

Chapter 3. Proposed Land Uses

In recent years, SRCSD has received several formal and informal proposals from both private entities and public agencies requesting that portions of the Bufferlands be set aside for specific uses. This chapter describes these proposed land uses, including their objectives, their proponents, the locations they would affect (see Figure 3–1), and the facilities proposed in association with these requests. To provide context for this discussion, the chapter first describes the administrative procedure established for evaluating proposals submitted to SRCSD for uses of the Bufferlands.

EVALUATION OF PROPOSED LAND USES

This section describes the process for evaluating proposals for alternative uses of the Bufferlands submitted to SRCSD. The purpose of the evaluation process is to ensure that a specific proposed use is consistent with the principal management objectives and the general and principal management policies provided in this master plan.

Although there is no set format for land use proposals for the Bufferlands, applicants should be encouraged to provide relevant information, including:

- › the exact type of use proposed;
- › the number of employees and/or visitors expected, and the frequency and duration of their presence;
- › the nature of equipment to be operated, if any;
- › the type and size of structures proposed for construction, if any;
- › any initial grading and construction activities required; and
- › the projected duration of use.

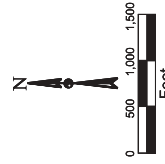
Proposals are submitted in writing to the Bufferlands Administrator (Administrator) by a prospective lessee or by an SRCSD staff person. The Administrator acknowledges receipt of the proposal and initiates the formal review process (Figure 3–2). At the time of submittal, each

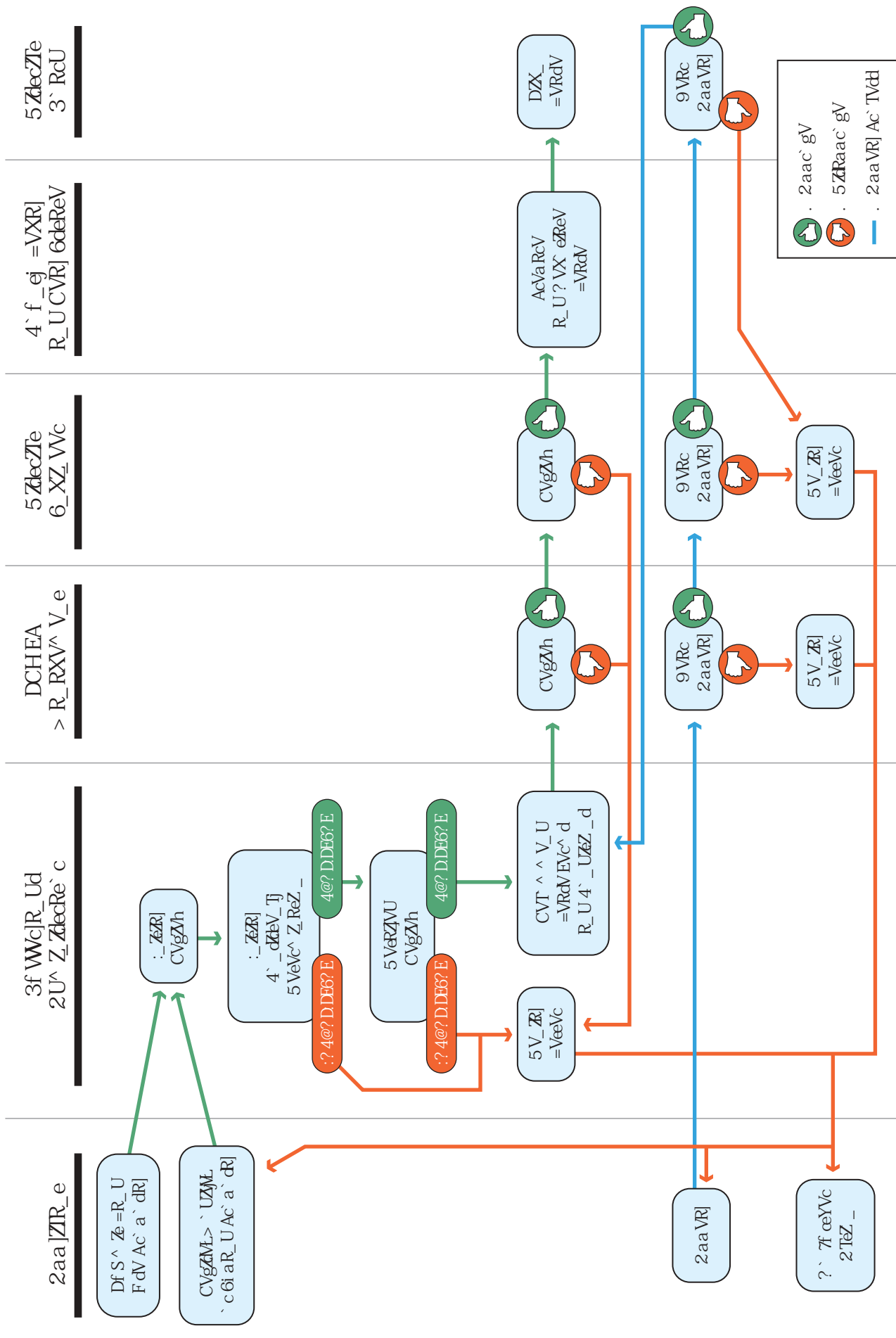
Figure 3-1

Proposed Land Uses on the Bufferlands, as of July 2000

LEGEND

- Plant Boundary
- Plant Process Area Boundary
- Future Outfall Line
- Future Interceptors
- Proposed Consumes River Boulevard
- Proposed South Sacramento Light Rail Transit Route Alternative
- Proposed Dwight Road Extension
- Proposed Fish and Wildlife Habitat Restoration Site
- Trail of Trees Phase II





applicant is apprised of the steps in the review process, of the time required for review, and of any land use constraints that may affect the proposal. Review of proposals will follow the checklist in Appendix E.

After an initial review of the proposal guided by the review checklist (Appendix E), the Administrator may reject a proposed use without further detailed evaluation, based on obvious incompatibility with the principal management objectives and the general and principal management policies of the Bufferlands. A denial letter will be sent to the applicant explaining the incompatibility of the proposed use with Bufferlands management policies and strategies. The Administrator may also reject a proposed use if the applicant fails to provide adequate detail regarding the nature and substance of the proposed use. If a proposal is rejected, the applicant may resubmit a modified or revised proposal at any time. An applicant may also appeal a denial to the District Engineer, and if unsuccessful, to the SRCSD Board.

Policy Screening

If initial review indicates that a proposed use appears to be consistent with Bufferland objectives and policies, the proposal will be further evaluated to ensure that it is consistent with Plant security and safety guidelines, that required services and utilities are available, and that the proposed use is consistent with existing and future uses of adjoining Bufferlands parcels. If an applicant submits a proposal without identifying a specific location on the Bufferlands, the Administrator will complete a compatibility evaluation checklist and identify areas on the Bufferlands that would be incompatible with the proposed use. Consideration of the use will subsequently be confined to the remaining conditionally compatible areas.

Availability and Consistency

If the proposal successfully passes the policy screening process, the Administrator will then determine the availability of land that may be compatible with the proposed use, and that is currently unleased or that may become available via lease expiration or termination.

PROPOSED LAND USES

South Sacramento Light Rail Project

In 1995, the Sacramento Regional Transit District (RT) and the Federal Transit Administration selected the Light Rail Transportation–Low; UPRR Alignment as the preferred investment strategy for the South Sacramento Corridor Light Rail Project. As a result, the South Sacramento Corridor Light Rail Project will follow the UPRR right-of-way south from downtown Sacramento as far as Cosumnes River Boulevard, where, according to current plans, it will turn east and follow Cosumnes River Boulevard across Highway 99 to the north side of Old Calvine Road and a station at the intersection of Calvine Road and Auberry Road. Preliminary engineering and construction-level environmental analyses on Phase 1 of this project (to Meadowview Road) were completed in March 1997. Revenue service to Meadowview Road is anticipated in the year 2003.

Portions of the proposed alignment, including the park-and-ride facilities at Franklin Station and Dwight Station, would be in the Bufferlands. The present Land Use Management Plan for the Bufferlands does not permit uses that would constrain operation or expansion of the SRWTP in any way; moreover, uses involving the congregation of large numbers of people (25 or more) are prohibited on the Bufferlands. As mitigation for a potential impact on the Bufferlands area, RT will work with SRCSD to ensure that RT's plan is compatible with SRCSD's Land Use Management Plan or to ask for authorization to use fringe Bufferlands for specific light rail transportation facilities (RT Board Resolution 95-05-2356 May 8, 1995, certifying the final environmental impact report for the South Sacramento Corridor Light Rail Project). The Light Rail Project will not be authorized by SRCSD unless it is developed in a manner consistent with land use management policies identified in this document.

Trail Of Trees Project – Phase II

The Trail of Trees project is an urban forest/landscape effort designed to provide scenic vistas of forest and open space while creating educational opportunities for viewing California Central Valley native plants. This project is also intended to provide visual screening for SRWTP, to provide a green zone that will serve as a firebreak, and to provide habitat for native wildlife. The initial phase of the Trail of Trees project (discussed in Chapter 2) was completed in 1994, and consisted of planting groups of trees, representing Central Valley plant communities, in the vicinity of Sims Road and Franklin Boulevard. Phase I of this project was partially funded by a \$191,000 grant from the National Small Business Administration. Phase II of the project involves the installation of native and non-native shrubs and grasses along the eastern boundary of the Bufferlands from Sims Road north to Cosumnes River Boulevard. These new plantings would supply an understory for the existing Phase I tree canopy.

Cosumnes River Boulevard

The City of Sacramento's Cosumnes River Boulevard project proposes to connect I-5 with State Route 99. The initial phase of the project, construction of Cosumnes River Boulevard from State Route 99 as far as Franklin Boulevard, has been completed. As proposed, the second phase of the project would cross the northern portion of the Bufferlands between Morrison Creek and the northern boundary of the Bufferlands. SRCSD recommends that the alignment of the project be altered so that it crosses the northeastern section of the Bufferlands between Franklin Boulevard and the UPRR and then proceeds northwesterly toward the Stonecrest Avenue overpass. This recommended alignment would minimize encroachment on the Bufferlands, reducing potential impacts on Plant security, public safety, and open space, agricultural and wildlife habitat conservation areas. SRCSD further recommends that the City of Sacramento work closely with SRCSD staff in planning this future project.

Dwight Road Extension

Sacramento County is proposing to extend Dwight Road to the southwest to intersect with Laguna Boulevard. In addition to reducing traffic at the intersection of Laguna Boulevard and Franklin Boulevard and providing a direct connection for the residential areas north of Laguna Boulevard, this road will serve as a secondary access road to the Plant. The Elk Grove Community Services Fire Department requires SRWTP to have a secondary access route located as far south as possible. The current secondary access route is Dwight Road (from Franklin Boulevard). The proposed secondary access route crosses the UPRR, curves across the southeastern corner of the Bufferlands, and intersects Laguna Boulevard approximately 2,000 feet south of the SRWTP boundary. The extension right-of-way would occupy approximately 5 acres of land and would isolate approximately 30 acres of pastureland in the southeast corner of the Bufferlands. There is currently no funding source for this project.

Demonstration Constructed Wetlands

In December of 1999 the five-year monitoring period for the demonstration constructed wetland facility was completed. Several alternatives for continued use were evaluated for their potential to maintain the project's valuable emergent marsh habitat and to support future research and educational opportunities. Use of water from a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) designed to remediate groundwater impacts from DLD areas was selected as the most feasible approach for maintaining the demonstration wetlands. CAP water is leachate from the DLDs and contains a slightly elevated nitrate level. Nitrates will be removed from the CAP water as it passes through the demonstration wetlands.

Maintenance of the demonstration wetlands using CAP water is expected to begin in the summer of 2000, when a portion of the CAP water will be pumped to the facility for treatment. Initially, no discharge will be permitted. Treated water will accumulate in the aquatic habitat cell where it will eventually be lost to evaporation and percolation. Future investigations will address the feasibility of increasing the supply of CAP water to the facility and eventually discharging the

treated water into Laguna Creek. Pursuance of this alternative may result in improvements in downstream habitat for special-status species and in the management capabilities of the Upper Beach Lake seasonal wetland complex. Appendix F contains a copy of the memo addressing policies for continued use of the demonstration wetlands.

SRWTP Infrastructure

The SRWTP 2020 Master Plan proposed the installation of two additional underground interceptor lines and one additional outfall line. The new outfall line would run parallel to the existing outfall line connecting the Plant with the Sacramento River. The Laguna Creek Interceptor would cross the southwestern portion of the Bufferlands and the Lower Northwest Interceptor would cross the northwestern portion of the Bufferlands. SRCSD is currently evaluating three alternative routes for each interceptor line (Figure 3-1) (Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District 1995).

South Sacramento County Streams Feasibility Study

As part of the South Sacramento Streams Feasibility Study, the Corps undertook a fish and wildlife habitat restoration planning study for the Bufferlands in 1997. The general purpose of this study was to identify, develop, and analyze conceptual restoration alternatives for wetlands and associated riparian, oak woodland, and grassland habitats on the Bufferlands. Implementation of these alternatives was viewed as an opportunity to contribute to the recovery of many of the regionally declining or threatened wildlife species that are known to occupy the Bufferlands area and to increase the diversity of common wildlife species in the region. Habitat restoration and enhancement would also provide important natural linkages and facilitate wildlife movement between the Bufferlands and other refuges and natural areas (e.g., Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, Cosumnes River Preserve).

This study resulted in the development of conceptual restoration plans for several locations on the Bufferlands, including Black Crown Lake, Upper Beach Lake, Nicolaus Pond/Parker Slough, and Lost Lake (Figure 3-1). The Corps used incremental cost analysis to identify the most cost-effective alternative for restoring the greatest number of acres of habitat and providing the greatest increase in habitat values. Cost-sharing between the Corps, SRCSD, and the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (SAFCA) was suggested as a means of implementing the preferred alternative.

Cooperative Management Agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

A portion of the Bufferlands is located within the project area of the Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, which has a total area of more than 18,000 acres. This large expanse of protected open space contiguous with portions of the Bufferlands will help to ensure the security and permanence of the Bufferlands' primary buffering function. Thus,

SRCSO has actively participated in the formation of the refuge, and now plans to establish a cooperative management agreement with USFWS.

Throughout the 1990's, SRCSD worked cooperatively with USFWS, sharing resources and information to improve the quality and efficiency of their respective natural-resource management practices. Entering into a cooperative management agreement will formalize this mutually beneficial relationship. The agreement will also provide both agencies with valuable leverage should they choose to pursue grant funding opportunities from sources that emphasize cooperative partnerships.

In order for SRCSD to enter into a cooperative agreement with USFWS, the agreement must comply with all of the management objectives set forth in the master plan. It must also specifically state SRCSD's right to use its land in any manner deemed necessary to operate its facilities, including construction, maintenance, and other core activities. Additionally, it must state SRCSD's right to restrict access to the Bufferlands, and stipulate that any USFWS action or activity that involves the Bufferlands is subject to SRCSD approval.