

Note to Reviewers: This handout describes the natural communities proposed for coverage under the BDCP and other natural communities within the BDCP Planning Area. Covered natural communities support the BDCP covered species and would be directly addressed by the BDCP, including conservation measures to protect, enhance, and restore these communities. Other communities present within the BDCP Planning Area, but not proposed for coverage, are also described. These communities will be addressed in the ecological baseline report because they are part of the environmental setting of the BDCP Planning Area and could be affected by the BDCP conservation measures and possibly by covered activities. Two additional natural communities are described that occur outside of the BDCP Planning Area, but could be affected by BDCP conservation measures if conservation measures are implemented upstream or downstream of the BDCP Planning Area. Descriptions of these communities would be added to the ecological baseline report if the proposed BDCP Conservation Strategy includes implementing conservation measures outside of the BDCP Planning Area.

Proposed BDCP Covered Natural Communities

Tidal Aquatic. The tidal aquatic natural community is defined as deepwater aquatic (greater than 3 meters deep from mean low low tide), shallow aquatic (less than or equal to 3 meters deep from mean low low tide), and unvegetated intertidal (i.e., tideflats) zones of estuarine bays, river channels, and sloughs within the BDCP planning area.

Tidal Freshwater Emergent. The tidal freshwater emergent community includes portions of the intertidal zones of the BDCP planning area that support emergent wetland plant species that are not tolerant of saline or brackish conditions.

Valley Riparian. The valley riparian community includes all successional stages of woody vegetation, commonly dominated by willow, Fremont cottonwood, valley oak, or sycamore, within the active and historical floodplains of the BDCP Planning Area.

Other Biological Communities within the BDCP Planning Area

Lacustrine. The lacustrine community is defined as portions of permanent bodies of water that do not support emergent vegetation and that are not subject to tidal exchange, including lakes, ponds, oxbows, gravel pits, and flooded islands.

Nontidal Freshwater Permanent Emergent. The nontidal freshwater permanent emergent community includes permanent (natural and managed) wetlands, including meadows, dominated by wetland plant species that occur in nontidal areas and are not tolerant of saline or brackish conditions.

Natural Seasonal Wetland. The natural seasonal wetland community includes vernal pools and other nonmanaged seasonal wetlands with natural hydrologic conditions that annually pond surface water or maintain saturated soils at the ground surface for enough

of the year to support facultative or obligate herbaceous wetland plant species. Alkaline and saline seasonal wetlands that were not historically part of a tidal regime are included in natural seasonal wetlands.

Managed Seasonal Wetland. The managed seasonal wetland community includes wetlands dominated by native or non-native herbaceous plants, excluding croplands (e.g., corn and rice), that land managers flood and drain during specific periods to enhance habitat values for specific wildlife species (e.g., ducks for duck clubs). Ditches and drains associated with managed seasonal wetlands are included in this community.

Grassland. The grassland community includes upland vegetation communities dominated by introduced and native annual and perennial grasses and forbs, including non-irrigated and irrigated pasturelands.

Inland Dune Scrub. The inland dune scrub community comprises vegetated stabilized sand dunes.

Agricultural. The agricultural community includes agricultural lands farmed for grain, rice, field, truck, and other crops that may or may not be seasonally flooded to enhance habitat values for specific wildlife species. Agricultural ditches and drains associated with agricultural lands are included in this community.

Other Communities Outside of the BDCP Planning Area that Could be Affected by BDCP Conservation Measures

Saline Emergent. The saline emergent community includes the areas downstream of the BDCP Planning Area that support emergent wetland plant species that are tolerant of saline or brackish conditions within the intertidal zone or on lands that historically were subject to tidal exchange (i.e., diked wetlands).

Valley Riverine Aquatic. The valley riverine aquatic community includes the water column of flowing Bay-Delta tributary streams and rivers in low-gradient channel reaches below an elevation of approximately 300 feet that are not tidally influenced. This includes associated shaded riverine aquatic (SRA), pool, riffle, run, and unvegetated channel substrate (including seasonally, exposed channel bed) habitat features, and non-tidal sloughs, backwaters, overflow channels, and flood bypasses hydrologically connected to stream and river channels.