided in Policy OS-1², development shall occur only as planned developments or under specific plans (G.C. 65450). Nothing herein is intended to prohibit those uses defined in Land Use Policies LU-23 through LU-27 inclusively.

Impact Analysis

AREAS OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

Under CEQA, project actions would result in potentially significant impacts if they:

- Physically divide an established community.
- Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.
- Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan.

THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The project would have a significant adverse effect if project effects meet the thresholds defined below.

Physically Divide an Established Community. Project related actions are considered to have a significant impact on land use for the area if they alter the physical lay-out of the community by creating a split in use already established in a way that results in an adverse impact to the current land use. In particular, a significant impact would result from placement of a new project facility within an existing farm operation.

Conflict with applicable Plans, Policies, or Regulations. If project operations consist of a use that differs from or does not conform with the approved uses within the general plan or zoning ordinance for that area, a significant impact would result. In addition, project

² Policy OS-1 (Open Space Element) indicates that areas designated for Resource Conservation, Agriculture-General, and Agriculture-Upland should remain in open space unless development would be consistent with community plans or land use policies (LU-1 through LU-56).

components must adhere to the restrictions established by zoning ordinances for both counties for building heights, setbacks, etc.

Conflict with Habitat Conservation or Natural Community Plans. Any conflict between the construction and operation of the proposed project and the terms of a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) or Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP) would be considered a significant impact.

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines a project will normally have a significant effect on the environment if it will “conflict with adopted environmental plans and goals of the community where it is located”. The question that must be assessed is whether or not a proposed project conforms and furthers the goals and policies established by the local community or if a proposed project conflicts with those goals and policies. If a conflict exists, then it is considered a significant impact.

IMPACT DISCUSSION

Impact 3.9-1: Physically Divide an Established Community.

The proposed project does not pass through any populated or established communities. The proposed project, with the exception of the Well Pad Site and Remote Facility Site expansions, would be located beneath the ground surface and would not result in any visible or physical signs of its presence once constructed. Therefore, it can reasonably be concluded that no division of established communities would result from project implementation.

Impact 3.9-2: Conformance with Land Use Plans, Policies, and Regulations

Expansion of the Well Pad Site would remove about 1.4 acres of land of which a portion is now used as non-prime irrigated pasture and cattle grazing. This would be considered a less than significant impact as the land is currently not being used as prime agricultural land.

The Remote Facility Site expansion would permanently remove 5.8 acres of prime agricultural land from production. This is considered to be a significant, unavoidable impact for which mitigation cannot offset the loss to less than significant.

Tables 3.9-1 and 3.9-2 present the preparers’ analysis of existing General Plan goals and policies relevant to the proposed project to determine whether or not the project is consistent with these rules. As shown in Table 3.9-1 and 3.9-2, the proposed project conforms to all existing General Plan goals and policies deemed relevant to the proposed project.

Table 3.9-1: Butte County Existing General Plan Goal and Policy Evaluation

Policy	Consistent/Inconsistent	Mitigation Recommended
To plan for future development of all incorporated and unincorporated areas with county boundaries (1.2.a)	<i>Consistent</i> – The project site has been previously developed as a gas storage field, so the initial project re-established a prior use for the Well Pad Site. The Expansion project would further develops the existing approved use in responding to the State’s energy crisis.	None required.
To consult with incorporated cities and neighboring counties in the development of planning proposals for areas of mutual concern (1.2.b.)	<i>Consistent</i> – During both the initial project development and prior to the proposed expansion project, WGSII has consulted with neighboring counties, political representatives, farmer associations, wildlife refuge management, and other concerned citizens. Letters of support have been received from all these groups and additional scoping meetings were held in both counties prior to initiation of the current CEQA review document for the expansion project.	None required.
To seek wide public participation in development of land use policies and proposals (1.5.a.)	<i>Consistent</i> - Public participation has been conducted for the proposed expansion project. Farmers have been engaged by WGSII in ongoing consultation for project effects to private property and farming operations. WGSII has conducted ongoing coordination since prior to the initial project with the owners of the Wild Goose Club and the area manager for the Gray Lodge Management Area.	None required.
To encourage development in and around existing communities with public facilities (1.7.c.)	<i>Consistent</i> – While the proposed project would be developed in predominantly a remote area in both Butte and Colusa counties, the project would not require public facilities during the operations phase. No additional population growth is anticipated by project operations to require use of public facilities.	None required.
To allow a wide range of agricultural and necessary accessory uses in crop production areas (2.1.c.)	<i>Consistent</i> – The proposed pipelines would not preclude the current use of land for rice or crop production except for the Remote Facility Site and Well Pad Site. Compensation would be made for any loss of production during construction. Mitigation measures have been proposed to insure a less than significant impact.	Refer to the Agriculture section for specific mitigation required.
To require proof of	<i>Consistent</i> – Water used for dust control	None required.

Policy	Consistent/Inconsistent	Mitigation Recommended
adequate water supply for all new development (2.4.d.)	during construction would be drawn from existing canals. Water needs during project operations would be minimal, and only required at the Remote Facility Site where the existing domestic well would serve the proposed expansion.	
Conservation of water and energy will be considered in approving plans for new development (2.4.e.)	<i>Consistent</i> – Water needs during operations for the proposed project would be minimal. The purpose of the project is to provide for an additional energy source by expansion of the existing natural gas storage field. Natural gas can be utilized to meet demands for a variety of customers as well as to support gas-fired electricity generation.	None required.
To Encourage the development of natural gas fields and other fossil fuel sources (2.7.b.)	<i>Consistent</i> – The purpose of the proposed project is to add additional wells and expand the capacity of the existing natural gas storage field, which was re-established in 1997.	None required.
To promote conservation of energy resources in reviewing proposed developments (2.7.d.)	<i>Consistent</i> – One of the goals of the proposed project is to maximize the use of a natural gas energy resource by expanding the storage capacity of the existing WGSJ gas field.	None required.
To provide a circulation system and plan that is consistent with and will support existing and proposed patterns and densities of land use (5.1.b.)	<i>Consistent</i> – The proposed project would implement a Transportation Management Plan with measures during construction and operations to insure a less than significant effect to the project area. This plan would require WGSJ to coordinate any mitigation measures with Butte, Colusa, and Sutter Counties as appropriate.	Refer to the Transportation section for specific mitigation required.
To require adequate drainage improvements for new development (5.3.b.)	<i>Consistent</i> – The proposed project would not alter existing drainage patterns. Following pipeline construction, all disturbed surfaces would be returned to their pre-construction elevation and slope. Above-ground facilities would be covered with gravel to allow storm water infiltration and any runoff would flow to existing drainage ways. Although fill material would be placed to expand the elevated well pad, the loss of flood channel capacity in this portion of the Butte Sink is not considered significant. The SWPPP prepared for initial project development would be revised to include the proposed project components.	Refer to the Hydrology section for specific mitigation required.
To encourage expansion of	<i>Consistent</i> – The current WGSJ gas storage	None required.

Policy	Consistent/Inconsistent	Mitigation Recommended
private utility systems consistent with County plans and policies (5.4.a.)	field is a privately owned utility. While the proposed expansion project would tie into the PG&E Line 400/401 backbone system, the pipeline and expanded storage field would remain a wholly owned subsidiary of Alberta Energy Company (AEC).	
To maintain public health and safety by requiring proper location and design for uses with offensive odors, dust, smoke, light, traffic, vibration, explosives, pollutants, insects and similar blighting influences (6.1.a.)	<i>Consistent</i> – During project construction Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be utilized to insure a less than significant effect to public health and safety.	None required.
To regulate development to facilitate survival of identified rare or endangered plants and animals (6.5.d.)	<i>Consistent</i> – The primary sensitive biological species in the project study area are California Hibiscus and Giant Garter Snake. Several mitigation measures have been proposed for project construction and operation to insure a less than significant impact. A Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan that defines the level of environmental monitoring during construction and describes how the specified mitigation measures would be implemented is included as Chapter 6.0 of this document.	Refer to the Biology section for specific mitigation required.
To identify and evaluate all cultural resources impacted by proposed projects before approval and development (6.7.a.)	<i>Consistent</i> – In general, the project study area is considered to be sensitive for cultural resources, primarily unrecorded historic resources. Resources in Butte County include the Gray Lodge Wildlife Management Area and the two contributing elements of Reclamation District 833, the Main Drainage Canal (ca. 1920) and Cherokee Canal (Lateral A; ca. 1920). The Historic Properties Management Plan (HPMP) completed during initial WGSi project development in 1997 would be amended to include the proposed project components, and stipulate the compliance measures to be followed for any additional work or expansion associated with the project. These measures would be incorporated into the proposed project to ensure potential impacts are a less than significant.	Refer to the Cultural Resources section for specific mitigation required.
To consider fire hazards in all land use and zoning	<i>Consistent</i> – AEC, the parent company of WGSi, is an established oil and gas, gas	Refer to Hazards section for specific

Policy	Consistent/Inconsistent	Mitigation Recommended
decisions, environmental review, subdivision review and the provision of public services (7.1.a.)	storage, and pipeline operator with excellent safety records. For WGSI, pipeline safety standards exceed all minimum Department of Transportation (DOT) standards. Various mitigation measures, including BMPs during construction, are part of WGSI's standard operating procedures for the existing facility. These plans would be incorporated into the proposed project to ensure potential fire hazards are a less than significant impact.	mitigation required.
To limit development in areas with significant drainage and flooding problems until adequate drainage or flood control facilities are provided (7.3.a.)	<i>Consistent</i> – While parts of the project study area are prone to significant drainage and flooding problems, the proposed project would incorporate an amended SWPPP and BMPs, particularly along the Sacramento River and other flood prone areas.	Refer to the Hydrology section for specific mitigation required.

SOURCE: Butte County General Plan Land Use Element 2000 and MHA

Table 3.9-2: Colusa County Existing General Plan Goal and Policy Evaluation

Policy	Consistent/Inconsistent	Mitigation Recommended
Agriculture and resource management should be the primary land uses outside of the designated communities. Freestanding subdivisions isolated from existing communities and lacking urban services should be prohibited (LU-4).	<i>Consistent</i> – While the proposed project is predominantly within A-G designation, secondary uses in A-G areas include oil and natural gas drilling providing that this use does not interfere with the viability of agriculture or create environmental hazards. As accessory facilities to natural gas drilling and production, the proposed project components are consistent with the County General Plan.	None required.
The proposed development pattern should protect the scenic values of Colusa County. More restrictive design standards should be developed within the communities to encourage visually attractive development and lessen the visual impact of existing non-conforming uses (LU-7).	<i>Consistent</i> – Since natural gas production has been occurring for many years in the area, natural gas wells, pipelines, and valve facilities are relatively commonplace. Project components such as buildings and towers would be constructed and painted to be as unobtrusive as is feasible. Specific measures have been provided to lessen this impact to a less than significant level.	Refer to the Aesthetics section specific mitigation required.
The proposed development pattern should protect the integrity of agriculture and	<i>Consistent</i> – WGSI engaged farmers in ongoing consultation for project effects to private property and farming operations. The	None required.

Policy	Consistent/Inconsistent	Mitigation Recommended
<p>shall not in any way create a hardship for the county’s farmers. Lands presently in agricultural uses that do not adjoin existing communities should be protected through the county’s land use regulations. In addition, the CEQA Initial Study checklist should consider the potential impact of proposed development on existing and adjoining agricultural operations and on water supply (LU-9).</p>	<p>CPUC conducted two public scoping meetings to solicit comments on the project. Permanent land rights would be required in the form of easements for the pipelines and either long-term leases or fee purchase for the other above ground components. Except for the main line block valve lot(s), the easement areas would be returned to their previous use, while the lease or fee purchase areas would be permanently dedicated to the particular project use. The project would require minimal water during both construction and operations.</p>	
<p>Potential conflicts between airports or landing strips and surrounding land uses shall be avoided by closely regulating future development in take off and approach zones.</p>	<p><i>Consistent</i> – Within the Colusa County portion of the project area, the Line 400/401 Connection Pipeline easement would pass approximately 1160 feet from the north end of the private airstrip. Construction activities in the vicinity of the airstrip along the pipeline route would be coordinated with the owners/users of the strip to ensure that the construction activities do not represent a hazard to the use of the strip.</p>	<p>Refer to the Transportation section for specific mitigation required.</p>
<p>Multiple uses (grazing, forestry, and recreation) should be allowed on conservation lands so long as environmental resources are protected (LU-17).</p>	<p><i>Consistent</i> – Within Colusa County, the project study area falls within the Sacramento River Conservation Area (SRCA). The goal of the Conservation Area is to restore and protect a continuous riparian corridor along the Sacramento River between Keswick Dam in Shasta County and Verona in Sutter County at the confluence of the Feather River. Construction activities within the SRCA would use BMPs to ensure that any impact would be less than significant. Other measures are proposed by WGSJ that would avoid or minimize potential impacts to biological resources.</p>	<p>None required.</p>
<p>Public lands in the National Forest and Wildlife Refuges should be protected from encroachment by activities on adjacent lands that could</p>	<p><i>Consistent</i> – Construction of the Line 400/401 Connection Pipeline would avoid or minimize potential impacts to resources or activities within the Delevan and Sacramento NWR.</p>	<p>None required.</p>

Policy	Consistent/Inconsistent	Mitigation Recommended
<p>damage environmental quality. Agriculture, in kind, should be protected from encroachment by activities on adjacent National Forest and Wildlife Refuge lands (LU-18).</p>		
<p>Lands designated for General or Upland Agriculture should continue to be used for agriculture for at least the duration of the planning period (1987-2010). Such period may be extended by future revisions of the plan (LU-20).</p>	<p><i>Consistent</i> – The proposed project is within the General Agriculture designation, which includes gas drilling and accessory operations as a permitted use. Compensation would be made to the landowner for any land required for the project’s permanent easement. This mitigation would reduce the impact to less than significant.</p>	<p>Refer to the Agriculture section for specific mitigation required.</p>
<p>Exploration and extraction of oil, gas, and other mineral resources should be conducted in such a way that conflicts with agricultural uses are minimized and permanent interference with agricultural operations is avoided, and in a way that is consistent with the land use compatibility requirements of the Williamson Act, for those lands that are now under contract (LU-25).</p>	<p><i>Consistent</i> – While the Williamson Act contract limits development of the property to agriculturally based uses, the statute provides certain exemptions to these use limitations for public utility improvements. If the proposed project components cross or affect lands subject to Williamson Act contracts, WGSII would be required provide notice to the California Department of Conservation consistent with the statutory requirements in Government Code § 51290 et. Seq.</p>	<p>None required.</p>
<p>Preservation of agricultural land under the Williamson Act should be an option available to all those who qualify (LU-28).</p>	<p><i>Consistent</i> – Lands under Williamson Act contracts must comply with regulations pertaining to parcel size, allowable development, and compatible uses. Section 9-1810.3 of the Williamson Act, “Terms of Contract”, outlines allowable uses for properties under contract, including petroleum and natural gas extraction and utilities services. Termination a Williamson Act contract requires notification to the Department of Conservation.</p>	<p>None required.</p>
<p>The County Chamber of Commerce, Farm Bureau, Board of Supervisors and</p>	<p><i>Consistent</i> – The proposed project study area is predominantly within the agriculture preserve or A-P zone and exclusive</p>	<p>None required.</p>

Policy	Consistent/Inconsistent	Mitigation Recommended
<p>Economic Development Commission should work together to determine the types of business and industry appropriate to enhance the county's economy, and endeavor to bring such industries into the county. First priority should be given to businesses that are compatible with Colusa County agriculture and enhance the quality of life in Colusa County (LU-44).</p>	<p>agriculture or E-A zone. The Colusa County Zoning Ordinance states that uses permitted with a use permit include exploratory drilling and production of fossil fuels and geothermal power. The project would expand the existing WGSII gas storage field, which would be consistent with the established uses permitted by the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance.</p>	
<p>Cooperation and coordination between the city councils of incorporated cities and Colusa County shall be encouraged. Proposed projects outside the primary spheres of influence but within three miles of the city boundaries of Colusa or Williams shall be jointly reviewed by the appropriate city and the county (LU-52).</p>	<p><i>Consistent</i> – WGSII has worked to garner support from a wide cross-section of the local community for the expansion project. Supportive letters have been sent to WGSII (or the CPUC directly) from elected officials in the area. The Colusa County Board of Supervisors has passed a resolution endorsing the project expansion. Prior to preparation of the environmental document for the expansion project, a scoping meeting was held in Colusa County to ensure all communities have another chance at public participation.</p>	<p>None required.</p>
<p>In those instances where development is appropriate as provided in Policy OS-1³, development shall occur only as planned developments or under specific plans (G.C. 65450). Nothing herein is intended to prohibit those uses defined in Land Use Policies LU-23 through LU-27 inclusively (LU-57).</p>	<p><i>Consistent</i> – As noted above, the proposed project is consistent with the permitted uses for the A-G designated area within Colusa County. The Zoning Ordinance allows for exploratory drilling and production of fossil fuels and geothermal power, which would include expansion of the existing WGSII project.</p>	<p>None required.</p>

³ Policy OS-1 (Open Space Element) indicates that areas designated for Resource Conservation, Agriculture-General, and Agriculture-Upland should remain in open space unless development would be consistent with community plans or land use policies (LU-1 through LU-56).

SOURCE: Colusa County General Plan Land Use Element 1989 and MHA

Impact 3.9-3: Conflict with Habitat Conservation or Natural Community Conservation Plans

The proposed project does not pass through any populated or established communities. The proposed project, with the exception of the Well Pad and Remote Facility Site expansions, would be located beneath the ground surface and would not result in any visible or physical signs of its presence once constructed. Therefore, it can reasonably be concluded that no division of established communities would result from project implementation.

There are several wildlife refuges and management areas in the project vicinity, but no known HCPs or NCCPs. The proposed construction and operation of the project therefore would not conflict with an HCP or NCCP.

MITIGATION MEASURES

The various measures identified by WGSi to protect resources serve to minimize or avoid inconsistencies with County plans and policies. Additional measures defined in Aesthetics, Agriculture, Biology, Cultural, Hazards, Hydrology, and Transportation would further reduce the potential for inconsistencies with the County plans and policies.

