

3.11 Recreation

This supplemental environmental impact report (SEIR) addresses proposed modifications to the B.F. Dam Sisk Safety of Dams Modification Project, which was previously evaluated in the B.F. Sisk Dam Safety of Dams Modification Project Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (2019 EIS/EIR). The project addressed in the 2019 EIS/EIR is referred to herein as the Approved Project; the Approved Project with proposed modifications identified since certification of the 2019 EIS/EIR is referred to herein as the Modified Project.

This section describes the existing recreation conditions of the Modified Project site and vicinity, identifies associated regulatory requirements, evaluates potential impacts, and identifies any applicable mitigation measures related to implementation of the Modified Project.

Public Scoping and Review Comments Received on 2019 EIS/EIR

The 2019 EIS/EIR underwent public scoping and public review periods and received a variety of comment letters addressing the Approved Project. Comments on the 2019 EIS/EIR pertaining to recreation include the following:

- Public review comment from State Water Contractors: The comment suggested that impacts to recreation under Alternative 2 should be significant.

Alternative 2 from the 2019 EIS/EIR was not adopted and is not evaluated in this SEIR.

3.11.1 Existing Conditions

3.11.1.1 San Luis Reservoir and San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area

Authorized through Public Law 89-72, Federal Water Projects Recreation Act, as amended, a Managing Partner Agreement was signed between the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and the California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR) for management of San Luis Reservoir and related facilities for recreation and fish and wildlife benefits. As shown in Figure 3.11-1, the San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area (SRA) spans approximately 27,000 acres of federal lands and includes major facilities such as San Luis Reservoir, O'Neill Forebay, and Los Banos Creek Reservoir (Reclamation and CDPR 2013). San Luis Reservoir consists of about 12,700 water surface acres and 65 miles of shoreline, O'Neill Forebay consists of approximately 2,210 water surface acres and 14 miles of shoreline, and Los Banos Creek Reservoir consists of approximately 485 water surface acres and 12 miles of shoreline (Reclamation and CDPR 2013). The San Luis Reservoir SRA Resource Management Plan/General Plan (San Luis Reservoir SRA RMP/GP) defines distinct geographic divisions, or management zones, within the SRA based on physical, social, and management characteristics (Reclamation and CDPR 2013). The management zones include the Administrative and Operations zone (for staff, operations, and maintenance activities), Front Country zone (for most visitor facilities, camping, and concessions), and Backcountry zone (for less-intensive recreation and with limited camping and trails). The San Luis Reservoir SRA is divided into five use areas (i.e., areas designated as major public recreational facilities)—Basalt, Dinosaur Point, Los Banos Creek, Medeiros, and San Luis Creek—and one minor use area for off-highway vehicle (OHV) use (Figure 3.11-2, San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area Use Areas). Four of the use areas (Basalt, Los Banos Creek, Medeiros, and San Luis Creek) have vehicle access points with entrance stations in the roadway for visitors.

The San Luis Reservoir SRA hosted approximately 210,000 paid visitors in 2018. As indicated in the 2019 EIS/EIR, most visitors come to the area to use recreation resources at the San Luis Creek, Basalt, and Medeiros Use Areas. Primary activities at each use area vary but, collectively, the San Luis Reservoir SRA provides opportunities for boating, swimming, windsurfing, camping, and fishing (Reclamation and CDPR 2013). Boating, fishing, and other water sports, such as jet skiing and windsurfing, are allowed from sunrise to sunset on San Luis Reservoir, O'Neill Forebay, and Los Banos Creek Reservoir (CDPR 2020). The San Luis Wildlife Area and O'Neill Forebay Wildlife Area are two additional areas designated for wildlife; both allow for hunting and backcountry hiking, along with nature study activities. Table 3.11-1 outlines each use area's primary recreation facilities and opportunities.

Table 3.11-1. San Luis Reservoir SRA Recreational Activities

Use Area	Primary Activities
Basalt Use Area	Fishing, camping, hiking, boating, day use
Dinosaur Point Use Area	Fishing, boating, day use
Los Banos Creek Use Area	Fishing, boating, camping, hiking, horseback riding
San Luis Creek Use Area	Fishing, windsurfing, swimming, boating, camping, day use, group activities
Medeiros Use Area	Fishing, windsurfing, camping, day use
OHV Use Area	OHV use
O'Neill Forebay Wildlife Area	Hunting, hiking, nature study
San Luis Wildlife Area	Hunting, hiking, nature study

Source: Reclamation and CDPR 2013.

Notes: SRA = State Recreation Area; OHV = off-highway vehicle.

Basalt Use Area

The Basalt Use Area is located at the southeastern shoreline of San Luis Reservoir and includes 511 parking spaces. Basalt Campground contains 79 tent and RV campsites, including 8 that are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible. The campground includes restroom facilities, sewer dump station, showers, designated picnic areas, and a fish-cleaning station. The Basalt Use Area also provides restrooms, trail access, a campfire center, and a four-lane boat launch with an 80-foot boarding float onto San Luis Reservoir. A 1.5-mile loop trail known as Basalt Campground Trail begins at the campground entrance and climbs to a hilltop area with an interpretive exhibit, map, and views of San Luis Reservoir, Basalt Hill, and the San Joaquin Valley. West of the Basalt Use Area, the Lone Oak Bay Trail is a 6-mile out-and-back trail to the south side of San Luis Reservoir. The trailhead is just before the end of the park road at the boat launch and parking area, 2 miles west of Basalt Campground.

Dinosaur Point Use Area

The Dinosaur Point Use Area is located on the western shore of San Luis Reservoir at the end of Dinosaur Point Road. It offers access to San Luis Reservoir from a four-lane boat ramp with an 80-foot boarding float and parking for 123 vehicles, with additional parking on the boat launch ramp. Dinosaur Point also provides chemical toilets and five shade ramadas. Other activities provided in this area include fishing and bicycling. No campground accommodations are offered at the Dinosaur Point Use Area (Reclamation and CDPR 2013).

Los Banos Creek Use Area

The Los Banos Creek Use Area contains 1,777 acres surrounding Los Banos Creek Reservoir (Reclamation and CDPR 2013). The main use area at Los Banos Creek Reservoir is located at the northeast end of the reservoir. Los

Banos Creek Campground includes 14 campsites with shade ramadas, barbecues, and picnic tables. The Los Banos Creek Use Area also includes a two-lane boat launch ramp with a 60-foot boarding float, an equestrian camp, parking for approximately 40 vehicles with boat trailers, chemical toilets, hiking and equestrian trail access, and a swimming area. The Path of the Padres historic hiking trail is located at Los Banos Creek Reservoir, and guided tours of the trail as well as a boat tour are led by volunteer and CDPR staff. While the Los Banos Creek Use Area is within the San Luis Reservoir SRA, it is located approximately 6 miles southeast of San Luis Reservoir and lands associated with the Los Banos Creek Use Area are not contiguous with SRA lands surrounding San Luis Reservoir and O'Neill Forebay.

San Luis Creek Use Area

The San Luis Creek Use Area is located on the western shore of O'Neill Forebay and is the most popular use area in the San Luis Reservoir SRA. It is divided into the North Beach and South Beach day use areas. The California Department of Water Resources operates the Romero Visitor's Center on the eastern side of San Luis Reservoir, north of B.F. Sisk Dam. The Romero Visitor's Center offers educational resources and restrooms for the public.

The San Luis Creek Day Use Area provides two large beaches, a lifeguard stand, a large irrigated lawn with 148 shade ramadas with barbecues, a three-lane boat launch ramp with two 80-foot boarding floats, a fish-cleaning station, and a picnic area (Reclamation and CDPR 2013). North Beach is the only designated swim area within San Luis Reservoir SRA and contains a restricted boating area. The 5-mile San Luis Creek Accessible Trail is the only ADA accessible trail in the San Luis Reservoir SRA (CDPR 2017, 2020). There are a total of 698 parking spaces, including 181 spaces for vehicles with boat trailers.

San Luis Creek Campground is spread along the northwestern shore of the San Luis Creek Use Area and contains 53 tent and RV campsites, including 6 ADA accessible sites. Campground facilities include electric and water hookups, fire pits, and picnic tables. In addition, San Luis Creek Campground has five group picnic sites for day use and two group campsites. The first group campsite, which can accommodate 60 campers, provides a large cooking/gathering shelter with lights and electricity, eight shade ramadas with fire rings and picnic tables, and restrooms with showers. The second group campsite, which can accommodate 30 campers, provides a smaller cooking shelter with lights and electricity, five shade ramadas with fire rings and picnic tables, and restrooms with showers. The group campsites also share an irrigated lawn area and a parking area with approximately 36 single-vehicle spaces. Overnight fishing is permitted in specific areas within the San Luis Creek Day Use Area, but is restricted within the campgrounds.

Medeiros Use Area

The Medeiros Use Area is located on the southeastern shore of O'Neill Forebay. The area provides 50 campsites with shade ramadas, picnic tables, and barbecues, approximately 300 informal parking spaces, as well as approximately 350 primitive campsites for tents and RVs (Reclamation and CDPR 2013). The day use and camping areas have potable water from four portable water tanks (water is trucked in), and chemical toilets. The Medeiros Use Area allows overnight fishing at its campgrounds (CDPR 2017). The boat launch at the Medeiros Use Area was closed in 2001 and remains closed because shallow water in the area prevents year-round launching. There are no formally designated recreation trails at the Medeiros Use Area.

OHV Use Area

The OHV Use Area, located south of Gonzaga Road, is a 150-acre open, flat, partially vegetated parcel that is developed with recreational OHV trails. The area also has parking and chemical toilets.

Wildlife Areas

The San Luis Reservoir Wildlife Area is located at the northwest shore of San Luis Reservoir, south of State Route 152, and is accessed from a parking area off of Dinosaur Point Road. Access to the wildlife area is restricted between sunrise and sunset. The O'Neill Forebay Wildlife Area is at the eastern side of O'Neill Dam and is accessible from a parking area off of State Route 33. Both sites have a self-registration system at the entry points and permit nature study, hiking, and hunting. Hunting for waterfowl, pheasants, quail, doves, rabbits, and crows is allowed at O'Neill Forebay Wildlife Area; hunting for all legal species, including deer, pig, dove, quail, turkey, and small game is allowed at the San Luis Wildlife Area. Portions of the O'Neill Forebay Wildlife Area are cultivated to provide forage and habitat for various game species.

3.11.2 Relevant Plans, Policies, and Ordinances

3.11.2.1 Federal

Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act

The Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act provides the basic authority for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service involvement in evaluating impacts on fish and wildlife from proposed water resource development projects. It requires that fish and wildlife resources receive equal consideration to other project features. It also requires federal agencies that construct, license, or permit water resource development projects, to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, and state fish and wildlife agencies regarding the impacts on fish and wildlife resources and measures to mitigate these impacts before a project's implementation.

3.11.2.2 State

California Department of Parks and Recreation Guidelines

CDPR is a trustee agency, which owns and operates all California State parks. CDPR has the principle mission to provide and manage the operations of various recreation and outdoor facilities, provide for recreation opportunities, and manage and protect natural resources. Park designations dictate the level of resource management need and include natural preserves, California State parks, California State reserves, and California State wilderness designations, among others. CDPR implements statewide recreation through its strategic vision, Trails Handbook, Trails Policy, as well as the California Code of Regulations and Public Resources Code.

San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area Resource Management Plan/General Plan

CDPR, in partnership with Reclamation, manages most of the San Luis Reservoir SRA. CDPR's planning process is integrated with Reclamation's resource management planning process. CDPR developed the San Luis Reservoir SRA RMP/GP in partnership with Reclamation, and adopted the 25-year plan in 2013. CDPR and Reclamation continue to collaborate on the San Luis Reservoir SRA RMP/GP to guide future growth. Lands managed by CDPR for recreation are part of the CDPR system and comprise the SRA. The San Luis Reservoir SRA RMP/GP's primary objective is to identify general areas in which future development may occur for recreation management. The plan

includes an overview of existing conditions, including a summary of opportunities and constraints, a plan for future use and management of the plan area, and the associated environmental analysis pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and the California Environmental Quality Act (Reclamation and CDPR 2013).

The San Luis Reservoir SRA RMP/GP identifies a series of policies in the form of goals and guidelines. Goals and guidelines related to recreation include the following (Reclamation and CDPR 2013):

Visitor Use, Opportunities, and Facilities (VIS)

Goal VIS-F1: Maintain and provide new visitor facilities and uses that enhance recreational enjoyment of the site's history and character while avoiding resource degradation.

Guidelines:

- Plan for recreational opportunities within a regional context and in coordination with other plans (e.g., the Millerton Lake RMP, Pacheco SP, Hollister Hills State Vehicular Recreation Area, and Merced County and Santa Clara County parks) so that facilities are balanced within the region and are compatible with the location and resources.
- Provide for a variety of day-use activities and overnight camping facilities that accommodate visitors of varying abilities.

Goal VIS-F2: Provide adequate shoreline and upland support facilities and management at each reservoir and use area to address current and future demand for permitted recreational uses, consistent with management zones and natural and cultural resource goals and guidelines.

Guideline:

- Ensure that campground and day use additions and improvements respond to and are prioritized based on user demand.

Goal VIS-F3: Manage water surfaces and use areas to accommodate a variety of different user groups and minimize resource degradation and conflicts among users.

Guidelines:

- Resolve water surface use conflicts using a variety of methods, such as but not limited to seasonal and time-of-day restrictions and “no wake” or “reduced speed” zones.
- Optimize and coordinate water and land based recreational uses by development of a boating management plan.

Goal VIS-T1: Provide an appropriate amount and variety of trails in a range of locations throughout the Plan Area as well as improved connectivity from existing trails.

Guideline:

- Maintain a system of multi-use trails to meet visitor demand.

Goal VIS-T2: Balance the optimum visitor experience while avoiding habitat fragmentation or other site degradation.

Guideline:

- Use BMPs to maintain trails and minimize erosion.

3.11.2.3 Local

Merced Vision 2030 General Plan

As required by state law, Merced County has adopted a general plan to guide land use decisions within the county. The general plan provides goals, policies, standards, and implementation programs to guide the physical development of a county. At a minimum, the general plan must address the topics of land use, transportation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. The Merced Vision 2030 General Plan (Merced County General Plan), adopted in 2013, has established the year 2030 as the plan’s time horizon. The Recreation and Cultural Resources Element analyzes impacts to recreational opportunities and facilities. The following goal and policies would apply to the Modified Project (Merced County 2013):

Recreation and Cultural Resources Element

- Goal RCR-1:** Preserve, enhance, expand, and manage Merced County’s diverse system of regional parks, trails, recreation areas, and natural resources for the enjoyment of present and future residents and park visitors.
- **Policy RCR-1:** Foothill Pasture Designation: Encourage the continuation and expansion of existing public recreation land uses, including, but not limited to, public beaches, parks, recreation areas, wild areas, and trails.
 - **Policy RCR-1.11:** Scenic Resource and Public Land Protection: Encourage the use of regional parks and open space areas as a mechanism to preserve the County’s natural scenic beauty and protect land for public resources.
 - **Policy RCR-1.12:** Recreation Services: Support recreation services to promote the full use of recreation facilities within their design capacity, and improve connections and access to a wide range of recreation opportunities in order to improve the quality of life for residents and visitors.

Land Use and Community Character Element

- **Policy LU-2.3: Land Use Activity Limitations:** Limit allowed land use within Agricultural and Foothill Pasture areas to agricultural crop production, farm support operations, and grazing and open space uses.

3.11.3 Thresholds of Significance

The following significance criteria from the 2019 EIS/EIR are used for the purposes of analysis in this SEIR. These criteria, which have not changed from the 2019 EIS/EIR, are identified in Chapter 19, Recreation, of the 2019 EIS/EIR. A significant impact related to recreational resources would occur if one or more of the following would occur as a result of implementing the Modified Project:

1. Recreational use of trails would be substantially reduced as a result of construction.
2. Construction activities would substantially reduce access to or close recreation areas.
3. Displaced recreation from sites affected by construction would substantially contribute to overcrowding or exceed the facility capacity at other recreation sites.
4. Operational changes to water levels in recreational water bodies would be reduced to an extent that recreational uses would be substantially affected.

3.11.4 Impacts Analysis

Threshold 1

Would recreational use of trails be substantially reduced as a result of Modified Project construction?

2019 EIS/EIR Impact Determination	Modified Project Impact Determination	New Significant Increase in Impact Severity?
Less than Significant	Less than Significant	No

Campground Construction and Day Use Area Improvements

As shown in Figure 3.11-3, Modified Project and San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area Use Areas, the Modified Project would include construction of a proposed campground area on the northwestern shoreline of O'Neill Forebay and improvements to the existing San Luis Creek Day Use Area on the west shore of the forebay. The site for the proposed campground area is an undeveloped grassland area bisected by an existing paved road that provides access to recreational facilities on the west side of O'Neill Forebay including San Luis Creek Campground north of the proposed campground area. This new campground would be adjacent to the 1.5-mile-long San Luis Creek Trail, which runs from North Beach at the San Luis Creek Day Use Area to the San Luis Creek RV Campsite. Construction of the proposed campground area and improvements within the San Luis Creek Day Use Area are not expected to require closure of San Luis Creek Trail. However, visitors to San Luis Creek Trail could be affected by minor construction impacts related to fugitive dust, noise, and disruption of visitor circulation; this disruption would be temporary. In addition, a variety of other hiking opportunities within the San Luis Reservoir SRA and neighboring state parks would remain available for use during construction of the proposed campground area and improvements to San Luis Creek Day Area. Therefore, the Modified Project would not result in a reduction of recreational trail availability and impacts would be **less than significant**.

Changes in Borrow Area Location

The Modified Project has identified two additional borrow areas, Borrow Area 12 and Borrow Area 14, in addition to Borrow Area 6 and Basalt Hill Borrow Area, which were identified as part of the Approved Project in the 2019 EIS/EIR. Borrow Area 12 is an approximately 28-acre area that includes a grassland-covered hill east of the dam's south valley section. The top of the hill is flat, having been used in the past as a borrow area for initial construction of B.F. Sisk Dam, with two unpaved roads leading to the top. Borrow Area 14 is an approximately 200-acre area south of Borrow Area 12 situated around four low hills within grassland. One of the hills has a road leading to the top. Neither borrow area contains designated recreational trails. Borrow Area 12 and Borrow Area 14 are within the overall construction footprint identified by the 2019 EIS/EIR, but were identified and analyzed in that document as anticipated contractor staging areas (see Figure 2-4b, Modified Project Detail).

Borrow Areas 12 and 14 are within the Basalt Use Area of the San Luis Reservoir SRA. The Approved Project analyzed the closure of all recreational uses within the Basalt Use Area and Medeiros Use Area beginning in December 2021 through the duration of the construction period. This closure includes Basalt Campground, Medeiros Campground, and two of the three formally designated trails within the San Luis Reservoir SRA, Basalt Campground Trail and the Lone Oak Trail. Therefore, as Borrow Areas 12 and 14 were included in the Basalt Use Area analyzed to be closed in the Approved Project, the change in borrow area locations would not result in additional reductions of recreational trail use. Impacts from the Modified Project on recreational trail use would be **less than significant**.

Minor Additions to Contractor Work Area

The Modified Project site includes minor temporary and permanent expansions of contractor work areas downstream of the dam that were not part of the original area of impact addressed in the 2019 EIS/EIR for the Approved Project. These Modified Project features are shown in Figures 2-4a and 2-4b, and total approximately 41 acres. The additional contractor work areas include several staging/soil stockpiling areas downstream of B.F. Sisk Dam, which would later be covered by the stability berms and expanded dam embankment, as well as another small area of less than 1 acre immediately west of the dam's right abutment, where a haul road would be widened. The additional temporary haul road area is a portion of the footprint of the alignment of an existing road that crosses San Luis Reservoir and is exposed when the reservoir is at a low water level. The existing road would be used to transport materials from Basalt Hill Borrow Area to the dam construction zone during periods when the reservoir water level is low enough to expose the road. The impact of the proposed new campground and improvements to the San Luis Creek Day Use Area are analyzed above under Campground Construction and Day Use Area Improvements.

Neither the additional staging and stockpiling areas nor the temporary haul road would trigger additional road and/or lane closures that would impede access to recreational trails. These contractor work areas are located within the Basalt Use Area; the Approved Project analyzed the closure of all recreational trails within both the Basalt Use Area and Medeiros Use Area; additional staging areas in the vicinity of the spillway are not open to public recreation. Therefore, these additional contractor work areas would not result in further closures of recreational trails beyond what was previously analyzed. Impacts on recreational trail use would be **less than significant**.

Additional Construction Assumptions

The Modified Project outlines additional construction assumptions, including changes to the construction schedule, equipment and personnel specifications, the inclusion of the campground development and improvement, and dewatering specifications for proposed excavations at the base of the dam. The impact of the proposed new campground and improvements to the San Luis Creek Day Use Area are analyzed above under Campground

Construction and Day Use Area Improvements. The other construction assumptions would not result in a reduction in the availability of recreational trails beyond what was analyzed under the Approved Project in the 2019 EIS/EIR. Impacts on recreational trail use would be **less than significant**.

Cumulative Impacts

A list of cumulative projects is presented in Table 3-1 of Chapter 3, Environmental Analysis. All other cumulative projects would result in no change in the use or access to recreational trails in the San Luis Reservoir SRA, with the exception of the B.F. Sisk Dam Raise and Reservoir Expansion Project (reservoir expansion project). The reservoir expansion project has been identified as a cumulative project that could contribute to recreation effects of the Modified Project. All recreational activities at the Basalt Use Area would be suspended during construction of the reservoir expansion project. Basalt Campground Trail and Lone Oak Trail, which are both accessed from the Basalt Use Area, would also be closed to the public during construction of the reservoir expansion project. The Modified Project would occur over a period of up to 20 years, with construction beginning in 2022, while the reservoir expansion project is proposed to occur over a period of approximately 8 years with construction beginning in 2025. Because the construction period of the two projects would overlap and both projects would result in closure of Basalt Campground Trail and Lone Oak Trail, the analysis of impacts associated with a reduced network of existing trails and use of trails during the construction period for the Approved Project, as provided in the 2019 EIS/EIR, would apply to cumulative impacts of the Modified Project and reservoir expansion project. The Modified Project would result in no additional closure of trails that was not analyzed in the 2019 EIS/EIR. As concluded by the analysis of the Approved Project in the 2019 EIS/EIR, a temporary reduction in the trail network within the SRA would occur during project construction, but adequate alternate trails would remain open to meet the demand for public trails during construction. Therefore, the Modified Project, in combination with the reservoir expansion project, would not result in cumulatively considerable impacts with respect to reduced access to recreational trails in the SRA and surrounding areas. Cumulative impacts would be **less than significant**.

Comparison to 2019 EIS/EIR

The additional project components analyzed above would result in less-than-significant impacts and therefore impacts of the Modified Project would not result in a significant increase in the severity of impacts as determined in the 2019 EIS/EIR. Impacts of the Modified Project would remain less than significant.

Threshold 2

Would Modified Project construction activities substantially reduce access to or close recreation areas?

2019 EIS/EIR Impact Determination	Modified Project Impact Determination	New Significant Increase in Impact Severity?
Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	No

Campground Construction and Day Use Area Improvements

The Modified Project includes construction of the proposed campground and associated recreational facility improvements to mitigate impacts to recreational opportunities that would occur with implementation of the project. The campground would be constructed within an area of approximately 40 acres and would include 79 campsites. Two restroom and shower buildings would be constructed along with a campfire center, and shore access would be

provided for fishing. The existing bike path would be realigned along the shoreline. Improvements to the San Luis Creek Day Use Area would be within the existing developed facility and would include provision of an additional boat launch lane and boarding float, a fish-cleaning station, and a restroom facility. Approximately 20,000 square feet of new buildings would be included on site.

The site for the proposed campground area is an undeveloped grassland area bisected by an existing paved road that provides access to recreational facilities along the west side of O'Neill Forebay including the San Luis Creek RV Campsite north of the proposed campground area. Disturbance related to the Modified Project would be limited to areas receiving the improvements, as subject to additional planning and design by Reclamation and CDPR as approved in the San Luis Reservoir SRA RMP/GP for the area.

The construction staging areas for the proposed campground area and improvements to the San Luis Creek Day Use Area would be within existing and underutilized recreation areas within the San Luis Reservoir SRA. These two elements of the Modified Project would promote greater utilization of these areas for recreation purposes and would result in no closure of the existing North Beach and South Beach recreational facilities, and the access road to these existing facilities along O'Neill Forebay would remain open during construction. As analyzed in Section 3.7, Traffic and Transportation, construction of the proposed campground area and improvements to the San Luis Creek Day Use Area would generate a temporary increase of traffic within the San Luis Reservoir SRA, but would generate fewer overall trips than operation of the campground; roadway traffic related to construction would result in no substantial, long-term limitations to accessing existing recreational facilities. The maintenance, expansion, and the addition of campsites, shade ramadas, boat launches, trails, and other recreational facilities could result in minor and temporary construction-related impacts to recreational use such as fugitive dust, noise, and temporary detours or restrictions on use of portions of the existing San Luis Creek Day Use Area to allow for construction of improvements. During the construction period, these activities could affect the quality of the visitor recreation experience near construction areas. However, these construction-related impacts would be temporary in nature. The result of these Modified Project elements would be increased recreational amenities and opportunities within the San Luis Creek Use Area provided by the improvements in the San Luis Creek Day Use Area and new campground. Therefore, impacts resulting from construction of the proposed campground area and improvements would be **less than significant**.

Changes in Borrow Area Location

As stated above, Borrow Areas 12 and 14 are within the Basalt Use Area of the San Luis Reservoir SRA. The Approved Project analyzed the closure of all recreational uses within the Basalt Use Area and Medeiros Use Area beginning in December 2021 through the duration of the construction period. Therefore, as Borrow Areas 12 and 14 were included in the area of impact identified for closure in the Approved Project, the change in borrow area locations would not result in additional construction impacts on recreation areas. The impacts of construction activities on recreational activities would be **less than significant**.

Minor Additions to Contractor Work Area

As previously discussed, additional impact areas include some minor expansion of contractor work areas that were not part of the original study area addressed in the Approved Project. These additional contractor work areas would not trigger additional road and/or lane closures around the Modified Project site, thereby impeding access to recreational resources. The additional contractor work areas, including the staging and stockpiling area and temporary haul road area, are located within the Basalt Use Area. The Approved Project analyzed the closure of all recreational uses within the Basalt Use Area and Medeiros Use Area. Therefore, these additional contractor work areas would not result in further closures of recreational use areas beyond what was previously analyzed. Impacts on recreational areas during construction would be **less than significant**.

Additional Construction Assumptions

The Modified Project outlines additional construction assumptions, including changes to the construction schedule, the inclusion of the campground development and improvement, and dewatering specifications for proposed excavations at the base of the dam. The impact of the proposed new campground and improvements to the San Luis Creek Day Use Area are analyzed above under Campground Construction and Day Use Area Improvements. The other construction assumptions would not result in the closure of additional recreation areas beyond what was previously analyzed under the Approved Project. Impacts on recreational areas during construction would be **less than significant**.

Cumulative Impacts

The reservoir expansion project has been identified as a cumulative project that could contribute to recreation effects of the Modified Project; no other projects identified in Table 3-1 would affect recreational facilities within the San Luis Reservoir SRA. The Approved Project, as analyzed in the 2019 EIS/EIR, would result in closure of the Basalt Use Area (including the Goosehead Point Boat Launch) for the full duration of construction activities and would result in closure of Medeiros Campground during construction. The reservoir expansion project would also include the closure of the access to Dinosaur Point Boat Launch for approximately 1 year during active construction at the Dinosaur Use Area, which could result in the temporary closure of all boat launch facilities at San Luis Reservoir if closure of the Dinosaur Point Boat Launch occurs concurrently with Basalt Use Area closure; no mitigation is identified for this temporary closure impact in the joint EIR and Supplemental EIS prepared by Reclamation and San Luis & Delta–Mendota Water Authority for the reservoir expansion project. Recreational use for boating would be suspended in areas of active construction, and would be limited to areas of the reservoir away from B.F. Sisk Dam for the duration of construction. Reclamation anticipates that construction of improvements at the Dinosaur Point launch facility included as part of the reservoir expansion project can be scheduled to minimize closure of the existing launch facility and to minimize or eliminate periods when both Dinosaur Point and Basalt Use Area boat launch facilities would be closed concurrently. Construction planning would ensure that disruption of recreational uses would be minimized and new facilities would not be required as each of the existing facilities is considered underutilized in the existing condition and can accommodate redirected recreation use during periods when one boat launch facility is closed during construction. The Modified Project would result in no facility closures not previously evaluated for the Approved Project in the 2019 EIS/EIR and would not contribute to cumulative impacts associated with temporary or permanent closure of recreational facilities. Cumulative impacts of the Modified Project associated with closure or reduced access to recreational facilities would be **less than significant**.

Comparison to 2019 EIS/EIR

The additional project components analyzed above would result in less-than-significant impacts and therefore impacts of the Modified Project would not result in a significant increase in the severity of impacts as determined in the 2019 EIS/EIR. Implementation of Mitigation Measure REC-1¹ is analyzed in this SEIR as part of the Modified Project; no new mitigation is required. However, Mitigation Measure REC-1 has been revised and replaced with Mitigation Measure SEIR-REC-1; refer to Section 3.11.5. Impacts of the Modified Project would remain less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

¹ Mitigation Measure REC-1 in the 2019 EIS/EIR included the expansion of the boat launch at Dinosaur Point Use Area. Since that time, CDPR has indicated the previously proposed expansion of this boat launch is no longer required, as the facility's existing capacity would accommodate any increase in use due to the closure of the Basalt Campground boat launch for the duration of Modified Project construction. As such, modifications to the Dinosaur Point Use Area are not addressed in this SEIR.

Threshold 3

Would displaced recreation from sites affected by Modified Project construction substantially contribute to overcrowding or exceed the facility capacity at other recreation sites?

2019 EIS/EIR Impact Determination	Modified Project Impact Determination	New Significant Increase in Impact Severity?
Less than Significant	Less than Significant	No

Campground Construction and Day Use Area Improvements

The construction of the proposed campground area and improvements to the existing San Luis Creek Day Use Area would not close additional recreation areas or result in additional displacement of visitors over that evaluated by the 2019 EIS/EIR. These elements of the Modified Project are intended to offset lost recreational resources and visitor capacity at Basalt and Medeiros Use Areas, increasing the breadth of the facilities offered at San Luis Creek Day Use Area and adding a new campground with developed facilities. Installation and construction of the improvements at San Luis Creek Day Use Area may temporarily disrupt visitors but would not close the day use facility and would be performed during lower seasonal use periods. As a result, these activities are not expected to result in substantial displacement of visitors to the extent that other regional recreation sites and state parks would be negatively impacted. Therefore, impacts regarding conditions at other local and regional recreation sites would be **less than significant**.

Changes in Borrow Area Location

As stated above, Borrow Areas 12 and 14 are within the Basalt Use Area of the San Luis Reservoir SRA. The 2019 EIS/EIR for the Approved Project analyzed the closure of all recreational uses within the Basalt Use Area and Medeiros Use Area, and determined that closure would result in displacement of visitors to other local and regional recreation sites and other areas within the San Luis Reservoir SRA. The proposed changes in the borrow areas location included in the Modified Project would result in no additional closure of recreation areas and would result in **no impacts** associated with displacement of recreation demand to other local and regional recreation sites.

Minor Additions to Contractor Work Area

As previously discussed, additional impact areas include some minor expansion of contractor work areas that were not part of the original study area identified for the Approved Project and evaluated in the 2019 EIS/EIR. The additional contractor work areas, including the staging and stockpiling area and temporary haul road area, are located within the Basalt Use Area. These additional features of the Modified Project would not prompt potential visitors to visit other recreational areas, thereby contributing to overcrowding or exceeding facility capacities, because the entirety of the Basalt Use Area was already planned for closure under the Approved Project. Therefore, these additional contractor work areas would not result in further closures of recreational use areas beyond what was previously analyzed and would not displace additional visitors. Impacts on conditions at other local and regional recreation sites would be **less than significant**.

Additional Construction Assumptions

As previously discussed, additional construction assumptions include changes to the construction schedule, equipment and personnel specifications, and dewatering specifications for proposed excavations at the base of the dam. The impact of the proposed new campground and improvements to the San Luis Creek Day Use Area are

analyzed above under Campground Construction and Day Use Area Improvements. The other construction assumptions would not result in the closure of additional recreation areas beyond what was previously analyzed under the Approved Project and would not displace additional visitors. Impacts on conditions at other local and regional recreation sites would be **less than significant**.

Cumulative Impacts

The reservoir expansion project has been identified as a project that could contribute to cumulative impacts on recreation in the vicinity of the Modified Project; other projects identified in Table 3-1 would have no effect on recreational facilities within the San Luis Reservoir SRA. The Approved Project, as analyzed in the 2019 EIS/EIR, would result in closure of the Basalt Use Area (including the Goosehead Point Boat Launch) for the duration of construction activities and would result in temporary and intermittent closure of Medeiros Campground during construction. The proposed reservoir expansion project would require closure of the access to Dinosaur Point Boat Launch for approximately 1 year during active construction at the Dinosaur Use Area. If closure of the Dinosaur Point Boat Launch occurs concurrently with closure of the Basalt Use Area boat launch, boating access to San Luis Reservoir would be temporarily eliminated because no alternate boat launching facilities exist at San Luis Reservoir. Reclamation anticipates that construction of improvements at the Dinosaur Point launch facility included as part of the reservoir expansion project can be scheduled to minimize closure of the existing launch facility and minimize or eliminate periods when Dinosaur Point and Basalt Use Area boat launch facilities would be closed concurrently. Construction planning would ensure that disruption of recreational uses would be minimized and new facilities would not be required as each of the existing San Luis Reservoir launch facilities is considered underutilized in the existing condition and can accommodate redirected recreation use during periods when one launch facility is closed temporarily during construction. Temporary closures of Dinosaur Point Boat Launch and the launch at Basalt Use Area is expected to result in increased use of boat launches on O'Neill Forebay. Construction of the proposed new campground area and improvements to San Luis Creek Day Use Area, which includes a new boat launch lane, would provide recreational opportunities to accommodate displaced use from closures that would result from the Approved Project, as analyzed by the 2019 EIS/EIR. The components of the Modified Project analyzed in this SEIR are not expected to result in impacts from displacement of visitors to other recreational areas and would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to impacts from displacement of visitors from temporary closure of facilities required to carry out the reservoir expansion project. The Modified Project's contribution to cumulative impacts associated with displacement of visitors resulting in impacts to other recreational areas would be **less than significant**.

Comparison to 2019 EIS/EIR

The additional project components analyzed above would result in less-than-significant or no impacts and therefore impacts of the Modified Project would not result in a significant increase in the severity of impacts as determined in the 2019 EIS/EIR. Impacts of the Modified Project would remain less than significant.

Threshold 4

Would operational changes to water levels due to the Modified Project in recreational water bodies be reduced to an extent that recreational uses would be substantially affected?

2019 EIS/EIR Impact Determination	Modified Project Impact Determination	New Significant Increase in Impact Severity?
Less than Significant	Less than Significant	No

Campground Construction and Day Use Area Improvements

Construction of the proposed campground area and improvements to the existing San Luis Creek Day Use Area would not require any changes to the reservoir operations related to water or lower reservoir water levels. An additional boat launch lane and boarding float would be added to San Luis Creek Day Use Area to increase recreational access to O'Neill Forebay. Impacts to recreational facilities or activities due to operational changes at the reservoir would be **less than significant**.

Changes in Borrow Area Location

As stated above, the Modified Project would include materials extraction for dam construction from two more borrow areas, Borrow Areas 12 and 14. Both borrow areas were within the area of impact for the Approved Project, but were identified in that document as contractor staging areas. The changes in borrow area location and use at these sites would not affect water levels in recreational water bodies as the materials extraction would come from hillsides. Impacts to recreational facilities or activities due to operational changes at the reservoir would be **less than significant**.

Minor Additions to Contractor Work Area

As previously discussed, additional impact areas include some minor expansion of contractor work areas that were not part of the original area of impact addressed in the 2019 EIS/EIR prepared for the Approved Project. Additional staging and stockpiling areas would have no bearing on reservoir water levels, as their purpose is to stockpile extracted materials prior to use at the dam construction zone. The proposed widening of the haul road would facilitate ease of material transport from Basalt Hill Borrow Area to the dam construction zone during periods when the reservoir water level is low enough to expose the road. The haul road would utilize lower water levels in the reservoir, but would not include manipulation of reservoir levels to achieve that elevation. Therefore, impacts to recreational facilities or activities due to operational changes at the reservoir would be **less than significant**.

Additional Construction Assumptions

As previously discussed, additional construction assumptions include changes to the construction schedule, equipment and personnel specifications, and dewatering specifications for proposed excavations at the base of the dam. The impact of the proposed new campground and improvements to the San Luis Creek Day Use Area are analyzed above under Campground Construction and Day Use Area Improvements. As described in Section 2.3, Description of the Approved Project, dewatering would be required in excavations occurring at the base of the dam. Dewatering is anticipated to entail installation of temporary deeper wells along with shallower well points that would be installed around each work area requiring dewatering. Water removed from the excavation during this period would be pumped into temporary settling ponds or portable tanks to allow sediment to drop out and meet permit water quality standards before being discharged into the reservoir or forebay. This work on the dam is anticipated to occur when the elevation of the reservoir is naturally below 480 feet, which typically occurs in June or July and continues through November or December. The Modified Project includes no manipulation of reservoir water levels to achieve the 480-foot surface elevation and includes no changes to descriptions of water levels required for construction activities as described in the 2019 EIS/EIR; no change in impacts to recreation associated with lowering of water surface elevation would occur with the additional construction assumptions identified in the Modified Project. Impacts to recreational uses from operational changes to water levels associated with the Modified Project would be **less than significant**.

Cumulative Impacts

The reservoir expansion project has been identified as a cumulative project that could contribute to recreation effects of the Modified Project; other projects identified in Table 3-1 would have no effect on recreational facilities within the San Luis Reservoir SRA. Under the reservoir expansion project, reservoir operations would result in the inundation of an additional 445 acres of lands that are not inundated when the reservoir fills to capacity under existing conditions. This increase in water and inundated areas resulting from reservoir expansion project operations would impact four additional existing recreational facilities and could inundate approximately 8,308 feet (1.6 miles) of recreational routes (i.e., trails and roads) in addition to the inundation that would occur under existing conditions. Reservoir expansion project operation could result in the inundation of approximately 2,298 feet of the Lone Oak Trail and potential impacts to Goosehead Point Boat Launch in the Basalt Use Area and Dinosaur Point Boat Launch. The reservoir expansion project would increase overall operational surface elevation and lake surface area. The Modified Project would result in no permanent or temporary operational changes to water levels in the reservoir that were not previously evaluated by the 2019 EIS/EIR prepared for the Approved Project and would not contribute to a cumulative impact to recreation as a result of water level manipulation in San Luis Reservoir when considered with the reservoir expansion project. The Modified Project's contribution to cumulative impacts to recreation with respect to operational changes to water levels would be **less than significant**.

Comparison to 2019 EIS/EIR

The additional project components analyzed above would result in less-than-significant impacts and therefore impacts of the Modified Project would not result in a significant increase in the severity of impacts as determined in the 2019 EIS/EIR. Impacts of the Modified Project would remain less than significant.

3.11.5 Mitigation Measures

Implementation of Mitigation Measure REC-1¹ identified in the 2019 EIS/EIR is analyzed throughout this SEIR under the Modified Project. As previously described, expansion of the boat launch at Dinosaur Point use area, included as a component of Mitigation Measure REC-1 in the 2019 EIS/EIR, is no longer required. As such, Mitigation Measure REC-1 is replaced with Mitigation Measure SEIR-REC-1 to reflect this change; no other changes to Mitigation Measure REC-1 are required. No additional mitigation measures are required, as no new significant impacts related to recreation would occur.

SEIR-REC-1 (Replaces REC-1 in the 2019 EIS/EIR): Campsite and Facilities Replacement. Campsites closed at San Luis Reservoir during construction of the Modified Project shall be replaced at a 1:1 ratio at the San Luis Creek Use Area and then as necessary at the Los Banos Creek Use Area, including six American with Disabilities Act (ADA)-accessible campsites and RV accommodations. These new replacement campsites shall be developed consistent with the new facilities considered in the San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area Resource Management Plan/General Plan (San Luis Reservoir SRA RMP/GP) and shall not exceed the quantities of new facilities considered in the San Luis Reservoir SRA RMP/GP at each use area. The new campsites shall be constructed concurrent to the crest construction period during a period of low precipitation in order to reduce the risk of accidental leaks or spills, potential for soil contamination, and to minimize erosion of loose materials in construction areas, as per Goal RES-WQ4 in the San Luis Reservoir SRA RMP/GP (Reclamation and CDPR 2013):

- Design, construct, and maintain buildings, roads, trails, campsites, boat launches and marinas, and associated infrastructure to minimize stormwater runoff, promote groundwater recharge, and prevent soil erosion.

The new campsites shall be constructed within the San Luis Creek Use Area at the SRA on O'Neill Forebay. The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) shall include this mitigation requirement in bid documents and construction contracts.

In addition, Reclamation shall work with the California Department of Parks and Recreation to implement the following measure:

- The boat launch at the San Luis Creek Use Area shall be expanded by adding a launch lane and a boarding float. In addition, a fish cleaning station, public storage lockers, and shower facilities shall be developed at San Luis Creek Use Area.

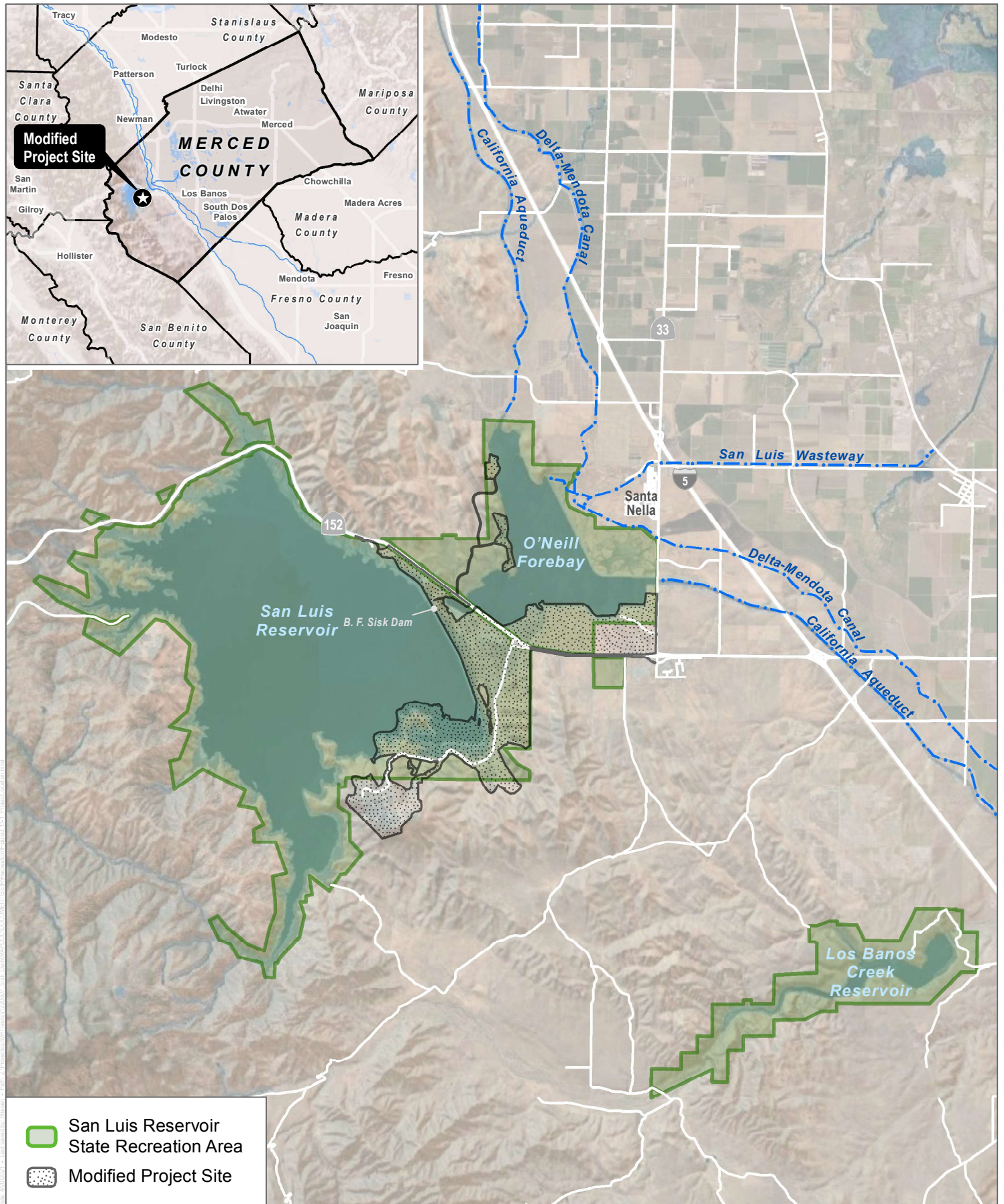
3.11.6 Level of Significance After Mitigation

The Modified Project would result in less-than-significant impacts with respect to recreational use trails being substantially reduced as a result of construction. No mitigation is required.

The Modified Project would result in less-than-significant impacts with mitigation incorporated with respect to construction activities substantially reducing access to or closing recreation areas. Implementation of mitigation measure SEIR-REC-1 is incorporated into the Modified Project analyzed throughout this SEIR. No new mitigation is required.

The Modified Project would result in less-than-significant impacts with respect to whether displaced recreation from sites affected by construction would substantially contribute to overcrowding or exceed the facility capacity at other recreation sites. No mitigation is required.

The Modified Project would result in less-than-significant impacts with respect to operational changes to water levels in recreational water bodies being reduced to an extent to which recreational uses would be substantially affected. No mitigation is required.



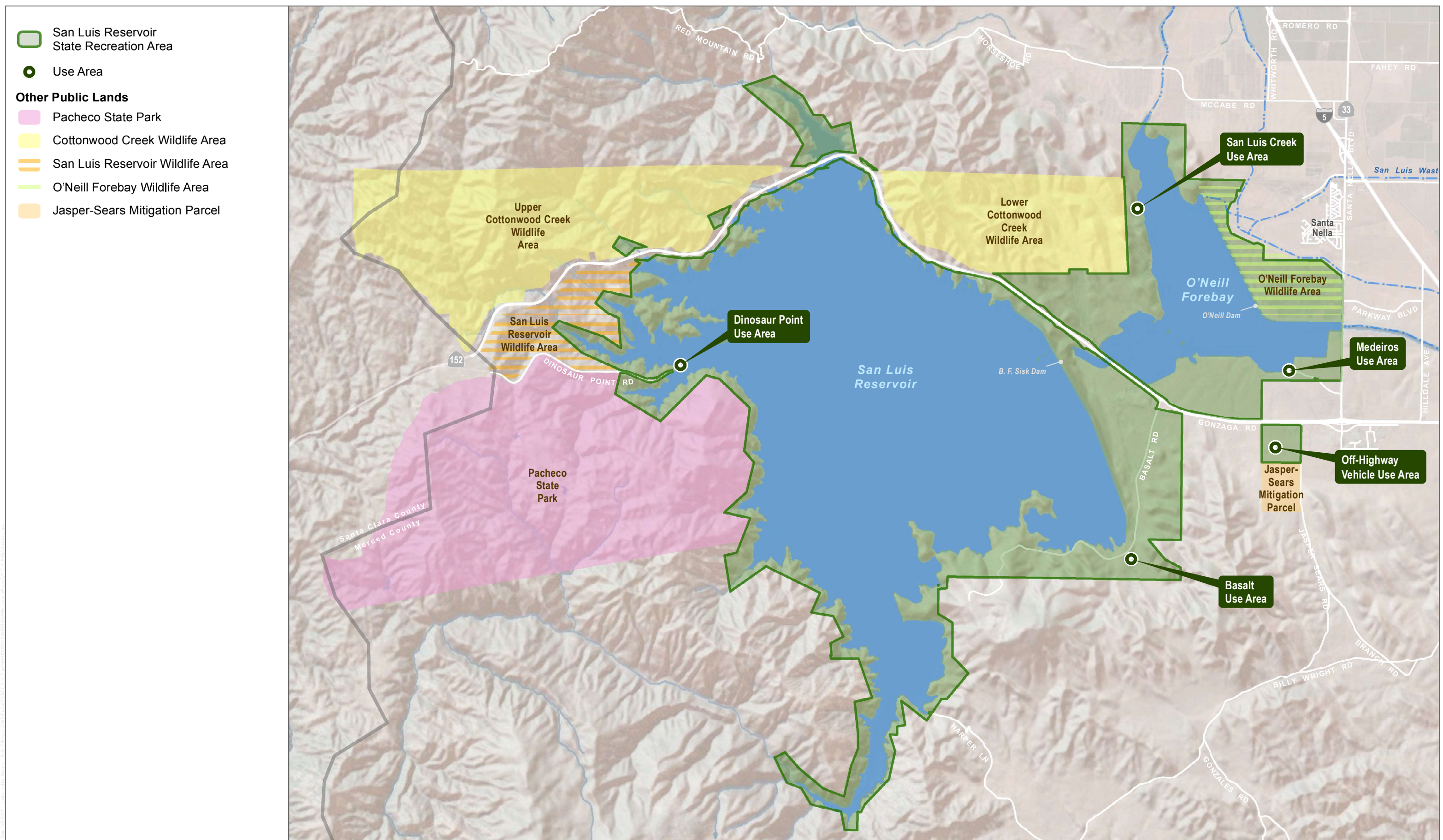
SOURCE: Basemap: ESRI World Imagery
 Project Boundary: Reclamation, 9/2/2020
 Canals: National Hydrologic Dataset 2020

FIGURE 3.11-1

San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area

B.F. Sisk Dam Safety of Dams Modification Project SEIR

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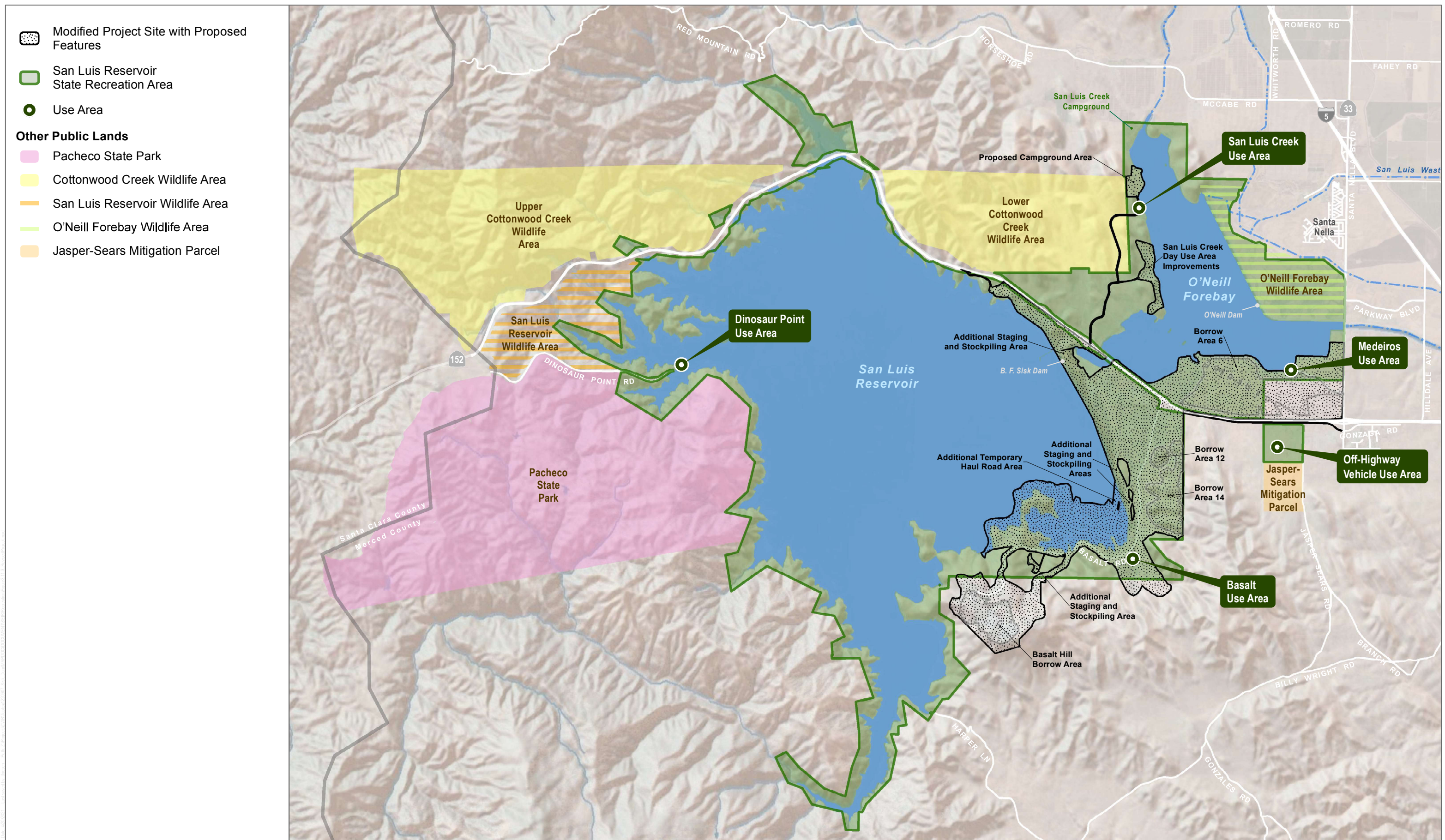
SOURCE: CPAD 2019

FIGURE 3.11-2

San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area Use Areas

B.F. Sisk Dam Safety of Dams Modification Project SEIR

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SOURCE: CPAD 2019

FIGURE 3.11-3

Modified Project and San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area Use Areas

B.F. Sisk Dam Safety of Dams Modification Project SEIR

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