

## 19.0 Unavoidable Significant Adverse Impacts

- *Water Quality*

*Trihalomethane Formation Potential.* THMFP would temporarily increase in the dredge disposal area due to mobilization of undissolved organic matter in soils underlying and adjacent to the dewatering ponds. THMFP increases should be short term as exposed/available organic matter is exhausted and as silt and THMFP is expected to decrease to normal levels shortly following introduction of dredge spoils for dewatering. Although the organic material is only exposed for a short time, this is considered an unavoidable significant adverse impact.

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- *Land Use And Planning*

*Old River Flow Control Structure Site.* Construction of the Old River control structure would involve creation of a new levee segment, approximately 1,000 feet long, roughly 200 feet north of the existing northern levee; the existing northern levee would be breached after construction of the flow control facility. Additional components outside the river channel would include a microwave tower, a permanent access road connecting to the existing southern levee road, and two fenced storage/parking areas.

The area south of Old River is partly developed and proposed for additional urban uses. Approximately 15 single-family residences line the south bank of Old River about 0.4 mile west of the proposed barrier. The area south of the site is planned for development as part of the new Mountain House Community Development Project. The Master Plan and Specific Plans for this project were approved in November, 1995. This project will be implemented in approximately two years. Development of the northwestern portion of Mountain House would involve construction of low- and medium-density residential uses, as well as some commercial, industrial, and open space uses. Under a February 1993 San Joaquin County General Plan amendment, the portion of Mountain House immediately south of and adjacent to the barrier site is designated for development as part of a regional park, with a marina providing boat access to Old River about 0.2 mile west of the control structure. Medium-density residential units are planned between the park and marina. Development of the Old River flow control facility as proposed could limit use of the southern levee and adjoining area as a regional park, residential neighborhood, and marina. This is considered a significant and unavoidable adverse impact.

Old River Dredging Site. The dredging process itself would take place entirely within Old River. However, placement of dredge spoils on Victoria Island would preclude the continued use of approximately 614 acres of cultivated land. These two parcels, considered prime farmland by San Joaquin County, and are under Williamson Act contract. The placement of dredge spoils in ponds on Byron Tract would preclude the continued use of approximately 360 acres of cultivated land, considered prime farmland by Contra Costa County. Although the settling ponds are expected to eventually return to agricultural use, no completion date nor method of dredge disposal has been identified. Consequently, further disposal of dredged materials from the settling ponds would be treated as a separate project, analyzed in a later document. For the purposes of this EIR/EIS, this is considered to be a significant and unavoidable adverse impact.

- *Aesthetics, Light And Glare*

Old River Fish Control Structure. Although the area surrounding the Old River fish control structure site is sparsely populated, with few travelers on its roadways, this area is one of the most popular boating locations in the south Delta. Due to the large number of viewers that would be affected, the structure's effect upon existing views is considered a significant and unavoidable adverse impact.

Grantline Canal Flow Control Structure. Although the site is far from scenic routes, several homes are located nearby and the canal is a popular boating and fishing area. Due to the high number of sensitive receptors in the site vicinity, this is considered a significant and unavoidable adverse impact.

Old River Flow Control Structure. The Old River flow control structure's 15-foot-high radial gates would eliminate long-distance water-level vistas from Grant Line Canal and Old River, and restrict views from neighboring homes. When raised, the radial gates would further reduce the area visible from the waterways and adjacent homes. The proposed levee-top control building, the microwave tower, and the flashboard storage area would also contribute to the obstruction of existing visual features in the site vicinity. Due to the large number of sensitive receptors affected, the structure's effect upon existing views is considered a significant and unavoidable adverse impact.

- *Navigation and Transportation*

Old River Fish Control Structure. A flow control structure will be constructed at the confluence of the head of Old River and the San Joaquin River. The construction of the barrier would be expected to severely limit or prevent navigation at this location for the 30-month long construction period. Thereafter, the barrier would prevent navigation during its operational period, from April 16th through May, and October through November, but would allow navigation the rest of the year. Boat docking facilities, stairs, and a jib crane would be constructed and operated to transfer boats from one side of the barrier to the other. Notwithstanding the availability of the docks, stairs, and jib crane, the creation of a seasonal barrier to navigation is considered to be an unavoidable significant adverse impact of ISDP.

Old River Flow Control Structure East of the Delta-Mendota Canal. The construction period for the control structure and associated boat lock would last approximately 30 months. Navigation is expected to be severely limited or prevented during the 30-month construction period. This is considered to result in a significant adverse impact upon navigation. Once constructed, the barrier would allow passage through a boat lock. Notwithstanding the availability of a boat lock, the creation of a barrier to navigation is considered to be an unavoidable significant adverse impact of ISDP.

Grant Line Canal Flow Control Structure. The Grant Line barrier would be located at the confluence of Grant Line Canal and Old River, and the western end of a 8.0-mile-long stretch of Grant Line Canal, from Old River to the Holly Sugar Factory also at Old River. The proposed boat lock would be constructed first, followed by the construction of the radial gate structure and the other components of the barrier, in several phases over the 36-month construction period. The boat lock would be available early in the construction period, and then would be available during the operation of the structure to allow boat passage. Notwithstanding the availability of a boat lock, the creation of a barrier to navigation is considered an unavoidable significant adverse impact of ISDP.

## 20.0 Short-Term Uses Versus Long-Term Productivity

Section 15126(e) of the CEQA Guidelines explains that this EIR/EIS should address "*The relationship between local short-term uses of man's environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity*", and that "*Special attention should be given to impacts which narrow the range of beneficial uses of the environment or pose long-term risks to health or safety.*" The CEQ NEPA Regulations, 40 CFR 1502.16, require the EIR/EIS to consider: "*the relationship between short-term uses of man's environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity.*" The following considers the proposed project in light of these requirements.

The objectives of the proposed Interim South Delta Program (ISDP) are: 1) to improve water levels and circulation in south Delta channels for local agricultural diversions; and 2) to improve south Delta hydraulic conditions to increase diversion into Clifton Court Forebay to maximize the frequency of full pumping capacity at Banks Pumping Plant. Each of these objectives is discussed, in turn, in the following.

The improvement in water levels and circulation would be achieved through the construction and operation of four barriers. These barriers would be used to manage flow within a 10.0 mile-long stretch of the Middle River, a 19.0 mile stretch of Old River from the Delta-Mendota Canal to the confluence of Old River and the San Joaquin River, and an 8.0 mile long stretch of Grant Line Canal, from Old River to the Holly Sugar Factory also at Old River. These barriers would be designed to maintain higher than normal water levels and to enhance water quality during specified periods of the year. Both of these actions would contribute to the maintenance and enhancement of long-term agricultural production within the south Delta.

The increase of diversions into Clifton Court Forebay to maximize the frequency of full pumping at the Banks Pumping Plant would be achieved through the dredging of Old River and the construction and operation of a new intake facility at Clifton Court Forebay.

Each of these actions would result in a set of short- and long-term effects on the environment. Establishing the nature of the relationship between short-term uses of the environment and the enhancement of long-term productivity involves evaluating the trade-offs between proceeding with the proposed project at this time, as opposed to keeping the options open for future choices.

Temporary construction-related effects of the ISDP involve increased velocity in the south Delta channels, and slight increases in turbidity and suspended sediment, temporary degradation of air quality, and short-term noise impacts on nearby residents. In addition, dredging of Old River would cause a short-term loss of the aquatic and terrestrial habitats within that reach.

A series of long-term compromises are associated with ISDP implementation. Most of the adverse effects of the ISDP are either temporary or mitigable, and would pose few threats to the long-term productivity of the environment. Furthermore, the adverse impacts of project implementation are generally balanced by the long-term beneficial effects of increased and more reliable water supplies within the south Delta and SWP service areas. A summary of the positive and adverse long-term effects of the ISDP on the environment follows.

Long-term effects of project construction would include potential reduction of agricultural resources, potential disturbance or damage to subsurface archaeological resources, obstruction of existing views, changes in scenic character, restricted navigation in the channels, and interference with established recreational activities.

Operation of the proposed barriers and pumping of water for SWP service areas would have both adverse and beneficial long-term environmental effects on a variety of resources, including terrestrial and aquatic biological resources, water quality, and other environmental resources. Effects on terrestrial and aquatic resources would include losses of a variety of habitat types, impacts on special status vegetation and wildlife species, and impacts to migration of several fish species. Project operation could increase the salinity of water near Suisun Marsh and the San Joaquin River, but would result in a general improvement in the quality of municipal and industrial water supplies exported by the SWP. In addition, barrier operation is expected to improve south Delta water quality, while potentially degrading water quality in the central Delta.

Barrier operation would also create substantial benefits to water supplies for south Delta agricultural users and assure greater reliability of water supplies for SWP service areas. Furthermore, few long-term risks to health or safety would be associated with the ISDP, with the exception of possible interference of the proposed Old River fish control structure with emergency response.