

5.1.2 Agriculture and Extractive Resources

Agricultural Resources

Under the proposed MSHCP and each of the alternatives, varying numbers of acres of State-designated Prime, Unique, or Statewide Important farmland are located within the Conservation Area. As previously stated, the designation of farmland as Prime, Unique, or State Important does not necessarily indicate that such land is utilized for agricultural production. The precise boundaries of the reserve are not fixed and the Criteria Area covers thousands of acres. Due to these facts and the fact that future development is dependent upon future market conditions, it is not possible to determine the extent to which implementation of the proposed MSHCP might result in the conversion (to non-agricultural uses) of specific parcels that are designated as Prime, Unique, or Statewide Important farmland on maps prepared by the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. Likewise, it is not possible to determine whether implementation of the proposed MSHCP would conflict with existing agricultural designations or a Williamson Act contract on specific parcels of land within the MSHCP Plan Area.

Overall, however, the proposed MSHCP will permit the continuation of existing agricultural operations within the Conservation Area. Additionally, the proposed MSHCP has a mechanism to allow up to 10,000 acres of new agricultural land within the MSHCP Criteria Area, which, if implemented, will offset potential impacts to agricultural resources that may result from implementation of the MSHCP. Development outside the limits of the MSHCP Criteria Area may contribute to the conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses. However, the MSHCP expressly permits existing agriculture and, if the provisions for new agricultural land are implemented, also has opportunities for new agricultural operations. Therefore, no cumulatively significant impact to agricultural resources will occur.

Mineral Resources

Throughout western Riverside County, approximately 19,500 acres have been identified as State-designated Mineral Resource Zones (MRZs). MRZs are known mineral resources that are of value to the region and the residents of the State. Active mineral extraction areas will not be incorporated into the Conservation Area. Under the Proposed MSHCP, land designated as MRZs (but with no permitted mineral extraction operation) will be incorporated into the Conservation Area. The loss of any portion of such an MRZ, when taken with similar losses that may result from the implementation of other projects (such as from assembling the existing reserves) represents a cumulatively significant and unavoidable impact. The MSHCP will not have any other significant direct or indirect cumulative impacts on mineral resources, because implementation of the MSHCP will not result in the loss of a locally important mineral resource recovery site, as delineated on a General Plan or other land use plan.

5.1.3 Housing, Population, and Employment

Implementation of the Proposed Action or any of the alternatives will not change any regional projections, displace persons or dwelling units, nor will it exacerbate the jobs-to-housing imbalance within western Riverside County. Thus, the MSHCP will not have significant cumulative impacts in any of these impact categories.