

6.0 OTHER ANALYSIS REQUIRED BY CEQA

6.1 Cumulative Impacts

A cumulative impact is the effect on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the proposed project when combined with the effects of other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. The significance of a cumulative impact may be greater than the effects resulting from the individual actions if the effects of more than one action are additive. This chapter evaluates the reasonably foreseeable potential effects of other existing activities in the area in addition to other planned projects.

Criteria for evaluating the significance of adverse effects were identified for each environmental issue in Chapter 4.0. These criteria, which are based on resource sensitivity, quality, and quantity are also applicable to cumulative impacts. The timing and duration of each activity is also an important consideration for evaluating the potential cumulative effects of activities that occur only for a limited period. In those cases, a cumulative effect may occur only when two or more of the activities are occurring simultaneously.

The CEQA Guidelines provide that cumulative impacts shall be discussed when they are significant, and that the discussion of cumulative impacts shall reflect the severity of the impacts and their likelihood of occurrence (Section 15130 (a) and (b)). This chapter considers the likelihood of such impacts and evaluates any significant effects. These effects, where they occur, are then evaluated for their impact in combination with other activities in the area for cumulative impact.

6.1.1 Other Activities in the Area

The effects of past and present activities have been considered as part of the existing environment evaluated in combination with the proposed project in Chapter 4.0. This chapter therefore focuses on the potential for additional effects of other proposed activities in the vicinity that could create a cumulative effect in combination with the existing conditions and the proposed project.

The region of influence for the analysis of cumulative impacts varies for various resource topics. For example, cumulative noise impacts may only be associated with projects that are geographically proximal, and may only affect a small area close to the noise-generating source. In contrast, cumulative impacts to air quality may affect a regional airshed.

For this project, the site is located in an unincorporated area of western Butte County. Surrounding land use activities are predominately agricultural. The site is approximately 1.5 miles south of the City of Chico Wastewater Treatment Plant. Recent projects in the area include the following:

- The Chico Water Pollution Control Plant Expansion for which an EIR was prepared in November, 1995 (City of Chico, 1995). The project has been completed (Figge, 2002). The EIR evaluated the impacts of the project for the following environmental issues:

- **Water Resources:** Primarily related to surface discharge of treated wastewater with residual contaminants.
- **Fishery Resources:** Impacts to fish from discharged water.
- **Biological Resources:** Impacts to various species, including northern harrier, white-tailed kite, tricolored blackbird, bank swallow, northwestern pond turtle, Swainson's hawk, and other species.
- **Air Quality:** Increases in ROG and NO_x.
- **Noise:** Increased mechanical equipment noise.
- **Cultural Resources:** Potential for damage to unidentified resources.
- **Health and Safety:** Use of chemicals, and generation of sludge.

Impacts for all of these issues were determined less than significant; in many cases, no mitigation was required.

- The M&T Ranch/Llano Seco Ranch/City of Chico Sacramento River Water Intake Stream Channel Maintenance Project for which a mitigated negative declaration was prepared in September 2001 and the project was completed in the late fall of 2001. This project was located approximately three miles southeast of the proposed M&T Chico Ranch Mine project and was adjacent to a gravel bar within the Bidwell Sacramento River State Park. The project involved a multi-agency coordinated effort to remove approximately eight acres of a 20-acre gravel bar in the Sacramento River. All environmental impacts from this project were determined to be less than significant.

Other Proposed Projects

Other jurisdictions in proximity of the proposed project and Butte County were contacted to determine the presence of any other project(s) for which an application has been filed, or which has been recently been approved but not yet constructed.

The jurisdictions contacted include the County of Glenn (15 miles west of the site), and the City of Chico (five miles northeast of the site).

Glenn County has no current applications or recently approved projects in the eastern portion of the County west of the project site (Leighton, 2002). Butte County similarly has no other projects on record in this region of the County (Breedon, 2002). The City of Chico similarly has no other projects on record in the vicinity of the project (Figge, 2002).

6.1.2 Cumulative Effects

The following section provides a discussion of the potential cumulative environmental effects that could result when the potential impacts of the proposed project are combined with impacts associated with the reasonably foreseeable projects identified in Section 6.1.1.

Land Use

The project site does not meet the standard for prime farmland. Though the project will result in the conversion of non-prime farmland to open space, the amount of agricultural land surrounding the site is abundant. In terms of prime agricultural land loss, no significant cumulative land use impacts are expected as a result of this project.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Impacts to hydrology and water quality from other projects in the vicinity that could contribute to a cumulative effect would be mitigated to less than a significant level. Mining at the M&T Chico Ranch property would have no significant effect on the regional stratigraphy or the hydrogeology of the area, nor would it adversely affect the volume or quality of regional groundwater resources. No significant cumulative hydrological impacts are expected as a result of this project.

Air Quality

As described in Impact 4.4-1, when viewed independently, the proposed project would result in a significant impact on PM₁₀ emissions, based solely on the Level C significance thresholds. However, when viewed in comparison to existing conditions at the site and surrounding areas, the project would result in a net reduction in PM₁₀ emissions (refer to Table 4.5-8). Because other impacts from these projects would be individually less than significant, and the combined impacts would not exceed the significance criteria defined for these issues in Chapter 4.0, no significant cumulative PM₁₀ emission impacts are expected.

As discussed in Section 4.6, Traffic, there are no feasible mitigation measures to reduce cumulative traffic congestion at certain intersections. This cumulative traffic congestion will result in an increase to carbon monoxide emissions due to increased idle time at these intersections. Under cumulative conditions, this is a significant, unavoidable impact.

Traffic and Circulation

Cumulative traffic impact as presented in Section 4.6 indicate that the daily levels of service for all locations would operate at LOS C or better with or without the project, except for the following locations:

- Park Avenue between East 20th Street and East Park Avenue will operate at LOS F
- East Park Avenue between Fair Street and SR 99 will operate at LOS F
- Bruce Road between SR 32 and Skyway will operate at LOS E
- Skyway – between SR 99 and the Butte Creek Bridge is expected to operate at LOS E

The project will add additional trips to these road segments. In all cases, these additions represent a less than one percent increase in traffic. Therefore, the impact of additional project traffic to these roadway segments would be minimal yet significant based upon the significance criteria established by this Draft EIR.

Peak hour intersection operations under cumulative conditions with and without the project also indicate that all intersections will operate at LOS C or better except for the Skyway/Baldwin Plant Driveway and Durham-Dayton Highway at Midway. Both locations operate unacceptably without the project and those unacceptable operations are exacerbated by the project. The Skyway/Baldwin Plant Driveway intersection will operate at LOS F in the a.m. peak hour and LOS D in the p.m. peak hour. The Durham-Dayton Highway/Midway intersection will operate at LOS F in both the a.m. and p.m. peak hour.

Biological Resources

The resulting habitat associated with the reclaimed lake would result in an overall increase in wildlife values over the long-term. No significant cumulative biological impacts are expected.

Noise

None of the cumulative projects noted in Section 6.1.1 are located near enough to the M&T Chico Ranch project to contribute to cumulative noise impacts associated with operations. No significant cumulative noise impacts are expected as a result of this project.

Cultural Resources

Records review and field surveys showed no evidence of cultural resources at the proposed project site. Therefore, the proposed Project is not expected to contribute to cumulative impacts to cultural resources.

Aesthetics

The aesthetic character of the site would change as a result of mining and reclamation. Completion of reclamation activities at the site would eliminate the potential for any negative cumulative visual effect. No significant negative cumulative aesthetic impacts are expected as a result of this project.

6.2 Growth-Inducing Impacts

CEQA Section 15126(g) requires that an EIR consider the potential for a project to create growth-inducing impacts. A project could have a growth inducing impact if it could:

- Foster economic or population growth, or construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment.
- Remove obstacles to population growth, for example, developing service areas in previously unserved areas, extending transportation routes into previously undeveloped areas, and establishing major new employment opportunities.
- Encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment, either individually or cumulatively.

The proposed project will not result in a significant increase in employment, or any increase in housing. No new roads or public services would be installed as a result of the

project that will remove obstacles to growth. The project would make available aggregate materials used in a variety of activities, including road building and maintenance and construction. While the project will make these materials available, it cannot be considered to be facilitating the activities using aggregate materials. The project is not the only source of these materials, and these activities will occur regardless of the availability of the additional resources made available in this project. Therefore, the project would not encourage or facilitate activities and create environmental effects other than those addressed in this Draft EIR.

6.3 Energy Consumption and Conservation

Construction and operation of the proposed project would result in the consumption of non-renewable energy resources. These resources would primarily include petroleum products, and electricity. Fuel consumption by heavy equipment would be the largest energy requirement. One of the primary opportunities for energy conservation is the scheduled maintenance of vehicles and equipment to maximize fuel efficiency. Vehicle and heavy equipment maintenance will occur in the processing area.

The proposed project has been designed for operational efficiencies, primarily by minimizing haul routes to reduce fuel consumption. Haul routes to the City of Chico and other northern Butte County markets were compared with the existing transport of aggregate from Baldwin’s Hamilton City Mine, Baldwin’s Orland Mine, and Robinson Construction Company’s Mine in Oroville (KRC, 1998). The following haul savings would result:

TABLE 6-1
FUEL CONSUMPTION ASSOCIATED WITH AGGREGATE DELIVERIES

Source	Saved Truck Miles	Diesel Fuel Savings⁽¹⁾
Hamilton City	350,000	58,330 gallons
Orland	600,000	100,000 gallons
Robinson	600,000	100,000 gallons
(1) Approximate fuel use, based on an average of six miles/gallon (1999 vehicles)		

As shown in Table 6-1, Fuel Consumption Associated with Aggregate Deliveries, the proposed project would result in substantial haul savings resulting in a reduction in fuel consumption associated with aggregate deliveries.

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