

4.7 Mineral Resources

4.7.1 Methods and Significance Criteria

Methods

This section evaluates the effects on minerals that would result from implementation of the proposed action and alternatives.

Anticipated changes in land cover/land use for each alternative are described in Chapter 2, *Proposed Action and Alternatives*. See Section 4.0, *Environmental Consequences*, for a description of the methodology used across all resource chapters for the analysis of cumulative effects.

Impacts related to mineral resources were assessed on the basis of the proposed action and review of applicable documents, such as relevant general plans and mineral reports by the California Geological Survey.

Significance Criteria

According to Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, a proposed project would be considered to have a significant effect if it would result in any of the following.

- Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state.
- Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan.

4.7.2 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Alternative 1—No Action

As described in Section 4.0, *Environmental Consequences*, Alternative 1 includes reasonably foreseeable activities in the Plan Area associated with urbanization and associated infrastructure development, operation, and maintenance included in the various planning documents of Placer County and the City of Lincoln as well as future projects of the South Placer Regional Transportation Authority (SPRTA) and Placer County Water Agency (PCWA), such as local transportation and water projects.

Impact MIN-1: Contribute to the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state (NEPA: no impact; CEQA: no impact)

The effects of implementing the general plans on the availability of known mineral resources were assessed in the EIRs for the *City of Lincoln General Plan* and the *Placer County General Plan* (City of Lincoln 2008; Placer County 1994). Both EIRs concluded that the policies of the respective general plans would ensure that development under those general plans would not result in loss of availability of known mineral resources; for the *City of Lincoln General Plan*, this conclusion relied upon adoption of a revised policy as a mitigation measure. Future projects of SPRTA and PCWA,

such as local transportation and water projects, would be unlikely to result in the permanent conversion of large areas of land such that mineral resources would not be accessible. Therefore, there would be no impact.

NEPA Determination: There would be no impact.

CEQA Determination: There would be no impact.

Impact MIN-2: Contribute to the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan (NEPA: no impact; CEQA: no impact)

No additional locally important mineral resource recovery sites were designated in the Plan Area other than those areas already referred to in the EIRs for the *Placer County General Plan* and the *City of Lincoln General Plan*. Therefore, there would be no impact.

NEPA Determination: No additional locally important mineral resource recovery sites were designated in the Plan Area other than those areas already referred to in the EIRs for the *Placer County General Plan* and the *City of Lincoln General Plan*. Therefore, there would be no impact.

CEQA Determination: No additional locally important mineral resource recovery sites were designated in the Plan Area other than those areas already referred to in the EIRs for the *Placer County General Plan* and the *City of Lincoln General Plan*. Therefore, there would be no impact.

Alternative 2—Proposed Action

Impact MIN-1: Contribute to the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state (NEPA: less than significant; CEQA: less than significant)

If under Alternative 2, the proposed action, land adjacent to land designated as an MRZ-2 or MRZ-3 on the Placer County mineral land classification map (Figure 3.7-1) were to be acquired for conservation, that acquisition could result in the loss of a known mineral resource if the land use were incompatible with mining. This would be a significant impact. Implementation of General Condition 1 of the Plan and the Plan requirement for internal buffers to protect reserves from adjacent development and other effects would ensure that such conflicts would not occur.

If, under Alternative 2, the proposed action, land designated as an MRZ-2 or MRZ-3 on the Placer County mineral land classification map (Figure 3.7-1) were to be acquired for conservation, that acquisition could result in the loss of a known mineral resource by making the land unavailable for mineral extraction if the Placer Conservation Authority (PCA) determined through the process identified in Section 8.8.4.2.6.2 of the Plan that the PCA would need to acquire or extinguish the severed mineral rights because the PCA has determined that the mineral rights would be used in a manner incompatible with conservation. This could be a significant impact. It is unlikely, however, that land designated as an MRZ-2 or MRZ-3 would be acquired because of the higher cost of land with mineral resources, and because such land is likely to have the mineral rights held separately, which makes the land ineligible for acquisition for conservation.

The effects of Covered Activities on the availability of known mineral resources were assessed in the EIRs for *Placer County General Plan* and the *City of Lincoln General Plan*. Both EIRs concluded that the policies of the respective general plans would ensure that development under the general plans

would not result in loss of availability of known mineral resources; for the *City of Lincoln General Plan*, this conclusion relied upon adoption of a revised policy as a mitigation measure. In addition, as stated above for Alternative 1, future projects of SPRTA and PCWA would be unlikely to result in impacts on the availability of known mineral resources.

NEPA Determination: Alternative 2, the proposed action, would not result in acquisition of land that could create a conflicting land use with mining operations on other lands due to Plan requirements. In addition, the acquisition of land designated as an MRZ-2 or MRZ-3 is unlikely because of the higher cost of land with mineral resources, and because such land is likely to have the mineral rights held separately, which makes the land ineligible for acquisition for conservation. Effects of the Covered Activities would be less than significant with implementation of general plan policies. This impact would be less than significant.

CEQA Determination: Alternative 2, the proposed action, would not result in acquisition of land that could create a conflicting land use with mining operations on other lands due to Plan requirements. In addition, the acquisition of land designated as an MRZ-2 or MRZ-3 is unlikely because of the higher cost of land with mineral resources, and because such land is likely to have the mineral rights held separately, which makes the land ineligible for acquisition for conservation. Effects of the Covered Activities would be less than significant with implementation of general plan policies. No mitigation has been identified.

Impact MIN-2: Contribute to the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan (NEPA: no impact; CEQA: no impact)

As described in Section 3.7.2, *Environmental Setting*, no additional locally important mineral resource recovery sites were designated in the Plan Area other than those areas already referred to in the EIRs for the *Placer County General Plan* and the *City of Lincoln General Plan*. Therefore, there would be no impact.

NEPA Determination: No additional locally important mineral resource recovery sites were designated in the Plan Area other than those areas already referred to in the EIRs for the *Placer County General Plan* and the *City of Lincoln General Plan*. Therefore, there would be no impact.

CEQA Determination: No additional locally important mineral resource recovery sites were designated in the Plan Area other than those areas already referred to in the EIRs for the *Placer County General Plan* and the *City of Lincoln General Plan*. Therefore, there would be no impact. No mitigation has been identified.

Alternative 3—Reduced Take/Reduced Fill

Impact MIN-1: Contribute to the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state (NEPA: less than significant; CEQA: less than significant)

The potential for land acquisition that could affect mineral resources would be the same as under Alternative 2, the proposed action, because the Plan would operate under the same policies as under Alternative 2. While slightly less land may be acquired for conservation under Alternative 3, less land would be converted to other uses as well. Under Alternative 3, land adjacent to land designated as an MRZ-2 or MRZ-3 on the Placer County mineral land classification map (Figure 3.7-1) were to

be acquired for conservation, that acquisition could result in the loss of a known mineral resource if the land use were incompatible with mining. This would be a significant impact. Implementation of General Condition 1 of the Plan and the Plan requirement for internal buffers to protect reserves from adjacent development and other effects would ensure that such conflicts would not occur.

If, under Alternative 3, land designated as an MRZ-2 or MRZ-3 on the Placer County mineral land classification map (Figure 3.7-1) were to be acquired for conservation, that acquisition could result in the loss of a known mineral resource by making the land unavailable for mineral extraction if the Placer Conservation Authority (PCA) determined through the process identified in Section 8.8.4.2.6.2 of the Plan that the PCA would need to acquire or extinguish the severed mineral rights because the PCA has determined that the mineral rights would be used in a manner incompatible with conservation. This could be a significant impact. It is unlikely, however, that land designated as an MRZ-2 or MRZ-3 would be acquired because of the higher cost of land with mineral resources, and because such land is likely to have the mineral rights held separately, which makes the land ineligible for acquisition for conservation.

Covered Activities that involve development on undeveloped land would be unlikely to make the land permanently unavailable for mining because of policies in the *Placer County General Plan* and the *City of Lincoln General Plan* that protect mineral resources.

NEPA Determination: Alternative 3 would not result in acquisition of land that could create a conflicting land use with mining operations on other lands due to Plan requirements. In addition, the acquisition of land designated as an MRZ-2 or MRZ-3 is unlikely because of the higher cost of land with mineral resources, and because such land is likely to have the mineral rights held separately, which makes the land ineligible for acquisition for conservation. Effects of the Covered Activities would be less than significant with implementation of general plan policies.

CEQA Determination: Alternative 3 would not result in acquisition of land that could create a conflicting land use with mining operations on other lands due to Plan requirements. In addition, the acquisition of land designated as an MRZ-2 or MRZ-3 is unlikely because of the higher cost of land with mineral resources, and because such land is likely to have the mineral rights held separately, which makes the land ineligible for acquisition for conservation. Effects of the Covered Activities would be less than significant with implementation of general plan policies. No mitigation has been identified.

Impact MIN-2: Contribute to the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan (NEPA: no impact; CEQA: no impact)

No additional locally important mineral resource recovery sites were designated in the Plan Area other than those areas already referred to in the EIRs for the *Placer County General Plan* and the *City of Lincoln General Plan*. Therefore, there would be no impact.

NEPA Determination: No additional locally important mineral resource recovery sites were designated in the Plan Area other than those areas already referred to in the EIRs for the *Placer County General Plan* and the *City of Lincoln General Plan*. Therefore, there would be no impact.

CEQA Determination: No additional locally important mineral resource recovery sites were designated in the Plan Area other than those areas already referred to in the EIRs for the *Placer County General Plan* and the *City of Lincoln General Plan*. Therefore, there would be no impact. No mitigation has been identified.

Alternative 4—Reduced Permit Term

Impact MIN-1: Contribute to the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state (NEPA: less than significant; CEQA: less than significant)

The potential for land acquisition that could affect mineral resources would be the same as under Alternative 2, the proposed action, because the Plan would operate under the same policies as under Alternative 2, although less land would be acquired for conservation under Alternative 4. Under Alternative 4, land adjacent to land designated as an MRZ-2 or MRZ-3 on the Placer County mineral land classification map (Figure 3.7-1) were to be acquired for conservation, that acquisition could result in the loss of a known mineral resource if the land use were incompatible with mining. This would be a significant impact. Implementation of General Condition 1 of the Plan and the Plan requirement for internal buffers to protect reserves from adjacent development and other effects would ensure that such conflicts would not occur.

If, under Alternative 4, land designated as an MRZ-2 or MRZ-3 on the Placer County mineral land classification map (Figure 3.7-1) were to be acquired for conservation, that acquisition could result in the loss of a known mineral resource by making the land unavailable for mineral extraction if the PCA determined through the process identified in Section 8.8.4.2.6.2 of the Plan that the PCA would need to acquire or extinguish the severed mineral rights because the PCA has determined that the mineral rights would be used in a manner incompatible with conservation. This could be a significant impact. It is unlikely, however, that land designated as an MRZ-2 or MRZ-3 would be acquired because of the higher cost of land with mineral resources, and because such land is likely to have the mineral rights held separately, which makes the land ineligible for acquisition for conservation.

NEPA Determination: Alternative 4 would not result in acquisition of land that could create a conflicting land use with mining operations on other lands due to Plan requirements. In addition, the acquisition of land designated as an MRZ-2 or MRZ-3 is unlikely because of the higher cost of land with mineral resources, and because such land is likely to have the mineral rights held separately, which makes the land ineligible for acquisition for conservation. Effects of the Covered Activities would be less than significant with implementation of general plan policies.

CEQA Determination: Alternative 4 would not result in acquisition of land that could create a conflicting land use with mining operations on other lands due to Plan requirements. In addition, the acquisition of land designated as an MRZ-2 or MRZ-3 is unlikely because of the higher cost of land with mineral resources, and because such land is likely to have the mineral rights held separately, which makes the land ineligible for acquisition for conservation. Effects of the Covered Activities would be less than significant with implementation of general plan policies. No mitigation has been identified.

Impact MIN-2: Contribute to the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan (NEPA: no impact; CEQA: no impact)

No other locally important mineral resource recovery sites were designated in the Plan Area on the general plans other than in the MRZ-2 and MRZ-3 areas. Therefore, there would be no impact.

NEPA Determination: No additional locally important mineral resource recovery sites were designated in the Plan Area other than those areas already referred to in the EIRs for the *Placer County General Plan* and the *City of Lincoln General Plan*. Therefore, there would be no impact.

CEQA Determination: No additional locally important mineral resource recovery sites were designated in the Plan Area other than those areas already referred to in the EIRs for the *Placer County General Plan* and the *City of Lincoln General Plan*. Therefore, there would be no impact. No mitigation has been identified.

4.7.3 Cumulative Analysis

Alternative 1—No Action

As described in Section 4.0, *Environmental Consequences*, other activities and projects that could contribute to a cumulative impact consist of agriculture and urban development, infrastructure development and operation including the Antelope Creek Flood Control Project, park acquisition and management, and other habitat conservation planning. The proposed action is not anticipated to result in loss of mineral resource lands to recovery, and, for reasons similar to those for the proposed action, neither would other habitat conservation planning and park acquisition and management. As described above, agriculture and urban development as considered in the EIRs for the *Placer County General Plan* and *City of Lincoln General Plan* would also not result in significant impacts on mineral resources. While flood control projects could occur in areas of mineral resources, the permanent impact of such projects would not be large enough to result in a cumulative impact. For these reasons, there would be no cumulative impact.

Alternative 2—Proposed Action

As described in Section 4.0, *Environmental Consequences*, other activities and projects that could contribute to a cumulative impact consist of agriculture and urban development, infrastructure development and operation including the Antelope Creek Flood Control Project, park acquisition and management, and other habitat conservation planning. The proposed action is not anticipated to result in loss of mineral resource lands to recovery, nor would other habitat conservation planning and park acquisition and management. As described above, agriculture and urban development as considered in the EIRs for the *Placer County General Plan* and *City of Lincoln General Plan* would also not result in significant impacts on mineral resources. While flood control projects could occur in areas of mineral resources, the permanent impact of such projects would not be large enough to result in a cumulative impact. For these reasons, there would be no cumulative impact.

Alternative 3—Reduced Take/Reduced Fill

Cumulative impacts resulting from Alternative 3 would be the same as for the proposed action.

Alternative 4—Reduced Permit Term

Cumulative impacts resulting from Alternative 4 would be the same as for the proposed action.

4.7.4 References Cited

City of Lincoln. 2008. *City of Lincoln General Plan Update Final Environmental Impact Report*. State Clearinghouse No. 2005112003. February.

Placer County. 1994. *Placer County General Plan Update: Countywide General Plan Final Environmental Impact Report*. July. Auburn, CA. Prepared by Crawford Multari & Starr, DKS Associates, Psomas and Associates, Jones & Stokes Associates, Recht Hausrath & Associates, and J. Laurence Mintier & Associates.