River County Park, Lake Isabella, Lake Woollomes, Metro Recreation Center, and Tehachapi Mountain Park). These parks provide more than 19,422 acres of parkland for recreational purposes.

Tehachapi Mountain Park is the only regional park in proximity to the proposed project and would be the primary park to service the project area. The park is located 8 miles southwest of the city of Tehachapi on the southern side of Highway 58 between the community of Mojave and the city of Bakersfield. Tehachapi Park is 5,000 acres and offers a variety of activities, family campsites, two group camps with cabins (Tehachapi Mountain Camp and Sierra Flats), hiking trails, nature trails, equestrian trails and a corral (Kern County Parks and Recreation, 2009).

State

The California State Parks Service owns, maintains, and operates one State park (Red Rock Canyon), two State historic parks (Fort Tejon and Tomo-Kahni), and one State reserve (Tule Elk) in Kern County. All of these parks are over 10 miles away. The closest is Tomo-Kahni State Historic Park, 10.4 miles southwest of the project area.

National Parks and Trails

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service oversees the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT), which runs roughly parallel to the western boundary of the project in a north to south direction. The PCT extends from Canada to Mexico. The PCT in this area is popular for hikers and equestrians who want to experience the scenic trail and wind farms (Gipe, 2009a). The distance between the PCT and the project site boundary varies, ranging from 5.5 miles at the northwest corner of the project to 0.8 mile at the southwest corner of the project. The distance from the PCT to the nearest WTG within the project site is 1.7 miles.

Several national parks are located in California’s Central Valley and southern desert region, which are accessible from Kern County, although a significant distance away. These include Sequoia National Park, Death Valley National Park, and Mojave National Preserve.

4.15.3 Regulatory Setting

Federal

National Trails System Act of 1968

The National Trails System Act of 1968 (Public Law 90-543), was passed by Congress in 1968 to create a series of trails “to promote the preservation of, public access to, travel within, and enjoyment and appreciation of the open-air, outdoor areas and historic resources of the Nation.” The Act authorized National Scenic Trails as well as National Recreation Trails and the connecting-and-side trails. National Scenic Trails are established to provide access to “spectacular natural beauty and to allow the pursuit of healthy outdoor recreation” and “extended trails so located as to provide for maximum outdoor recreation potential and for the conservation and enjoyment of the nationally significant scenic, historic, natural, or cultural qualities of the areas through which such trails may pass.” In addition, the 1968 act also authorized creation of the PCT as a National Scenic Trail. As Congressionally-established long-distance trails, each trail is administered by a federal agency, such as by the USDA Forest Service for the PCT.
Pacific Crest Trail Planning Criteria

The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail Comprehensive Plan (USDA Forest Service, 1982) and the Pacific Crest Trail Guide for Location, Design, and Management (USDA Forest Service, 1971) provide guidelines and criteria for design and location of the PCT. Specifically, these guidelines state that the most desirable location will avoid unattractive roads, mining areas, power and telephone lines, commercial and industrial developments, fences, and other features incompatible with the natural condition of the trail, and with its use for outdoor recreation. Where the trail encounters such developments, it should be located so as not to adversely affect, or conflict with, the purpose of the development. Natural vegetation, topography, or natural plantings shall be used, where possible, to screen objectionable features from the view of the trail user.

Local

Kern County General Plan (KCGP)

The KCGP contain policies, goals, and implementation measures that are general in nature and not specific to development such as the proposed project. Therefore, they are not listed below, but, as stated in Chapter 2, “Introduction,” all policies, goals, and implementation measures in the KCGP are incorporated by reference.

Kern County Zoning Ordinance

The Wind Energy (WE) Combining District (Chapter 19.64) contains development standards and conditions (Section 19.64.140) that would be applicable to the siting and operation of wind turbine generators (WTGs). The following provisions apply to recreation issues related to the proposed project.

Chapter 19.64 Wind Energy (WE) Combining District

19.64.140 Development Standards and Conditions

- **Setback From Public Highways and Streets, Public Access Easements, Public Trails, and Railroads.** A minimum wind generator setback of one and one-half (1 1/2) times the overall machine height (measured from grade to the top of the structure, including the uppermost extension of any blade) shall be maintained from any publicly maintained public highway or street. A minimum wind generator setback of one (1) times the overall machine height shall be maintained from any public access easement or railroad right-of-way. A minimum wind generator setback of one hundred fifty feet (150) shall be maintained from the outermost extension of any blade to any public trail, pedestrian easement, or equestrian easement.

4.15.4 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Methodology

Recreational facilities and opportunities in the area were evaluated to determine whether they would be adversely affected by the project. This evaluation included consideration of the overall number and area of parklands or other recreational facilities and proximity to the project.