3.10 Recreation

Recreation provides humans with the opportunities for relaxation, enjoyment, and engagement with the natural and human-made environment. In Grays Harbor, recreational uses and areas are important for local lifestyles and the economy. Recreation activities include water-based activities (boating, fishing, beachcombing, diving) and land-based activities (wildlife viewing, walking, and active sports).

This section describes recreational uses and areas in the study area, including parks and natural areas, fishing, bird watching, and whale watching. It then describes impacts on recreation that could result under the no-action alternative or as a result of the construction and routine operation[1] of the proposed action. Finally, this section presents any measures identified to mitigate impacts of the proposed action and any remaining unavoidable and significant adverse impacts.

3.10.1 What is the study area for recreation?

The study area for recreation consists of recreational uses and areas near the project site that could be affected by construction and routine operation at the project site. The study area also includes recreational uses and areas that could be affected during routine rail transport along the Puget Sound & Pacific Railroad (PS&P)[2] rail line and vessel transport through Grays Harbor out to 3 nautical miles from the mouth of the harbor.

3.10.2 What laws and regulations apply to recreation?

Laws and regulations for determining potential impacts on recreation are summarized in Table 3.10-1. More information about these laws and regulations is provided in Appendix B, *Laws and Regulations*.

Table 3.10-1. Laws and Regulations for Recreation

Regulation, Statute, Guideline	Description
Federal	
No federal laws or regulations apply.	
State	
Department of Fish and Wildlife (Fisheries) (220 WAC)	Describes regulations related to fisheries; establishes fishing seasons and limits.
Department of Fish and Wildlife (Wildlife) (232 WAC)	Describes regulations related to use of wildlife areas and game reserves; establishes hunting seasons.
Local	
Shoreline Management Master Program Regulations (HMC 11.04 and AMC 16.20)	Carries out responsibilities imposed on the respective cities by the Shoreline Management Act of 1971.

WAC = Washington Administrative Code; HMC = Hoquiam Municipal Code; AMC = Aberdeen Municipal Code

[1] Chapter 4, *Environmental Health and Safety*, addresses the potential impacts from increased risk of incidents (e.g., storage tank failure, train derailments, vessel collisions) and related consequences (e.g., release of crude oil).

[2] The PS&P rail line refers to the rail line between Centralia and the project site.

3.10.3 How were impacts on recreation evaluated?

3.10.3.1 Information Sources

Information about recreational uses and areas in the study area was obtained from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), local planning documents, scoping comments, personal communications with local planners, and a review of aerial photography. Additionally, a site visit was conducted to observe and verify recreational uses in the study area on August 13, 2014.

3.10.3.2 Impact Analysis

Impacts on recreation within 0.25 mile of the project site, along the PS&P rail line, and within and along the shoreline of Grays Harbor were qualitatively assessed based on an evaluation of how construction and routine operation of the proposed action could disturb recreational uses.

3.10.4 What recreational resources are in the study area?

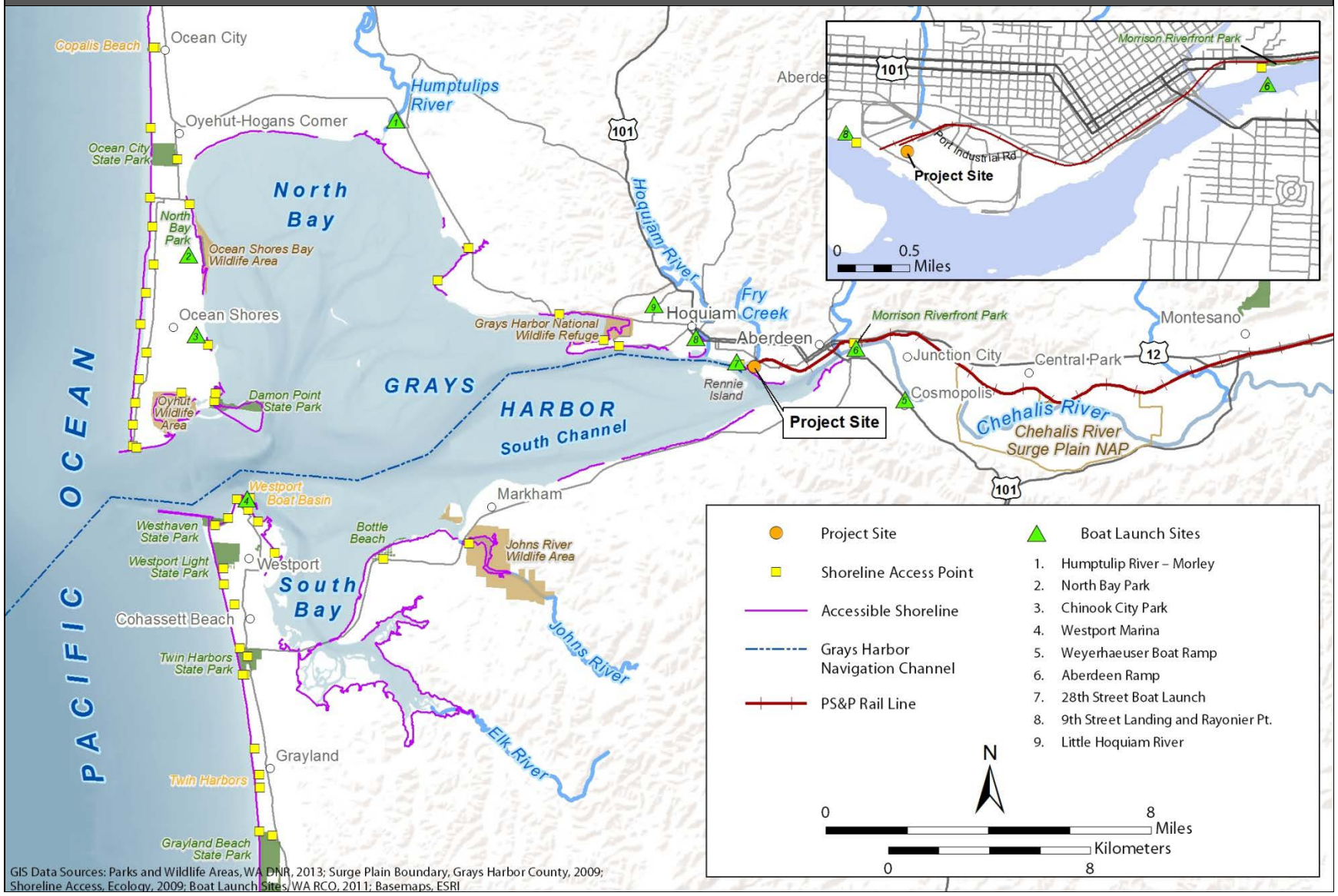
This section describes recreational uses and areas in the study area that could be affected by construction and operation of the proposed action. This section describes recreation on the project site, along the PS&P rail line, and in and along the shoreline of Grays Harbor.

3.10.4.1 Project Site

The nearest recreational amenities to the project site are the 28th Street boat launch and observation tower, located on an 0.5-acre site less than 0.25 mile northwest of the Terminal 1 dock (Figure 3.10-1). These facilities are owned by the Port of Grays Harbor (Port) and were developed as part of the approval process for the Imperium Terminal Services facility. Access to these facilities is provided by 28th Street and John Stevens Way. The boat launch includes a fishing pier and provides boaters and anglers free public access to Grays Harbor and the Chehalis River. In the fall, the boat launch is in full use and as many as 60 boats are launched daily during the height of the salmon fishing season (Port of Grays Harbor 2011). Adjacent to the boat launch is an observation tower affording visitors views of Grays Harbor, Port operations, and Rennie Island. Picnic areas are also available here. The portion of the navigation channel adjacent to the project site and continuing east is a popular area for recreational fishing, as discussed in Section 3.10.4.3, *Grays Harbor*.

Less than 0.25 mile north of the project site is a, 3.5-acre neighborhood park called West End Park. This park is located within the city limits of Aberdeen and includes an open playfield with basketball courts and a softball diamond. Support facilities such as parking and bathrooms are also available (City of Aberdeen 2011).

Figure 3.10-1. Public Recreation Areas



3.10.4.2 PS&P Rail Line

Along the PS&P rail line, recreational facilities are concentrated in the more developed areas such as Hoquiam, Aberdeen, and Centralia. Facilities include community and neighborhood parks, designated waterfront recreational areas, playfields and sport facilities, and urban pathways. Along the PS&P rail line are some privately owned amenities, including golf clubs and exhibition centers. A large area along the rail corridor consists of forested open spaces that offer outdoor recreational activities. Within this area, state forests and parks, protected natural areas, and designated recreational areas provide activities such as hiking, camping, fishing, kayaking, canoeing, and wildlife viewing.

State and City Parks

Numerous state and city parks provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and day use near the PS&P rail line. The larger state and local parks are listed in Table 3.10-2 along with a general description of their facilities and recreational opportunities. Several smaller city or neighborhood parks (1 to 3 acres) are also located in the larger cities along the rail line, and these include landscaped or manicured areas, athletic fields and courts, and picnic facilities.

Table 3.10-2. State and City Parks along the PS&P Rail Line

Park	Description
West End Playfield (Aberdeen)	3.5-acre neighborhood park with playground equipment, combination ball field, parking area, and paved multipurpose park.
Morrison Riverfront Park (Aberdeen)	11-acre complex on the Chehalis River with Rotary Log Pavilion, picnic tables, fishing and viewing dock, and a 1.35-mile landscaped trail.
John W. Vessey Memorial Ball Park (Montesano)	Less than 1-acre athletic facility used for girls' softball.
Lake Sylvia State Park (Montesano)	233-acre camping park with 15,000 feet of freshwater shoreline. Facilities offer campsites, a fishing dock and boat ramp, 5 miles of hiking and biking trails, and playground equipment.
Gladys Smith Park/Lloyd Murray Park (Elma)	10-acre park with playfields for baseball, softball, and soccer. Includes picnic tables and playground facility.
Cedar Park (Centralia)	Less than 1-acre park with playground equipment, picnic tables, tennis court, basketball court, and site furnishings.

Natural Areas

Natural areas along the PS&P rail line range from approximately 100 acres to 100,000 acres, and offer opportunities for wildlife viewing, bird watching, hiking, fishing, and hunting. Table 3.10-3 provides a general description of the facilities and recreational opportunities at natural areas along the PS&P rail line.

Table 3.10-3. Natural Areas along the PS&P Rail Line

Natural Area	Description
Chehalis River Surge Plain	3,018-acre natural area maintained by WDNR, located just upstream from where the Chehalis River empties into Grays Harbor. Comprises protected high-quality tidal surge plain wetland, the largest in Washington. Includes sloughs that shelter salmon and other fish and supports birds such as osprey, bald eagles, and Olympic mudminnows. Public access is provided. Offers 3.5-mile interpretive trail for hiking, bird watching, and educational use along the southern margin. Other activities include bank fishing, kayaking, and canoeing. Hunting is limited.
Capitol State Forest	91,650-acre working forest and recreation area east of the rail corridor from Elma to Oakville. Managed by WDNR. Includes camping facilities, hiking, hunting, horseback riding, and areas for vehicle off-roading.
Black River Habitat Management Area	109-acre WDFW management area in Rochester. Provides habitat for upland birds and waterfowl and offers fishing.
Black River Preserve	320-acre preserve owned by The Nature Conservancy near Rochester offering wildlife viewing accessible by canoe or kayak only.

WDNR = Washington State Department of Natural Resources; WDFW = Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Recreational Fishing

As discussed in Section 3.3, *Water*, the PS&P rail line largely parallels the Chehalis River (within 0.1 mile). This waterway and its primary tributaries support recreational fishing from Grays Harbor to Centralia; however, fishing upriver from Porter is limited (Hiss and Knudsen 1993). Recreational fishing (both bank and boat fishing) typically runs from early May through January. Recreational fish species in the Chehalis River system include salmon, steelhead, trout, and some warmwater species. Several boat launches provide access the river: including the 28th Street boat launch (east Hoquiam), 9th Street Landing and Rayonier Point (Hoquiam), Pakonen Ramp (south Aberdeen), Weyerhaeuser Boat Ramp (Cosmopolis), Friends Landing Boat Ramp (Montesano), and Montesano Boat Launch (south Montesano).

3.10.4.3 Grays Harbor

The shoreline of Grays Harbor provides an abundance of opportunities for hiking, biking, picnicking, wildlife viewing, bird watching, and hunting at the numerous state and city parks and designated wildlife areas that surround the harbor. Miles of public shoreline with abundant public access provide opportunities for beachcombing and shellfishing; public boat launches provide access for recreational fishing and boating. Wave riding and surfing are other popular activities near the south jetty. The parks, wildlife areas, public shorelines, and public boat launches are shown on Figure 3.10-1 and described further in the sections below.

State and City Parks

Numerous state and city parks provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and day use near Grays Harbor. The larger state and local parks are listed in Table 3.10-4 along with a general description of their facilities and recreational opportunities. Several smaller city or neighborhood parks (1 to 3

acres) are also spread widely across the areas surrounding the harbor, and these include landscaped or manicured areas, athletic fields and courts, and picnic facilities.

Table 3.10-4. State and City Parks around Grays Harbor

Park	Description
Damon Point State Park (southeast Ocean Shores Peninsula)	61-acre day-use park at the southeastern tip of the Ocean Shores Peninsula with a walk along a 1-mile-long, 0.5-mile-wide stretch of land jutting out to the ocean. Activities include bird watching, wildlife viewing, hiking, picnicking, fishing, clamming, crabbing, rock collecting, and beachcombing.
Westhaven State Park (Westport)	79-acre day-use park near the City of Westport on the Pacific Ocean and Half Moon Bay. Activities include picnicking, fishing, clamming, horseback riding, kite flying, crabbing, surfing, scuba diving, and beachcombing.
Westport Light State Park	212-acre park on the Pacific Ocean adjacent to the historic Westport Lighthouse. Activities include hiking, fishing, beachcombing, and bird watching.
Westport City Park	7-acre park east of Westport Light State Park. Facilities include a covered picnic shelter, children's play area, tennis court, softball field, hiking trails, BMX track, and community house.
Bottle Beach State Park	75-acre day-use park in Ocosta with 6,000 feet of shoreline on Grays Harbor. Activities include bird and wildlife viewing, and a walking trail is provided.
North Bay Park	7-acre city park in Ocean Shores between the Ocean Shores Wildlife Area and Duck Lake. Facilities include a boat launch, fishing dock, athletic fields and courts, playground, and picnic shelter.
Ocean City State Park	170-acre camping park in Ocean City. Activities include camping, hiking, beachcombing, and bird watching.
Twin Harbors Beach State Park	172-acre camping park along the Pacific Coast approximately 4 miles south of Westhaven. Activities include camping, hiking, beachcombing, and wildlife viewing.

Natural Areas

Natural areas along Grays Harbor range from 185 acres to more than 3,000 acres, and offer opportunities for wildlife viewing, bird watching, hiking, fishing, and hunting. Table 3.10-5 provides a general description of the facilities and recreational opportunities offered at designated wildlife areas along Grays Harbor.

Table 3.10-5. Natural Areas around Grays Harbor

Natural Areas	Description
Oyhut Wildlife Recreation Area	682-acre wildlife area managed by WFDW at the southern end of the Ocean Shores peninsula. Features wetlands and tidal flats that shelter coastal birds, including blue herons, brown pelicans, pheasants, and federally listed (threatened) snowy plovers. Serves as a popular migrant stop for these birds and is a site for bird watching.
Ocean Shores Airport Unit	185-acre wildlife area managed by WFDW in Ocean Shores and adjacent to the harbor. Offers year-round birding opportunities and is popular for waterfowl hunting.
Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuge	1,500-acre wildlife refuge managed by USFWS in the Grays Harbor estuary along the northeastern shore. Encompasses intertidal mudflats, salt marsh, and uplands, including the Bowerman Basin, an arm of Grays Harbor that is a world-renowned bird-watching area particularly during the spring and fall shorebird migration. Although limited, recreational activities allowed include wildlife viewing, photography, and nature study. No fishing or hunting is allowed on the refuge. Visited by over a million travelers each year (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2012).
Johns River Unit, State Wildlife Area	1,500-acre area managed by WFDW in the Johns River State Wildlife Area approximately 6 miles southwest of Hoquiam. Comprises extensive mudflats and swamps that have formed behind old dikes that create prime habitat for numerous types of wildlife and waterfowl. Includes a boat launch and trails for easy public access. Hiking, wildlife viewing, fishing, and hunting are popular activities in the wildlife area.

WDFW = Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; USFWS = U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Recreational Activities

Recreational activities and facilities in and along the harbor are focused on fishing, shellfishing, bird watching, and whale watching.

Fishing

Grays Harbor and several large rivers that empty into the harbor (Chehalis, Wishkah, Hoquiam, Humptulips, and Johns Rivers) provide excellent opportunities for recreational saltwater and freshwater fishing for salmon, steelhead, sturgeon, and other game fish.

Grays Harbor is a very popular small-boat fishing area, especially for large Chinook and coho salmon. Major access points include the 28th Street boat launch, Westport, Ocean Shores, and Johns River; several smaller public boat launches provide access to the water (Table 3.10-6; Figure 3.10-1). The protected nature of Grays Harbor allows small boats access to exceptional salmon fishing. Recreational fishing is open throughout the harbor but tends to concentrate in the navigation channel east of the Hoquiam River (near the project site and continuing east) and in the south channel (Figure 3.10-1), east of Johns River (Scarp pers. comm.). Most recreational salmon fishing occurs in September and early October before the commercial fishery commences (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife 2015a). Typically, recreational fishing is limited to daylight hours. WDFW fishing regulations identify closures at night by species, location, and season.

Chartered ocean fishing for albacore tuna, Pacific halibut, rockfish, lingcod, and salmon is available from the Westport Marina, Washington's largest fish-landing port. Bank fishing is available from the

boardwalks, jetty, and piers near the Westport Marina and on the east end of the harbor near the Morrison Riverfront Park.

Grays Harbor facilities providing moorage and access for recreational fishing boats are described below. Refer to Section *3.5, Animals,* for more information on the fisheries in Grays Harbor.

Westport Marina

The Westport Marina, located on a peninsula on the south side of the entrance to Grays Harbor, is home to over 200 commercial fishing vessels and many recreational boats in Grays Harbor. It has designated moorage slips for guest boats and a public boat launch ramp. Westport Marina has 21 floats with 650 boat slips. It is Washington's largest fish landing port, providing loading and fuel docks and on-shore processing and service facilities (WorleyParsons 2014).

Public Boat Launches

Public boat launches providing public access for recreational boating and fishing at Grays Harbor are listed in Table 3.10-6 along with a description of each facility's amenities and capacity for car and trailer parking. Smaller facilities typically have a single concrete or gravel boat ramp with parking capacity for up to 10 cars and between 5 and 25 trailers. Larger facilities have more than one boat ramp and substantially greater capacity for parking cars and trailers. For example, the Weyerhaeuser boat launch has two boat ramps and parking for 50 cars and 50 trailers, while the Westport Marina has three boat ramps and parking for 100 cars and 135 trailers.

Recreational boating activity fluctuates significantly depending on season, day of the week, and weather conditions. Peak boat activity in Grays Harbor is usually concentrated on weekend days during open salmon fishing season, typically from June to October, and particularly when the weather is warm and sunny. Much of the in-harbor sports-fishing activity is further concentrated in the second half of September and the first half of October. However, even in high season, the density of recreational boats and fishing vessels in Grays Harbor is considered to be low (WorleyParsons 2014).

Table 3.10-6. Public Boat Launches

Boat Launch	Description of Amenities
Humptulips River – Morley Site Manager: WDFW	• 1 concrete plank ramp • 5 gravel car parking spaces • 7 gravel trailer parking spaces
North Bay Park Site Manager: City of Ocean Shores	• 1 loading float • 1 concrete plank ramp • 7 paved car parking spaces • 10 paved trailer parking spaces
Chinook City Park Site Manager: City of Ocean Shores	• 1 loading float • 1 concrete plank ramp • 10 gravel car parking spaces • 5 gravel trailer parking spaces
Ocean Shores Marina Site Manager: Quinault Indian Nation	• 1 concrete ramp • 20 paved car parking spaces • 50 paved trailer parking spaces • Boat moorage is available at the marina

Boat Launch	Description of Amenities
Little Hoquiam River Site Manager: Hoquiam Parks & Recreation Department	• 1 concrete plank ramp • 10 gravel car parking spaces • 25 gravel trailer parking spaces
9th Street Landing and Rayonier Point Site Manager: Hoquiam Parks & Recreation Department	• 1 gravel ramp • 7 gravel car parking spaces • No trailer parking
28th Street Boat Launch Site Manager: Port of Grays Harbor	• 1 loading float • 1 concrete plank ramp • 10 gravel car parking spaces • 8 gravel trailer parking spaces
Aberdeen Ramp Site Manager: City of Aberdeen	• 1 concrete plank ramp • 5 gravel car parking spaces • 5 gravel trailer parking spaces
Weyerhaeuser Boat Ramp Site Manager: Weyerhaeuser Company	• 1 asphalt ramp • 1 gravel ramp • 50 gravel car parking spaces • 50 gravel trailer parking spaces
Westport Marina Site Manager: Port of Grays Harbor	• 3 asphalt ramps • 2 loading floats • 100 paved car parking spaces • 135 gravel trailer parking spaces • Boat moorage is available at the marina

Source: Grays Harbor Chamber of Commerce 2000
WDFW = Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Shellfishing

Razor clams are found primarily on the intertidal coastal beaches (those that are exposed at low tide) from a +3 foot tide level to a -2 foot tide level. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife manages two razor clam harvest areas near Grays Harbor.

- **Copalis Beach**. Harvests are managed from the north jetty at the mouth of Grays Harbor to the Copalis River.
- **Twin Harbors**. Harvests are managed from the Willapa Bay north to the south jetty at the mouth of Grays Harbor.

Razor clam seasons are variable and occur only after clam samples have been tested by Washington Department of Health and are found to be safe for human consumption. Seasons are set to allow digging during daylight spring tides when there is better weather and again during the fall and winter (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife 2015b).

Crabbers in the harbor use crab pots to catch Dungeness and red rock crabs; however, crabs are also caught using ring nets and dip nets and by wading in shallow water during spring and early summer. The season for crabbing by use of crab pots is limited (December 1 through September 15), whereas fishing with other crab gear is open all year. Public access for crabbing is available at the Westport Boat Basin. Crabbing is allowed off any of the floats in this area as well as off the walkway along the top of the breakwater (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife 2015c).

Bird Watching

Bird watching is a very popular recreational activity at the harbor, particularly in springtime with the peak bird migration typically in late April and early May. The Grays Harbor estuary offers many opportunities for excellent bird watching, notably at the Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuge during the Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival. This event (hosted by the Grays Harbor Audubon Society, Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuge, the City of Hoquiam, and local sponsors) is scheduled during the annual migration of hundreds of thousands of Arctic-bound shorebirds as they rest and feed at the estuary (Shorebird Festival 2015). Thousands of visitors attend the festival's activities, which include shorebird viewing, field trips, lectures, and a birding market place and nature fair.

Whale Watching

Whale watching off the coast of Washington peaks between March and May as gray whales migrate between feeding grounds in the North Pacific and breeding lagoons in Baja California. Humpback whale sightings are often reported as the whales travel along the coast near the mouth of Grays harbor, but humpbacks are rarely reported entering the bay itself (Orca Network 2013 in U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 2014: 88). Gray whale use of Grays Harbor is well documented, especially during migrations along the coast (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife 1997). During this time, Pacific gray whales can be spotted from shore, within and beyond the entrance to Grays Harbor, or from one of many chartered whale-watching boats departing from Westport.

3.10.5 What are the potential impacts on recreation?

This section describes impacts on recreational uses and areas that could occur in the study area. Potential impacts of the no-action alternative are described first, followed by potential impacts of the proposed action.

3.10.5.1 No-Action Alternative

Under the no-action alternative, impacts related on recreation from the construction of the proposed action would not occur. The applicant would continue to operate its existing facility as described in Chapter 2, Section 2.1.3.2, *Existing Operations*. Although the proposed action would not occur, it is assumed that growth in the region would continue under the no-action alternative. This growth could lead to development of another industrial use at the project site, which could result in impacts similar to those described for construction and routine operation of the proposed action. However, for the purposes of this analysis, it is assumed that no future development would occur at the project site.

As discussed in Section 3.15, *Rail Traffic*, it is assumed that rail traffic would not increase between 2017 and 2037. Therefore, there would be no impacts on recreation from increase rail traffic under the no-action alternative.

As discussed in Section 3.17, *Vessel Traffic*, large commercial vessel trips are projected to increase from 338 in 2017 to 436 in 2037 and Terminal 1 berth occupancy is expected to increase slightly. This additional activity would proportionally increase the potential for impacts on recreational vessels compared to existing conditions. However, because recreational fishing and boating is highly seasonal and even at the height of the season the boat density is considered low by both the pilots

and the U.S. Coast Guard (WorleyParsons 2014), potential conflicts are not anticipated to be frequent or to last for a substantial amount of time.

3.10.5.2 Proposed Action

This section describes the impacts that could occur in the study area as a result of construction and routine operation of the proposed action. First, this section describes impacts from construction of the proposed action. It then describes impacts of routine operation at the project site and of routine rail and vessel transport to and from the project site.

Construction

Construction activities could have impacts on recreation if they were to limit access to recreational facilities or conflict with recreational uses (e.g., increased noise levels or visual changes that affect the recreational experience). Construction-related impacts could occur as a result of construction vehicles entering and leaving the project site and generating noise or obstructing views.

Construction vehicles would access the site from Port Industrial Road and are not likely to block or reduce vehicle access to the 28th Street boat launch, fishing pier, viewing tower, or nearby parks. No in-water construction or access to the project site by water is proposed; therefore, the activities would not conflict with in-water recreation near the project site.

As discussed in Section 3.7, *Noise and Vibration*, construction activities, primarily pile driving, would result in increased noise levels that could disturb surrounding recreational uses. Although noise would increase above ambient conditions, construction noise would be short term (up to approximately 22 months) and would not represent permanent changes to the environment.

Operations

This section describes impacts that would occur as a result of routine operations at the project site, rail transport along the PS&P rail line, and vessel transport through Grays Harbor.

Onsite

The proposed action could affect recreation if onsite operations block access to recreational facilities or conflict with adjacent recreational uses (e.g., increased noise levels or visual changes that affect the recreational experience). Because onsite operations would occur entirely within the boundaries of the project site, these activities would not block access to offsite recreational facilities. Tank vessels at berth during vessel loading would restrict recreational boating and fishing access to the area adjacent to the Terminal 1 dock. A vessel would occupy this area for up to 119 days per year[3] compared to 58 days per year under the no-action alternative. Impacts on recreational boaters would be low because boaters could access other boating and fishing areas throughout the harbor, including popular areas in the south channel east of Johns River and the navigation channel east of the project site.

As noted in Section 3.7, *Noise and Vibration*, operational noise levels would be similar to existing noise levels at the project site and would be consistent with current uses surrounding the project site. Although new facilities (e.g., new storage tanks, hose tower or loading arm, and new marine

[3] Assumes all vessels are tank barges with maximum 24-hour berth occupancy.

vapor control system) would be visible from the 28th Street viewing tower and boat launch, as discussed in Section 3.9, *Aesthetics, Light, and Glare*, these facilities would visually blend in with the existing infrastructure. These new features, once implemented, would not be very noticeable to viewers from nearby recreational uses. See Section 3.10.7.1, *Voluntary Measures and Design Features*, for the commitment by the applicant to halt crude oil vessel-loading operations for a period of 2 weeks each year overlapping with the Shorebird Festival.

Rail

Operation of the proposed action at maximum throughput would add 458 unit train trips[4] per year (1.25 trips per day on average) along the PS&P rail line to the approximately 1,100 train trips per year (three trips per day on average) under the no-action alternative (Section 3.15, *Rail Traffic*). This increased traffic could affect recreational uses along the PS&P rail line because of increased noise and limitations to access, which are discussed in Section 3.7, *Noise and Vibration*, and Section 3.16*, Vehicle Traffic and Safety,* respectively*.*

As noted in Section 3.7, *Noise and Vibration*, the passing of a train (including sounding horns for safety at PS&P rail line grade crossings) would generally increase the average noise levels along the PS&P rail line; however, the maximum level of noise associated with a single passby likely to be experienced by recreational areas would not change. This is because all trains would continue to travel at the same speeds and would continue to sound horns consistent with existing operational practices. As noted above, the number of events per day would increase by approximately one trip per day on average. This increased train noise could cause temporary disturbance to surrounding recreational uses, during the passage of a train. Given that the recreational uses present along the PS&P rail line already experience noise levels associated with rail operations and the temporary nature of the noise, noise impacts from the additional rail traffic under the proposed action are considered low.

Increased rail traffic along the PS&P rail line could also affect recreation if the trains block access to a recreational area for an extended period. This would occur in situations where the only public access is from roadways that cross the PS&P rail line. With the exception of the Morrison Riverfront Park, all the other recreational areas listed in Section 3.10.4.2, *PS&P Rail Line*, can be accessed by multiple roadways. Additionally, as discussed in Section 3.16, *Vehicle Traffic and Safety*, for the majority of the rail line, the increase in blockages would not result in a substantial decline in the level of service. Although the potential for an individual to encounter a train at any PS&P rail line grade crossing would increase to four times per day on average, compared to three times per day under the no-action alternative, the likelihood and duration of an individual experiencing a delay would be similar to the no-action alternative.

Morrison Riverfront Park, which can only be accessed through entrances to the Olympic Gateway Plaza, would be blocked more frequently. As described in Section 3.15, *Rail Traffic*, operation of the proposed action at maximum throughput would block all access points to the Olympic Gateway Plaza area more frequently, an average of four more times per week compared with four times per week under the no-action alternative. Per event, the length of additional time that all access to the plaza would be blocked would increase from approximately 35 minutes to 45 minutes under the

[4] A trip represents one-way travel; in other words, an inbound trip and an outbound trip are counted as two trips.

proposed action. The potential impacts on vehicle delay and mitigation measures to address delay are discussed in Section 3.16, *Vehicle Traffic and Safety*.

An analysis of potential impacts from increased risk of incidents (e.g., train derailments) and related consequences (e.g., release of crude oil) is provided in Chapter 4, *Environmental Health and Safety.*

Vessel

As described in Section 3.17, *Vessel Traffic*, operation of the proposed action at maximum throughput would add 238 tank vessel trips per year (0.7 trip per day on average) along the navigation channel to projected large commercial vessel trips under the no-action alternative—between 338 and 436 large commercial vessel[5] trips per year in 2017 and 2037, respectively, or approximately one trip per day on average. This increased traffic could affect recreational activities in the harbor, including boating and fishing, by restricting access to certain areas in the harbor. Because vessel traffic under the proposed action would be limited to the navigation channel, impacts on recreational uses in the harbor but outside the channel are not expected. As noted in Section 3.10.4.3, *Grays Harbor*, and shown in Figure 3.10-1, with the exception of the 28th Street boat launch, all other major access points for recreational boaters would be distant and not affected by vessel traffic under the proposed action. Because recreational boats are smaller and are not limited to using the navigation channel, it is expected that recreational boaters would have sufficient room to navigate safely away from the launch into the harbor and would not be substantially affected by vessels passing through the navigation channel.

As noted in Section 3.10.4.3, *Grays Harbor*, recreational fishing does occur within the navigation channel, primarily in the fall (September and early October). As explained in Section 3.17, *Vessel Traffic*, this area would not be accessible while a vessel was making the trip to and from the project site. Although vessels would occupy the berth more frequently (as addressed for onsite impacts), the potential impacts related to vessel transport would be limited to the time required for a vessel to move through the navigation channel (approximately 2 hours one-way). Recreational fishing and boating is highly seasonal, and even at the height of the season, the boat density is considered low by both the pilots and the U.S. Coast Guard (WorleyParsons 2014), meaning potential conflicts are not anticipated to be frequent or to last for a substantial amount of time. Additionally, as noted in Section 3.17, alternative fishing areas include the south channel, east of Johns River, which would not be affected by vessel traffic under the proposed action. For these reasons, impacts on recreation associated with vessel transport would be low. The measure identified in Section 3.10.7.2, *Applicant Mitigation*, to announce project-related vessel traffic arrivals and departures would further reduce impacts.

An analysis of impacts from increased risk of incidents (e.g., vessel collisions) and related consequences (e.g., release of crude oil) is provided in Chapter 4, *Environmental Health and Safety.*

3.10.6 What required permits and plans apply to recreation?

No required permits or plans apply to recreation.

[5] The term *large commercial vessels* refers collectively to tank and cargo vessels.

3.10.7 What mitigation measures would reduce impacts on recreation?

This section describes the voluntary measure and applicant mitigation that would reduce impacts on recreation from construction and routine operation of the proposed action. Mitigation measures to reduce potential impacts on environmental health and safety from increased risk of incidents and related consequences are presented in Chapter 4, *Environmental Health and Safety*.

3.10.7.1 Voluntary Measures and Design Features

The applicant has committed to the following measure.

- To acknowledge the importance of the annual Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival to the community and its visitors and to eliminate the potential for a spill from vessel-loading operations occurring during the festival, the applicant will coordinate with the City of Hoquiam to receive advance notice of the date for and will halt crude oil vessel-loading operations for a period of 2 weeks each year overlapping with the event.

3.10.7.2 Applicant Mitigation

The applicant will implement the following mitigation measure.

- While fishing boats are required to follow the U.S. Coast Guard navigation rules, to improve awareness of vessel traffic in the navigation channel, the applicant will work with the Grays Harbor Safety Committee, including the U.S. Coast Guard and Port of Grays Harbor, to establish procedures to announce project-related vessel traffic arrivals and departures over a designated VHF marine radio channel at least 1 hour before arriving and departing.

3.10.8 Would the proposed action have unavoidable and significant adverse impacts on recreation?

Increased activity at the project site and rail and vessel traffic could interfere with or disrupt recreational activities but the impact is not considered significant. Implementation of the voluntary and applicant mitigation measures listed above would further reduce these impacts. There would be no unavoidable and significant adverse impacts. Potential impacts related to increased risk of incidents and related consequences are addressed in Chapter 4, *Environmental Health and Safety*.