

## 4.16 Recreation

This section describes effects on recreation that would be caused by construction and operation of the Project. The LWEF EIR addressed possible effects on recreation in Section 3.15, *Other Issue Areas*, and concluded that no significant recreation impacts would occur. The following discussion describes the status of recreation activities in the Project area, and provides an update to applicable policies, potential impacts, and recommended mitigation measures.

### 4.16.1 Environmental Setting

As described in the LWEF EIR, the Project area is a scenic region characterized by hillsides, forests, agriculture, and ranch lands, and is popular for informal recreation activities that include cycling, running, birding, and sightseeing. The Project area includes one developed recreational facility, Miguelito County Park, which is located on San Miguelito Road approximately 250 feet south of the proposed transmission line alignment.

Several local recreational groups commonly utilize the Project area. The Lompoc Valley Bicycling Club (LVBC) has identified a 15-mile stretch of Miguelito Canyon Road as one of the club's popular routes (LVBC, 2018). The Lompoc Valley Distance Club (LVDC) coordinates running races throughout the Lompoc community, which may include portions of San Miguelito Road. At this time, no races are currently scheduled in the Project area (LVDC, 2018). Birding is popular at Miguelito County Park and along San Miguelito Road near Sudden Road. The Santa Barbara Audubon Society (SBAS) has identified Miguelito County Park as a hotspot<sup>1</sup> during the spring, summer, and winter seasons (sbcoBirding, 2018), and San Miguelito Road at Sudden Road is included in *eBird's* map of hotspot locations (eBird, 2019).

### 4.16.2 Regulatory Setting

No applicable federal or state regulations were identified in the LWEF EIR.

#### 4.16.2.1 Local

The LWEF EIR identified one applicable planning document: the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan. Please refer to the LWEF for a discussion of this plan, and to Section 4.13, *Land Use and Planning*, for an analysis of policy consistency.

### 4.16.3 Significance Thresholds

The LWEF EIR did not include significance thresholds for Recreation. The following significance thresholds are included in the County's Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual to address recreation-related concerns in the Project area. The proposed Project would have a significant recreation impact if it would:

- Conflict with an ongoing recreation activity or scheduled recreational event.
- Contribute to the long-term loss or degradation of a recreational use or facility.

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<sup>1</sup> "Hotspots" are public birding locations that have been identified through users of *eBird*, which is a real-time, online checklist program sponsored by the Cornell Land of Ornithology. A Hotspot is frequented by multiple birders in order to share birding data from the same location (eBird, 2018).

### 4.16.4 Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Table 4.16-1 below summarizes the effects to recreation that were described in Section 3.16.1 of the LWEP EIR. The LWEP’s impact analysis for recreation did not include specific impact statements, but instead summarized the less than significant effects associated with this topic. This LWEP summary of recreation effects is presented in Table 4.16-1. To address SWEP-specific recreation concerns identified by the County, impact statements have been developed for the subsequent SEIR analysis.

**Table 4.16-1. LWEP Impacts and Mitigation Measures – Recreation**

Impact No.	LWEP Impact Statements	LWEP Mitigation Measures	SWEP Changes
NA	Impacts in any given location would be short-term and potential loss of recreational opportunities would be low.	None identified.	Modified impact statement. Updated impact discussion. Significance conclusion change. New mitigation measure.

The recreation impacts of the proposed SWEP are discussed below.

#### **REC-1 Loss of Recreation.** Project construction-related activities could interfere with recreational activities in the Project area.

The LWEP concluded that recreation impacts in any given location would be temporary, and the potential loss of recreational opportunities would be low. The following discussion has been updated since the LWEP to consider adverse effects to specific recreation groups who frequently use visit the Project area.

No Project staging activities are proposed at Miguelito County Park, and no road improvements are proposed along San Migeulito Road north of the park. Project construction would not require closure of the park, nor would it limit use within the park. However, birding activities within the park would be adversely affected on a temporary basis by construction noise and traffic that may reduce the presence of birds.

Proposed road improvements would begin immediately south of the entrance to Miguelito County Park and would continue over a three-mile stretch of San Miguelito Road as it extends southwest into the Project site (Logisticus Project Group, 2018). Please see Figures 2-6a through 2-6c for the location of these road improvements. Along this stretch of San Miguelito Road south of the park, public traffic would need to be temporarily stopped using flaggers or traffic control devices to accommodate construction truck trips and various work areas in road shoulders. While San Miguelito Road would remain publicly accessible, recreation activities along this stretch of road would be interrupted during periods of construction-related traffic and safety concerns. Mitigation to reduce adverse recreational impacts includes posting informational signs to inform the public of the construction-related traffic schedule and temporary traffic hazards. Mitigation would require the Applicant to provide current information on the construction schedule to identified recreational groups that utilize the Project area, thereby allowing these groups to plan the location of their recreational activities and to inform their members accordingly (see Special Mitigation Measure REC-01, below). Project impacts to recreation during the construction phase would be short term in nature and would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with implementation of Special MM REC-01 (Class II).

Following the 10-month construction schedule, San Miguelito Road would be fully accessible to recreational groups such as the LVBC, LVDC, La Purisima Audubon Society (LPAS), and SBAS. Birding activities at Miguelito County Park and along San Miguelito Road would no longer be affected by the temporary construction-related noise impacts. Therefore, the physical use of the Project area would remain fully accessible to informal recreation (i.e., cycling, running, birding, sightseeing) during Project operation. Post-construction visual and biological impacts due to modifications to San Miguelito Road and installation of the WTGs and other facilities are discussed in Section 4.2, *Aesthetics/Visual Resources*, and Section 4.5, *Biological Resources*, of this SEIR.

Regarding the potential degradation of recreational uses during the post-construction operational phase of the Project, San Miguelito County Park would not be affected as no WTGs would be visible from the Park. This Park is a formal recreational area, which receives the most recreationalists within the Project vicinity.

San Miguelito Road and Sudden Road are used by bicyclists and birders, although these two roads are not considered a formal recreational area. In addition, the use of these roads for recreation is considered low. The visibility of the Project components would alter the current rural and natural character of the views from these two roads, and Section 4.2 identifies several significant and unavoidable aesthetic/visual impacts associated with the Project, including impacts related to WTG visibility (Impact VIS-1) in the Project vicinity, transmission line visibility along San Miguelito Road (Impact VIS-5), and tree removal along San Miguelito Road (Impact VIS-7). These aesthetic/visual impacts would affect the recreational experience for recreationalists using the area; however, the degree to which the changed visual character would affect the recreationalist's experience is subjective. The degradation of the recreational experience is considered adverse but not significant (Class III) as the area has low usage and is not a formal recreational area.

## Mitigation Measure

Special Mitigation Measure (MM) REC-01 is recommended to avoid conflicts with recreation activities that often occur within the Project area.

### Special

**MM REC-01** **Community Signage and ~~Communication Coordination~~ with LVDC, LVBC, LPAS, and SBAS.** The Applicant shall post signage at Miguelito County Park and ~~coordinate~~ communicate with the Lompoc Valley Distance Club (LVDC), Lompoc Valley Bicycling Club (LVBC), La Purisima Audubon Society (LPAS), and Santa Barbara Audubon Society (SBAS) regarding the proposed construction schedule and anticipated construction activities along San Miguelito Road.

**Requirements.** The Applicant shall communicate the proposed construction schedule directly with the LVDC, LVBC, LPAS, and SBAS. The Applicant shall post information regarding the Project construction schedule in a conspicuous location at Miguelito Canyon Park. In the event that there would be a substantial delay in the construction schedule (i.e., one month or longer beyond the original schedule), the Applicant shall update the signage at Miguelito County Park and shall communicate the revised construction schedule with the LVDC, LVBC, LPAS, and SBAS.

**Timing.** The Applicant shall ~~coordinate with~~ provide the construction schedule to LVDC, LVBC, LPAS, and SBAS no less than 30 days prior to the start of Project

construction. The Applicant shall also post the required Project information at Miguelito County Park no less than 30 days prior to construction.

**Monitoring.** The Applicant shall provide the County with documentation of this ~~coordination~~ communication no less than 2 weeks prior to the start of construction.

## 4.16.5 Cumulative Effects

### Geographic Extent/Context

The geographic context for recreation considers the extent to which the Project’s adverse effects on developed and informal recreation opportunities would combine with the impacts from other projects to create an effect that is cumulatively considerable. The geographic extent of cumulative recreation impacts includes developed recreation facilities within the area surrounding the Project site (i.e., Miguelito County Park) as well as the stretch of San Miguelito Road that is popular for informal recreational uses. The LWEP did not include a discussion of cumulative impacts associated with recreation.

### Cumulative Effects

**Loss of Recreation.** Cumulatively adverse recreation impacts could occur if nearby projects were to be constructed concurrently with the proposed Project. None of the projects listed in Section 3.3, Table 3-1, are located within three miles of the SWEP site. Because of variable construction schedules, the potential for the combined effects of construction noise and traffic to result in substantial cumulative impacts to recreational activities along San Miguelito Road and within Miguelito County Park is low. Furthermore, construction-related impacts from the proposed Project would be temporary, and the Project area would remain fully accessible to recreation during operation. Cumulative recreation impacts associated with Project construction and operation are not anticipated.

## 4.16.6 Residual Impacts

With implementation of proposed mitigation, residual effects from Impact REC-1 would not be significant.

## 4.16.7 Impact and Mitigation Summary

Table 4.16-2 below provides a summary of the SWEP’s impact related to recreation and indicates the mitigation measure proposed to reduce that impact to a less-than-significant level.

**Table 4.16-2. SWEP Impact and Mitigation Summary – Recreation**

Impact No.	Impact Statement	Mitigation Measures	Significance Conclusion
REC-1	Loss of Recreation. Project construction-related activities could interfere with recreational activities in the Project area.	REC-01: Community Signage and <del>Communication Coordination</del> <u>Communication</u> with LVDC, LVBC, LPAS, and SBAS.	Class II

**Class I.** Significant unavoidable adverse impact.

**Class II.** Significant environmental impacts that can be feasibly mitigated or avoided.

**Class III.** Adverse impacts found not to be significant.

**Class IV.** Impacts beneficial to the environment.

### 4.16.8 References

- eBird. 2019. Hotspot Map: San Miguelito Road at Sudden Road. [online]: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L7395549>. Accessed February 14.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2018. What is an eBird Hotspot? [online]: <https://help.ebird.org/customer/en/portal/articles/1006824-what-is-an-ebird-hotspot->. Accessed November 6.
- Logisticus Projects Group. 2018. Strauss Wind 67m Blade Feasibility Assessment. September.
- LVBC (Lompoc Valley Bicycle Club). 2018. Lompoc Valley Bicycle Club: Route Maps. [online]: <https://www.lompocvalleybikeclub.org/route-maps>. Accessed September 13.
- LVDC (Lompoc Valley Distance Club). 2018. Lompoc Valley Distance Club: Our Upcoming Events. [online]: <http://members.impulse.net/~lvdc/>. Accessed September 13.
- sbcoBirding (Santa Barbara County Birding). 2018. North Coast. [online]: <http://sbcobirding.com/northcoast.html>. Accessed November 6.

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