COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & BUILDING

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

PLN-2039
04/2019

Project Title & No. : Rocky Canyon Quarry CUP DRC2019-00132 / ED26-0159

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED: The proposed project could have a "Potentially Significant Impact" for environmental factors checked below. Please refer to the attached pages for discussion on mitigation measures or project revisions to either reduce these impacts to less than significant levels or require further study.

☐ Aesthetics	☐ Greenhouse Gas Emissions	☐ Public Services
☐ Agriculture & Forestry Resources	☒ Hazards & Hazardous Materials	☐ Recreation
☐ Air Quality	☒ Hydrology & Water Quality	☐ Transportation
☒ Biological Resources	☒ Land Use & Planning	☐ Tribal Cultural Resources
☐ Cultural Resources	☐ Mineral Resources	☐ Utilities & Service Systems
☐ Energy	☐ Noise	☐ Wildfire
☒ Geology & Soils	☐ Population & Housing	☒ Mandatory Findings of Significance

DETERMINATION:

On the basis of this initial evaluation, the Environmental Coordinator finds that:

☐ The proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☒ Although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☐ The proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

☐ The proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

☐ Although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

David Moran	David Moran	9/10/2026
Prepared by (Print)	Signature	Date
Eric Tolle	Eric Tolle	10/9/2026
Reviewed by (Print)	Signature	Date

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Project Environmental Analysis

The County's environmental review process incorporates all of the requirements for completing the Initial Study as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines. The Initial Study includes staff's on-site inspection of the project site and surroundings and a detailed review of the information in the file for the project. In addition, available background information is reviewed for each project. Relevant information regarding soil types and characteristics, geologic information, significant vegetation and/or wildlife resources, water availability, wastewater disposal services, existing land uses and surrounding land use categories and other information relevant to the environmental review process are evaluated for each project. Exhibit A includes the references used, as well as the agencies or groups that were contacted as a part of the Initial Study. The County Planning Department uses the checklist to summarize the results of the research accomplished during the initial environmental review of the project.

Persons, agencies or organizations interested in obtaining more information regarding the environmental review process for a project should contact the County of San Luis Obispo Planning Department, 976 Osos Street, Rm. 200, San Luis Obispo, CA, 93408-2040 or call (805) 781-5600.

A. Project

DESCRIPTION: Request by **CalPortland** for a Conditional Use Permit ("CUP") to expand quarry operations at their Rocky Canyon Quarry to include Phases 3, 4 and 5 as set forth in the 2002 Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan ("Specific Plan"). The proposed expansion will result in an area of disturbance of about 82 acres and would enable the extraction and processing of an additional 30,843,000 cubic yards (67,854,600 tons) of aggregate which would extend the 'life' of the quarried products by about 57 years. The project also includes a request to amend condition No.37 of the Development Plan/Reclamation Plan to alter the design standard for interim graded slopes to reduce the bench width from 15 feet to 12.5 feet. The site consists of three lots of record with a combined area of 286.5 acres located about one mile southeast of the City of Atascadero on Rocky Canyon Road within the El Pomar/Estrella Sub-Area of the North County Planning Area. The project site is within the Agriculture and Rural Lands land use categories and is subject to the Extractive Resource Area combining designation.

The owner/operator began quarry operations associated with Phases 1 and 2 in 2002 and is approaching the production limits of quarried materials in these areas. The expansion area will be located within a previously-approved mining area and will be mined in a sequence of phases that will ensure efficiency of operation and will minimize adverse environmental impacts. Consistent with the policies of the Specific Plan (discussed below), mining plans have been prepared for each phase. Mining will be undertaken in a manner that maximizes the use of gravity in the moving of material, limits on-site hauling distances to reduce air pollution, establishes permanent habitat areas as soon as feasible through reclamation, and allow for flexibility in the sequence to respond to fluctuations in market demand and other unanticipated factors. Operations within Phases 3 through 5, as described within the Specific Plan, will be as follows:

- **Phase 3:** This phase will remove an existing east-west trending ridge and most of the face of the existing cut on the east side of Rocky Canyon Creek. The interim slopes will be extended further southwest, as will the finished quarry floor. The total proposed area within Phase 3 is approximately 19.5 acres and will include removal of approximately 5,500,000 cubic yards of aggregate material.

- **Phase 4**: Excavation in this phase will include a portion of the highest elevations of the site, beginning at approximately 1,530 to 1,590 feet elevation, and will result in additional finished quarry floor area

as well as more finished slopes and benches. The total proposed area within Phase 4 is approximately 32.7 acres and will include removal of approximately 13,913,000 cubic yards of aggregate material.

- **Phase 5**: Excavation will move in a southeasterly direction with the highest cut at an approximate elevation of 1,630 feet. This phase will result in larger areas of finished slopes, benches and quarry floor. The total proposed area within Phase 5 is approximately 29.1 acres and will include removal of approximately 11,430,000 cubic yards of aggregate material.

Mining activities will be consistent with currently permitted activities. More specifically, as discussed below in the Baseline Conditions, the number of employees, daily truck trips and the annual production limits for quarried materials will not change from current levels consistent with the limitations set forth by the Specific Plan and conditions of approval of the 2002 Development Plan/Reclamation Plan. Mining will first include removing vegetation and overburdened material wherever feasible, which will be transported to inactive areas of the mine for storage and future use as mulch during reclamation. Granite will be accessed by either ripping or blasting and then transported to the primary crusher for processing. As new areas are opened up, mining will begin from the top, increasing in size as it is lowered into the formation. A berm will be retained along the edge of the working shelf where necessary to conceal the operating equipment and working face from public views.

As part of the expansion of quarry operations, the applicant/operator may relocate the primary rock crusher and associated conveyor system to more efficiently serve the new excavation areas.

Lastly, the applicant is requesting that condition No. 37 of the Development Plan/Reclamation Plan be modified to reduce the width of the graded benches associated with temporary cut slopes from 15 feet to 12.5 feet (a 16.7 percent reduction). This modification is discussed in greater detail in section I. Aesthetics, and section VII. Geology and Soils.

The location of the project site and existing conditions are shown in Figures 1 and 2, respectively. Project phasing and detailed mining plans for phases 3, 4 and 5 are shown in figures 6, 7 and 8.

Background

CalPortland, owner/operator of the Rocky Canyon Quarry, is authorized to extract, process and distribute aggregate materials subject to entitlements approved in 1996 which were subsequently amended in 1998 and 2002. These entitlements include a Specific Plan, Development Plan and Reclamation Plan as required by relevant provisions of Government Code section 65450, the County Land Use Ordinance, and the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (“SMARA”, Public Resources Code 2710-2796).

Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975

The Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA) provides for the reclamation of mined lands and directs the State Geologist to classify land within California according to the presence or likely occurrence of significant mineral deposits. The mineral land classification reports and maps are transmitted by the State Mining and Geology Board (SMGB) to appropriate lead agencies who are required to incorporate this information into their general plans.

Accordingly, in 1989, land within San Luis Obispo County was classified and mapped on the basis of the presence of available aggregate deposits. Mineral Resource Zone 2 (MRZ-2) is the designation used for land containing or highly likely to contain PCC-grade aggregate. All of the Rocky Canyon Specific Plan area is within an MRZ-2a zone as designated by the State. This zone means "*Areas underlain by mineral deposits where geologic data indicate that significant measured or indicated resources are present. Areas classified MRZ,.2a contain discovered mineral deposits that are either measured or indicated reserves as determined by such evidence as drilling records, sample analysis, surface exposure and mine information*."

In 1991 the Board of Supervisors adopted new language into the Framework for Planning (Ord. 2498) to address mineral extraction requirements as set forth in the SMARA. More specifically, the EX-1 combining designation was applied to the Rocky Canyon Quarry to reflect the SMARA Mineral Land Classification "...*as containing or being highly likely to contain significant deposits of Portland cement concrete aggregate materials*." In addition, planning area standards specific to the quarry were included in the El Pomar-Estrella Planning Area Plan (described below). Collectively, the inclusion of this language addresses the requirements of the SMARA to ensure protection of significant resources. This includes management of land uses that may effect areas of statewide significance and measures emphasizing the conservation and development of identified mineral deposits.

SMARA Chapter 8, Mining and Geology, Subchapter I, State Mining and Geology Board Reclamation establishes state policy for the reclamation of mined lands and the conduct of surface mining operations. Note that Chapter 8 includes reclamation standards (§3700) and performance standards for wildlife habitat (§3703), backfilling, regrading, slope stability and recontouring (§3704), revegetation (§3705), drainage, diversion structures, waterways and erosion control (§3706), prime agricultural land reclamation (§3707) other agricultural land (§3708), building structure and equipment removal (§3709) stream protection, including surface and groundwater (§3710), topsoil salvage, maintenance and redistribution (§3711) and tailing and mine waste management (§3712).

Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan

The Specific Plan was adopted in 1996 to guide the long-term development, operation and reclamation of the quarry site consistent with the requirements set forth in the SMARA and Government Code Section 65450. A Specific Plan is a land use planning tool that bridges the broad, County-wide policy objectives set forth in the General Plan with the detailed site-specific development standards provided in the Land Use Ordinance. In this case, the plan provides site-specific policies and standards (provided in their entirety in Exhibit C) for allowable land uses, circulation (including on-site and offsite roadways and haul routes), the protection of visual and biological resources, noise management, mining practices and site reclamation. The plan was subsequently amended in 1998 and 2002. Policies and standards of the specific plan are provided in Exhibit C of this Initial Study. For purposes of this initial study, it is assumed that the quarry has operated in accordance with the approved Specific Plan since 2002.

The area governed by the specific plan is shown on Figure 4. The maximum limit of allowable mining operations (the “mining area”) is identified within the plan area along with a “transition area” between the two; the transition area is intended to protect mining operations from future incompatible land uses on surrounding lands, and visa versa.

The Specific Plan allows for the phased expansion of quarry operations over ten total phases as summarized in Table 1, below, and as shown on Figure 4.

Table 1 – Phasing of Quarry Operations

Phase	Approximate Area (Acres)	Approximate Quantity of Material (1,000's of cubic yards)
Operations Authorized By Previous Approvals		
1	12.3	4,490
2	38.1	4,625
Sub-Total:	50.4	9,115
Operations Requested With Current CUP		
3	19.5	5,500
4	32.7	13,913
5	29.1	11,430
Sub-Total:	81.3[1]	30,843
Future Phases (6 through 10)		
6	+/- 243.0	6,990
7		6,120
8		6,320
9		7,670
10		5,660
Sub-Total	243.0	32,760
Total for All Phases	**+/- 375 acres**	**72,718 cubic yards**

Sources: Rocky Canyon Quarry Draft Mining and Reclamation Plan, 2017,

Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan, 2002, Table 7-1

Notes:

1. Area of disturbance associated with this CUP.

The specific plan requires that each phase be accompanied by a detailed mining plan that provides for the safe and efficient extraction of aggregate materials while protecting sensitive resources. The plan also provides detailed standards for the reclamation of the site to be implemented during and after quarry operations. These standards are intended to satisfy the requirements of LUO Section 22.36 et seq., and the SMARA (discussed below).

LUO Standards

LUO Section 22.36 provides standards for surface mining and address the following topics:

- Permitting requirements
- The need for, and the contents of, a reclamation plan
- Financial assurance for guarantee of reclamation
- Requirements for annual review of compliance

Development Plan and Reclamation Plan

Surface mining (quarrying) within areas subject to the Resource Extraction combining designation is subject to the permit requirements set forth in LUO Section 22.36. Section 22.36.040 requires approval of a CUP for

new or expanded surface mining operations that includes a plan for the reclamation of the site ("reclamation plan") along with financial assurances that the reclamation plan will be implemented. LUO Sections 22.36.050 and 22.36.060 set forth specific requirements for the Reclamation Plan and financial assurances, respectively.

A Development Plan and Reclamation Plan were approved for the first two phases of operation in 2002 subject to a number of conditions relating to, among other things, the allowable uses of the site, limitations on the hours of operations and the amount of material that may be produced in each phase. The conditions of approval for the Development Plan are provided in their entirety in Exhibit D of this initial study. The conditions also incorporate mitigation measures derived from the three previous EIRs (discussed below).

The reclamation plan sets forth standards for slope stabilization and shaping, revegetation, drainage, and the preparation of the site for future beneficial use following the cessation of quarry operations. Reclamation is intended to be a continuous and ongoing activity integral to the quarry operations.

2014 Revegetation and Restoration Plan

The Revegetation and Restoration Plan provides a summary of efforts by Dr. VL Holland and his students at California Polytechnic State University to devise methods and procedures for the restoration and revegetation of areas affected by ongoing mining activities at Rocky Canyon Quarry. The report provides a summary of the most successful strategies arising from their efforts which in turn may be used to inform the ongoing reclamation of mined areas. The goal of the Plan is to restore disturbed areas to natural ecosystems that are near-pre-disturbance conditions that will blend in with the surrounding undisturbed vegetation and will be self-sustaining.

Planning Area Standards

Planning Area Standards for the El Pomar-Estrella Sub-area of the North County Planning Area are set forth in Chapter 22.94 of the LUO. Chapter 22.94.040 F. states:

> F. Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan Area. All development within the Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan Area (see Figure 94-13) shall comply with the adopted specific plan dated April 23, 1996 and amended May 2, 2002, including the objectives, policies and standards of the Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan. In the event of any conflict between the provisions of this Title and the Specific Plan, the Specific Plan shall control. Any deviation of existing or proposed development from the provisions of the Specific Plan shall occur only after appropriate amendment of the Specific Plan.

Previous Environmental Review

The entitlements described above were subject to three environmental impact reports ("EIRs") as summarized in the following table. These environmental documents are incorporated herein by reference as though set forth in their entirety and are available for review at the Department of Planning and Building 976 Osos Street, San Luis Obispo.

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Table 2 -- Summary of Previous Environmental Review Documents

CEQA Compliance Document	Year	Project Components and Level of Analysis	Impact Areas Assessed
Program EIR	1996	Program Level[1] Potential impacts of conducting surface mining within the entire "mining area" over six phases consistent with the policies and standards of the Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan, Development Plan and Reclamation Plan, and Project Level Potential site-specific impacts of implementing Phase 1 surface mining activities.	Geology and geologic hazards, Drainage, erosion and sedimentation Pollution Biological resources Traffic and circulation Visual resources
Revised Program EIR	1998	Program Level Potential impacts of conducting surface mining within the entire "mining area" over ten phases and over a longer period than originally contemplated consistent with the policies and standards of the Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan, Development Plan and Reclamation Plan, as amended. Project Level Potential site-specific impacts of implementing Phase 1 surface mining activities.	Geology and geologic hazards, Drainage, erosion and sedimentation Pollution Biological resources Traffic and circulation Air quality Noise Archaeological Resources Visual resources
Subsequent and Second Tier EIR[2]	2002	Program Level Amendments to Specific Plan, Development Plan and Reclamation Plan relating to the allowable quantity of aggregate removed per year and an increase in production hours. Project Level Potential site-specific impacts of implementing Phase 2 surface mining activities.	Traffic and circulation Air quality Noise

The Program EIRs prepared in 1996 and 1998 characterized project impacts for the Specific Plan, Development Plan and Reclamation Plan at a programmatic level as defined by Guidelines Section 15168.

The Subsequent EIR certified in 2002 assessed impacts associated with Phase 2 surface mining activities at the project level and identified project-specific mitigation measures for noise, traffic and air quality, only. However, the Subsequent FEIR anticipated that later activities, such as those contemplated by the current

project, could result in adverse impacts that were not examined in the Program EIRs and that a new initial study may be required leading to either another subsequent EIR or a Mitigated Negative Declaration.

The application materials submitted in 2019 include technical studies assessing potential impacts associated aesthetic and visual resources, air quality/greenhouse gas emissions, biological resources, cultural resources, geology, noise, and traffic that may result from implementing Phases 3, 4 and 5 as contemplated by the amended Specific Plan, Development Plan and Reclamation Plan. Additional technical studies relating to water supply and an updated biological resources assessment ("BRA") were submitted in 2025.

Ordinance Modifications. None are requested.

Baseline Conditions

The quarry occupies portions of three contiguous parcels with a total area of about 286.5 acres located at the northerly terminus of Rocky Canyon Road about one mile southeast of the City of Atascadero. Topography of the site consists of relatively steep hillsides with moderate to dense assemblages of oak woodlands and chaparral; quarried areas of the site are characterized by steep manufactured slopes some of which have been replanted in accordance with the approved restoration plan. Three jurisdictional drainages occur within the project area, including two USGS blue line drainages and one additional ephemeral drainage. The two USGS blue line drainages are Rocky Canyon Creek and an unnamed drainage, referred to herein as East Creek. Rocky Canyon Creek flows southwest out of the foothills of the Santa Lucia Range to the Salinas River. The creek supports sparse to moderately dense riparian vegetation in the vicinity of the project site.

Surrounding land uses include ranches with livestock grazing and animal husbandry on parcels that range in size from 50 acres to over 200 acres.

As discussed above in the project description, current surface mining operations have proceeded in accordance with the approved Specific Plan/Development Plan since 2002. Table 3 provides a summary of the baseline characteristics of current/ongoing quarry operations. Current mining operations involve the extraction of aggregate materials that are then delivered to the mineral processing plant which crushes and sorts the aggregate into different products which are then washed and stockpiled for loading onto trucks. The site is served by a system of unimproved roadways extending from the northerly terminus of Rocky Canyon Road, a County maintained rural collector. Other site improvements include a weigh station/office area. There are four wells associated with the project site; groundwater is stored in five water tanks with a combined capacity of 72,000 gallons. Water is used for dust management and for the washing of aggregate materials. Electrical service is provided by PG&E.

Table 3 – Baseline Conditions

Topic	Baseline Conditions
Hours of Operation -- March 16 to November 14	Monday thru Saturday, 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM[1]
Hours of Operation -- November 15 to March 15	Monday thru Saturday, 7:00 AM to 8:00 PM[1]
Trucking Hours	7:00 AM to 5:00 PM[1]
Employees	26[4]
Annual Limits of Quarried Products	Phase 1: 435,000 cubic yards per year[1] Phase 2: 535,000 cubic yards per year[1]
Revegetation/Restoration	Ongoing as required by the Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific plan and as set forth in the 2014 Revegetation and Restoration Plan
Daily Truck Trips	359 trips per day (the equivalent of 826 passenger car trips[4]
Daily Employee Trips	24 trips per day[4]
Water Demand	17.4 AFY[5]
Noise Generation – Non-Transportation Sources	81 to 91 dBA at 50 feet from the source[3]
Electricity Use	541,238 kWh/year[2]
Haul Routes	Rocky Canyon Road to Halcon Road to Viejo Camino to Santa Barbara Road to Highway 101. The opposite route would be used to gain access to the quarry. When the river crossing is **not** passable, trucks may use Rocky Canyon Road north of Halcon Road.
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	2,390 MTCO2e[2]
Rock Processing System	Operating in accordance with SLOAPCD Permit No. 380-10, November 3, 2016

Sources:

1. Development Plan conditions of approval, 2002.
2. Ambient Air Quality and Noise Consulting, Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Impact Assessment, January, 2018
3. Ambient Air Quality and Noise Consulting, Noise and Groundborne Impact Assessment, January, 2018
4. Central Coast Transportation Consulting, February, 2019
5. Geosyntec Consultants, Rocky Canyon Water Supply Assessment, March 25, 2025. Includes water for dust control and washing of aggregate.

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ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBER(S): 034-431-004, 034-431-043, 034-431-044

Latitude: 35.4740º N **Longitude:** 120.6070º W **SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT #** 5

B. Existing Setting

Plan Area: North County **Sub:** El Pomar/Estrella **Comm:** Atascadero

Land Use Category: Agriculture Rural Lands

Combining Designation: Extractive Resource Area

Parcel Size: 286.4 acres

Topography: Flat to Gently rolling

Vegetation: Scattered Oaks Chaparral Grasses

Existing Uses: Quarry

Surrounding Land Use Categories and Uses:

North: Agriculture; agricultural uses ***East:*** Rural Lands; undeveloped

South: Agriculture; agricultural uses ***West:*** Rural Lands; agricultural uses

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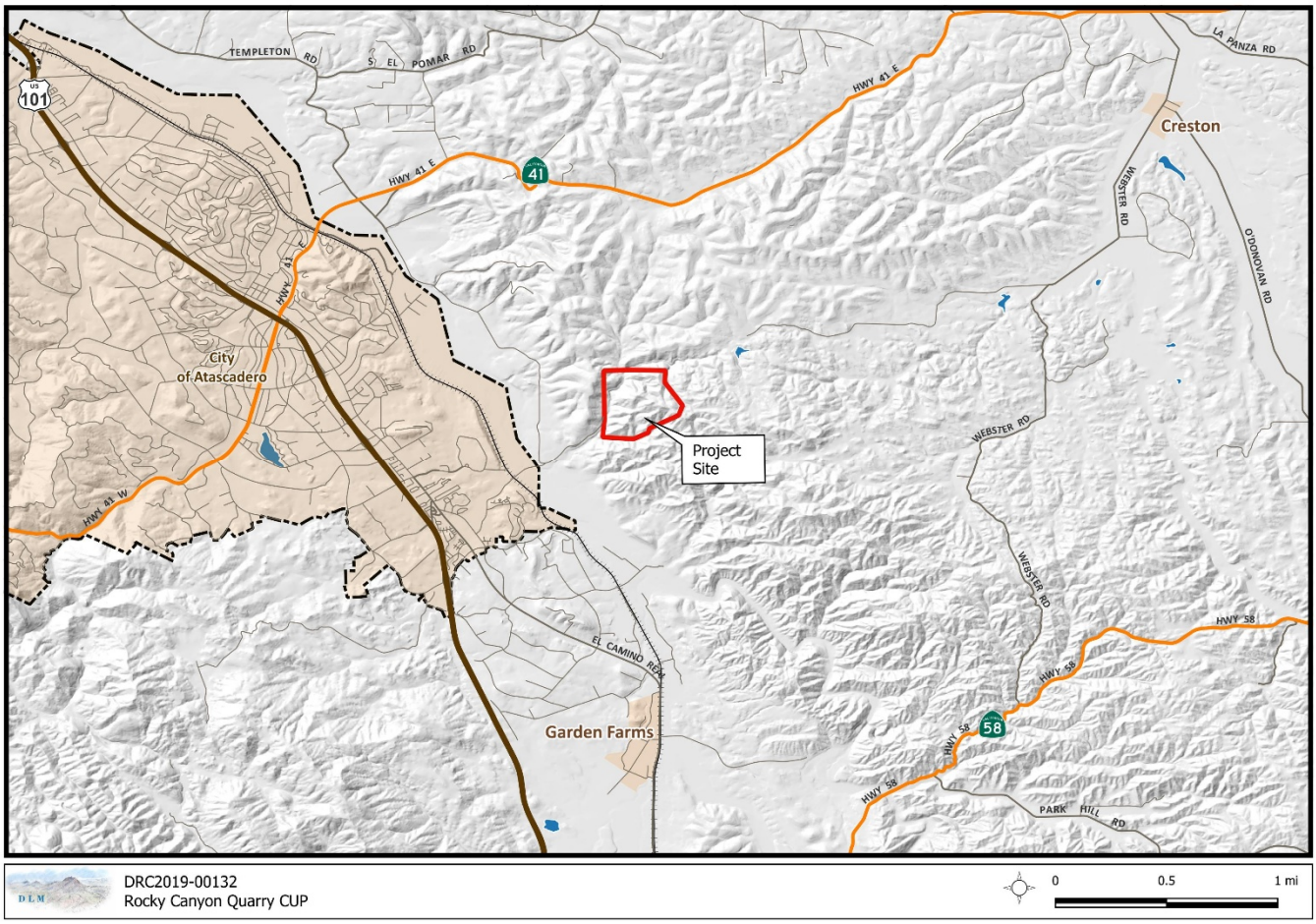


Figure 1 -- Project Location

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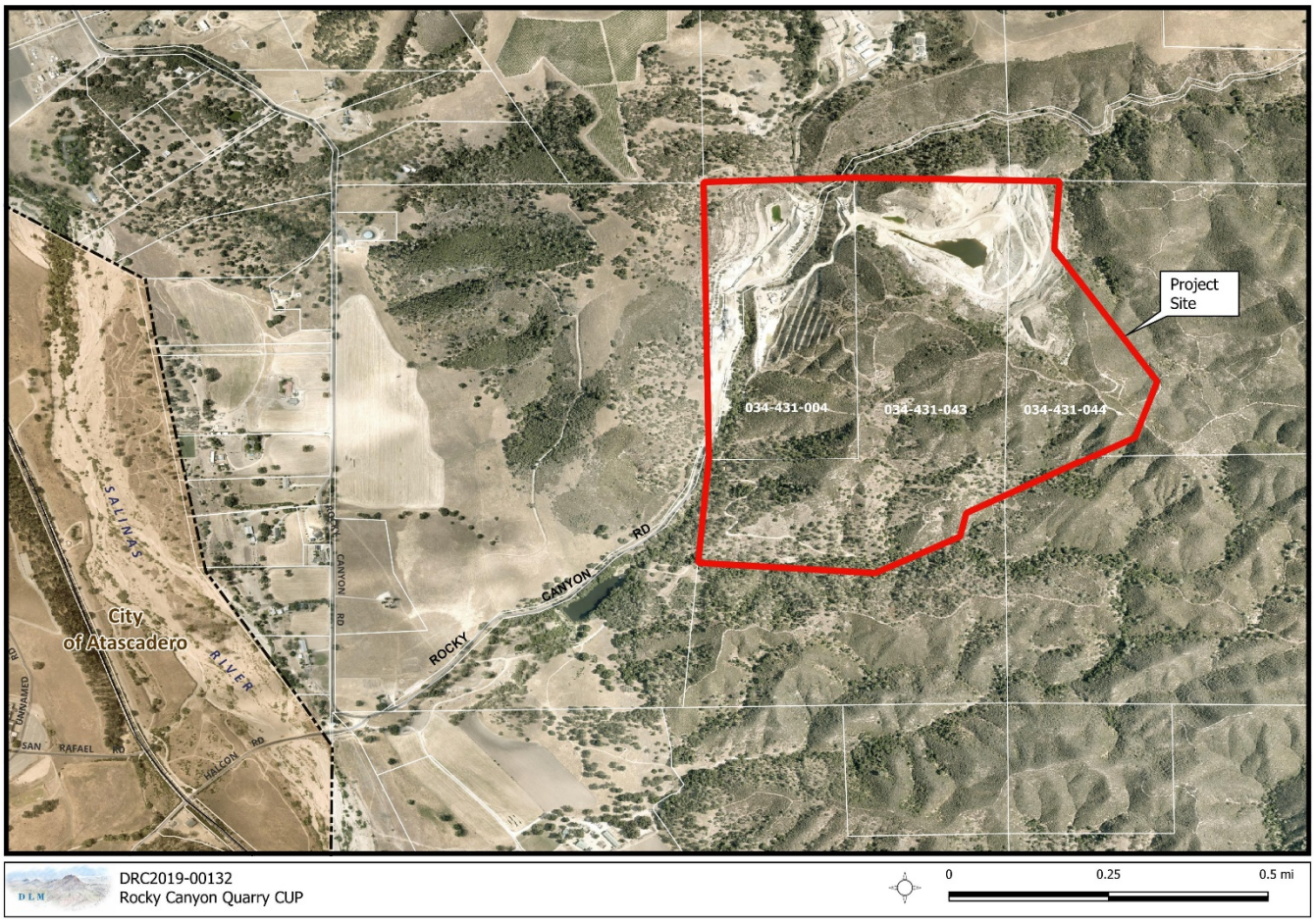


Figure 2 – Project Vicinity

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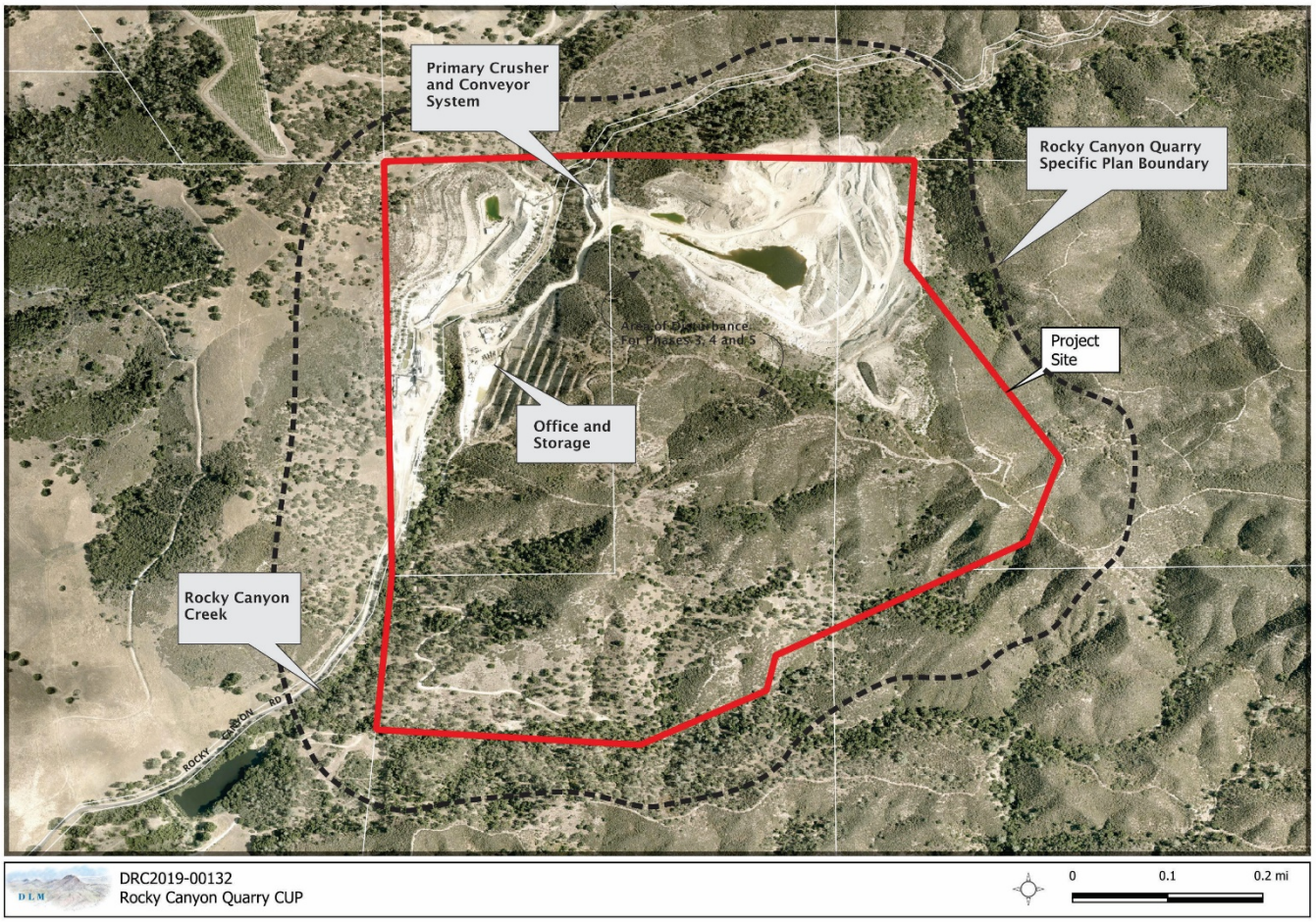


Figure 3 – Aerial Closeup/Existing Conditions

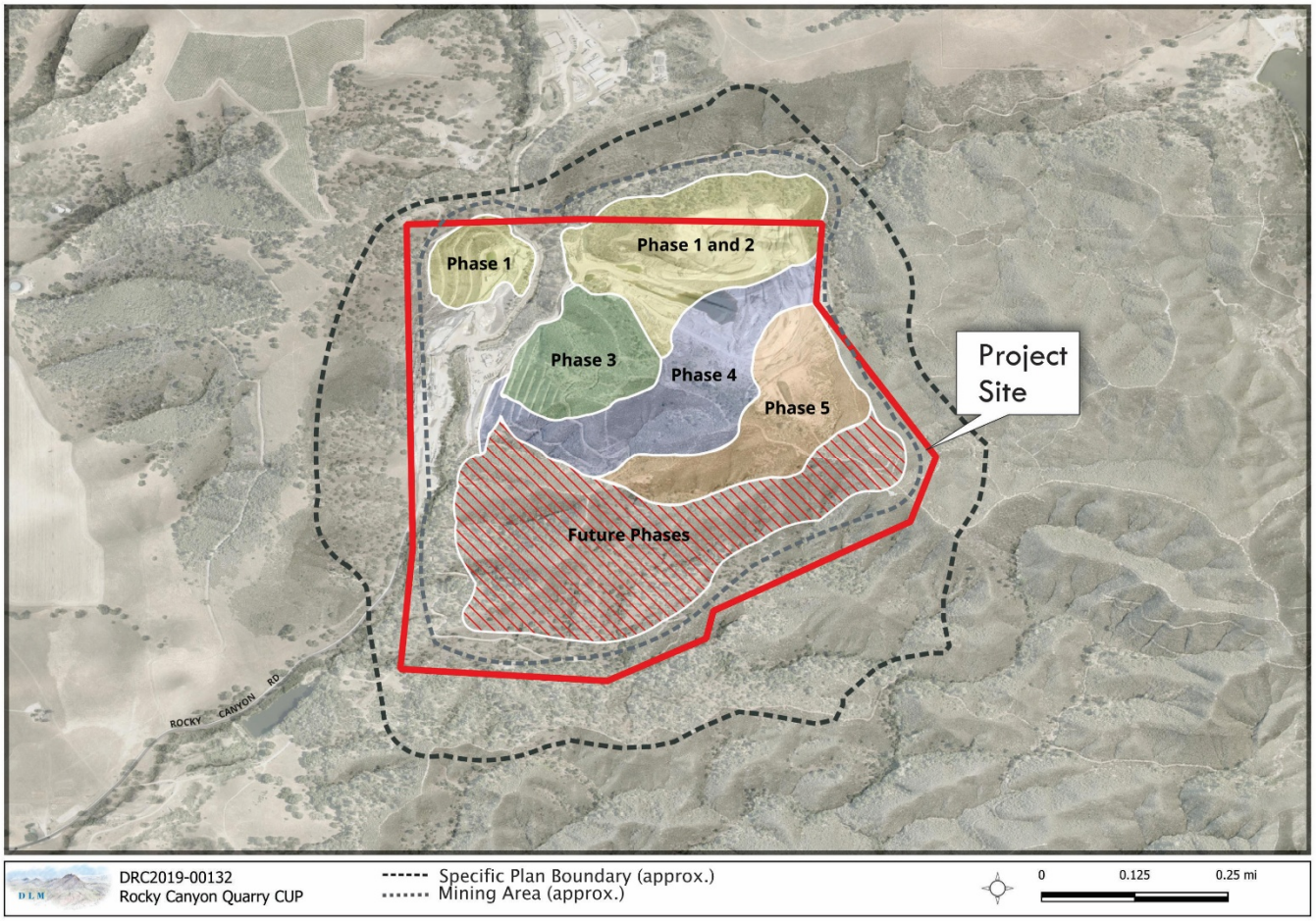


Figure 4 – Specific Plan Boundary and Phasing

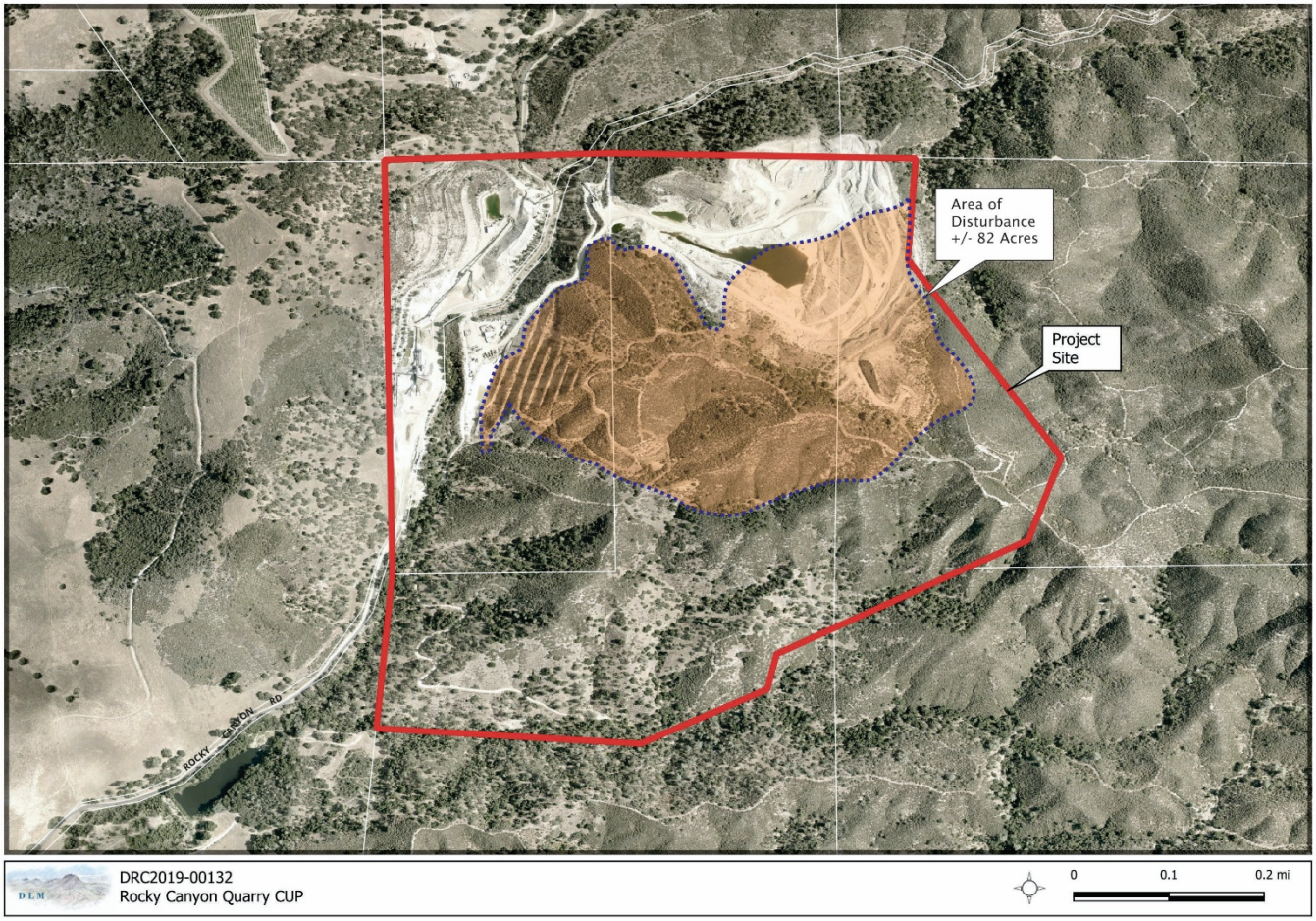


Figure 5 – Area of Disturbance for Phases 3, 4 and 5

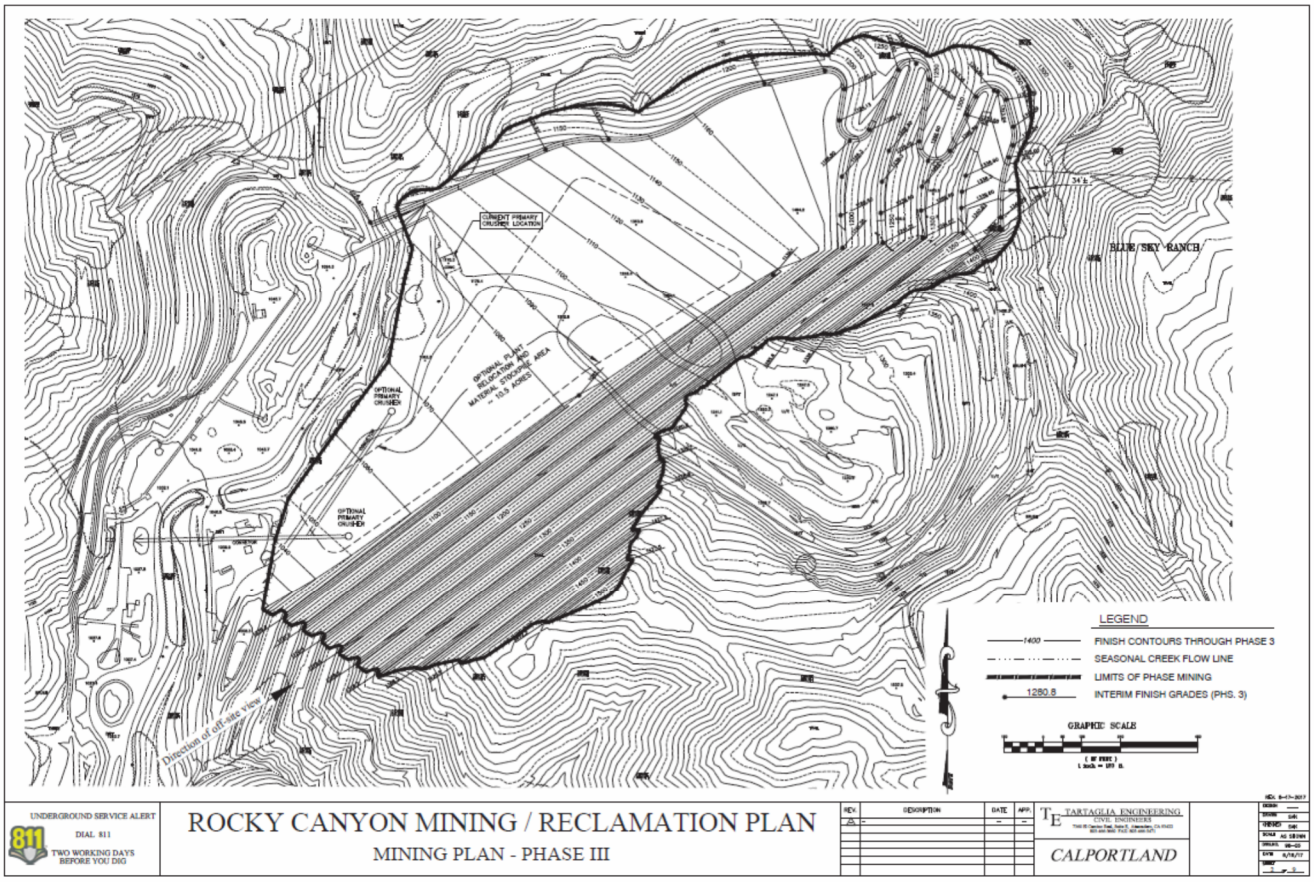


Figure 6 – Phase III Mining plan

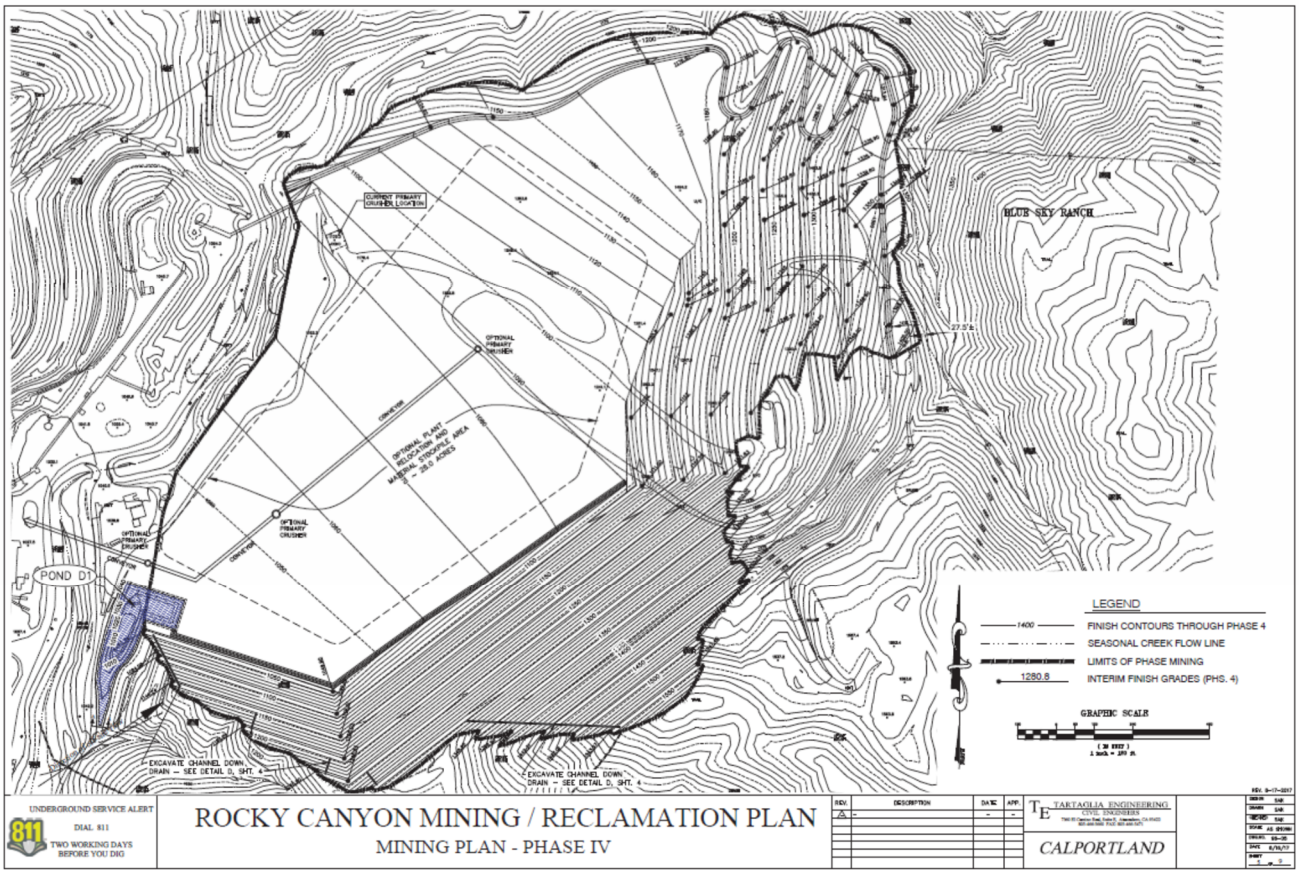


Figure 7 -- Phase IV Mining Plan

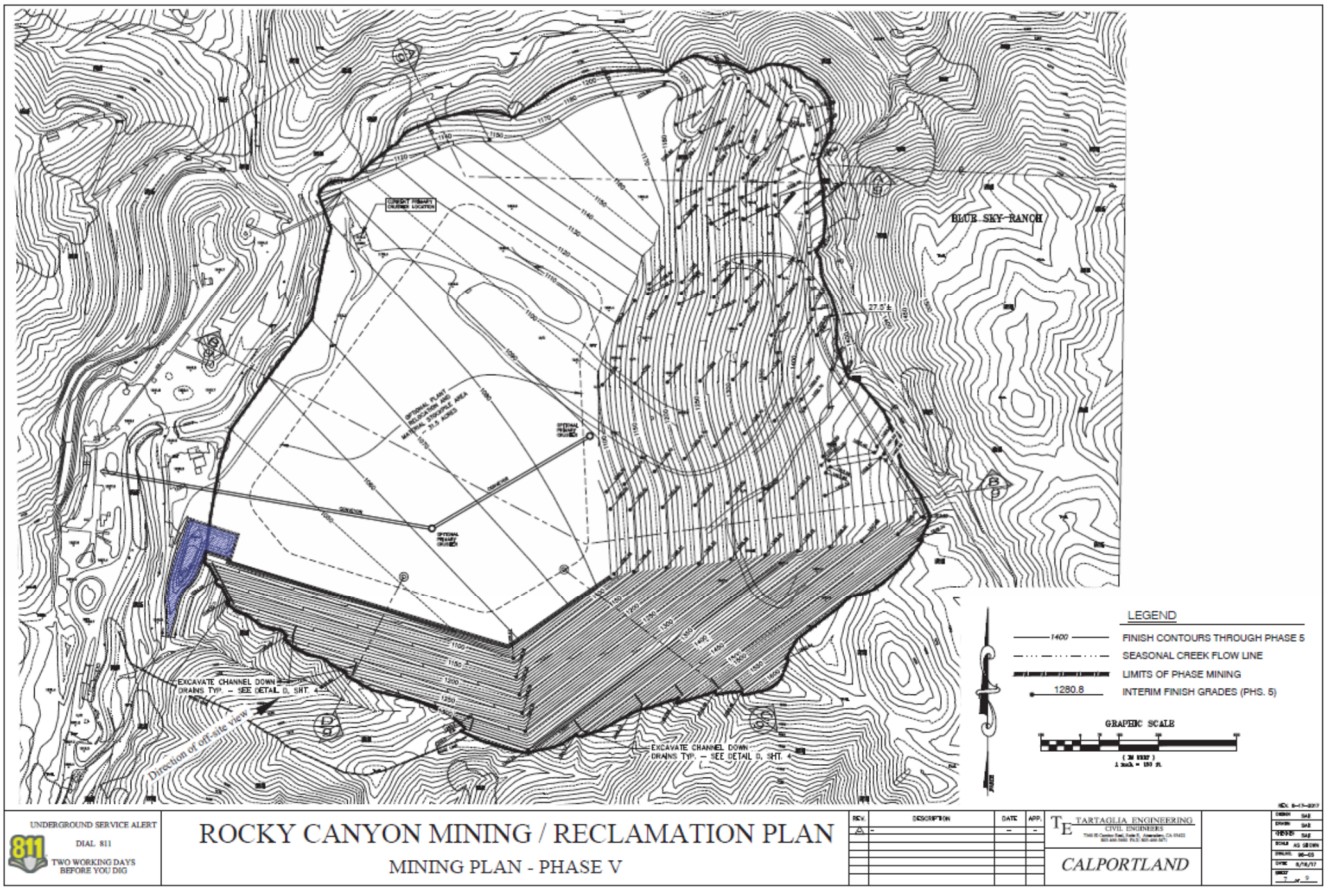


Figure 8 -- Phase V Mining Plan

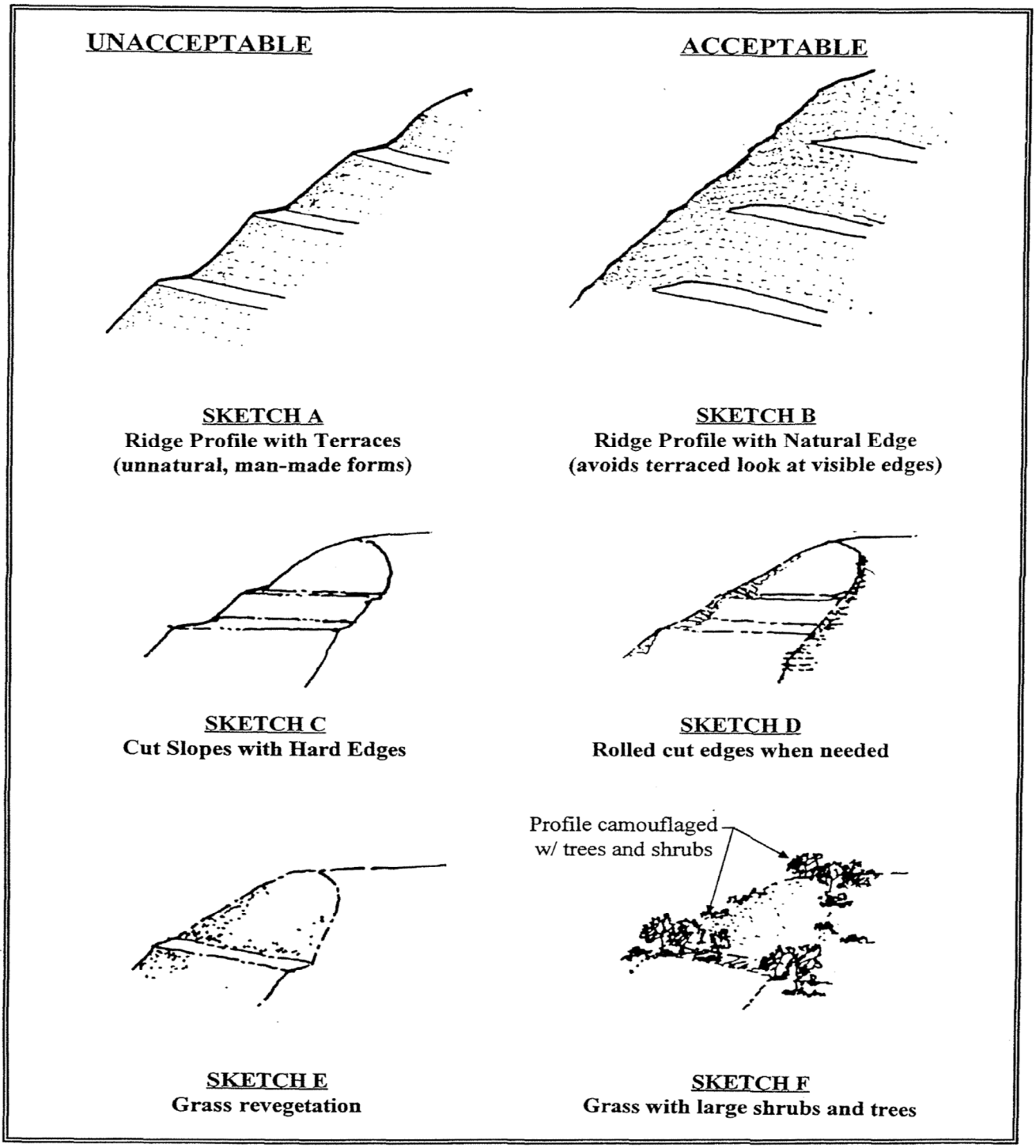


Figure 9 – Ridge Profiles As Envisioned By The Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan

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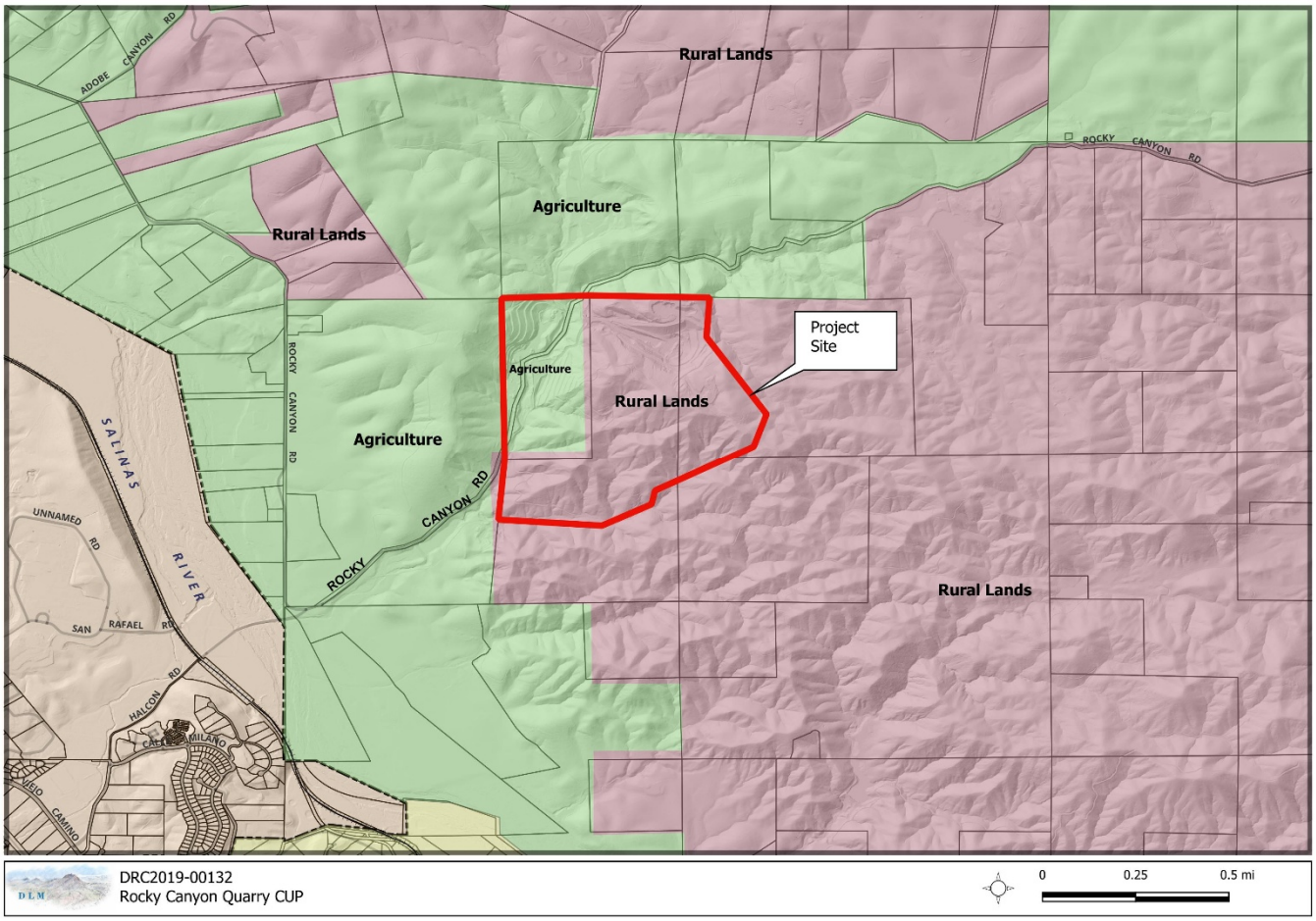


Figure 10 – Land Use Categories

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Environmental Analysis

The Initial Study Checklist provides detailed information about the environmental impacts of the proposed project and mitigation measures to lessen the impacts.

I. AESTHETICS

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:					
(a)	Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(b)	Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(c)	In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(d)	Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Setting

As discussed in the Baseline Conditions, the quarry occupies portions of three contiguous parcels with a total area of about 286.5 acres located at the northerly terminus of Rocky Canyon Road about one mile southeast of the City of Atascadero. Topography of the site consists of relatively steep hillsides with moderate to dense assemblages of oak woodlands and chaparral; quarried areas of the site are characterized by steep manufactured slopes that have been replanted in accordance with the approved restoration plan. The project site is divided by a portion of Rocky Canyon Creek which flows southwest out of the foothills of the Santa Lucia Range to the Salinas River. The creek supports sparse to moderately dense riparian vegetation in the vicinity of the project site.

Surrounding land uses include ranches with livestock grazing and animal husbandry on parcels that range in size from 50 acres to over 200 acres.

The visual qualities of the project site and surrounding area are considered rural and of relatively high quality except for areas subject to surface mining. The main vantages for public views of the project site are provided to motorists travelling on the surrounding public roadways, and especially Rocky Canyon Road and Halcon Road.

Conservation and Open Space Element. The Conservation and Open Space Element (COSE) identifies several goals for visual resources in rural parts of the county:

- Goal VR 1: The natural and agricultural landscape will continue to be the dominant view in rural parts of the county.
- Goal VR 2: The natural and historic character and identity of rural areas will be preserved.
- Goal VR 3: The visual identities of communities will be preserved by maintaining rural separation between them.
- Goal VR 7**:** Views of the night sky and its constellation of stars will be maintained.

Some of the strategies identified to accomplish the goals listed above include encouraging project designs that emphasize native vegetation and conforming grading to existing natural forms, as well as ensuring that new development follows the Countywide Design Guidelines to protect rural visual and historical character.

Countywide Design Guidelines. The Countywide Design Guidelines identify objectives for both urban and rural development as well as resource protection. The following Creek, Habitat and Drainage Improvement guidelines are applicable to the project:

OBJECTIVE RC-1: Creek corridors should be protected and enhanced.

Guidelines

a. Location of development. Building development, roadway construction, and introduced landscaping should be located away from the top of a creek bank consistent with adopted standards or outside the dripline of riparian vegetation to avoid significant impacts on the habitat as shown in Figures 126 and 127. Adjustments are possible where alternatives are infeasible or more environmentally damaging.

OBJECTIVE RC-3: Drainage improvements should be designed to mimic natural creeks in their visual and hydrologic qualities.

Guidelines

a. Drainage channels. Underground creek culverts and pipes should be avoided. Drainage channels should only be developed where absolutely necessary to convey storm flows to existing creek channels, and should have the visual character of naturally occurring creeks. Where consistent with County standards, drainage channels should follow meandering courses, be planted with native vegetation, and be stabilized with rock linings or similar materials rather than smooth concrete. A

OBJECTIVE RC-5: Existing habitats should be retained wherever possible.

Guidelines

a. Habitat protection. Habitat protection priorities are to save oak woodlands and protect links between habitats to protect or preserve wildlife corridors. Habitat protection should take precedence over individual tree preservation, except for landmark trees.

b. Tree preservation. Development projects should be designed to preserve and protect existing native trees on the site if feasible. Where appropriate, an arborist or other qualified individual should be consulted on specific tree protection measures.

c. Tree replacement. Any trees that are removed for a project should be replaced with trees of a similar species in 24-inch boxes, at a ratio specified in the LUO and CZLUO, or permit requirements. Replacement oak trees should be from a maximum 15 gallon sized container maximum. Recent studies on the very high disease rates among Monterey pines suggests that these trees should not be replaced with like species if suceptible to pine pitch canker. A suitable native tree may be substituted within native stands of Monterey pines.

d. Tree preservation. When a proposed site plan identifies trees to be preserved, those trees should be marked and fenced at the dripline prior to grading. Construction activities, material and equipment storage should not occur within the fenced area.

OBJECTIVE RC-7: The impacts of grading should he minimized, both by limiting the amount of grading and hy properly contouring areas where grading occurs. (This Objective does not apply to surface mining operations.)

e. Graded Slopes. New graded slopes should be configured to retain the natural character of the site, as shown in Figure 141. In plan view, new contour lines should be rounded to mimic natural contours. Graded slopes should undulate and should not result in relatively flat planes.

f. Slope steepness. Artificial slopes that are visible to the public should match the natural slopes in its immediate vicinity, and graded areas are encouraged to have slopes no greater than 3:1, as shown in Figure 142, except where steeper graded slopes can significantly reduce the total graded area.

g. Feathering. Graded areas should be "feathered" so that there are no abrupt transitions between flat areas and graded slopes, or between graded and ungraded areas.

Inland Land Use Ordinance. The Land Use Ordinance sets forth standards for exterior lighting (LUO Section 22.10.060). In accordance with these standards, exterior lighting must be shielded and directed onto the source parcel and away from roadways and adjacent parcels.

Highway Corridors Combining Designation. Portions of Highway 101 south of the City of Atascadero are subject to the Highway Corridors Combining Designation. The project site is not within the areas subject to this Combining Designation.

Scenic Highways. The only Officially Designated State Scenic Highway in San Luis Obispo County is Highway 1 which is not visible from the project site.

Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan

The policies and standards of the Specific Plan (included in their entirety as Exhibit C) provide guidance for the protection of visual resources through the phased expansion of quarry operations. Topics addressed by these policies and standards include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The use of berms and ridges as visual barriers.

- The incorporation of curvelinear features in the final graded landform.
- Ensuring revegetation is accomplished in a successful manner

For purposes of this Initial Study, it is assumed that the quarry has operated in accordance with the purpose and intent of these policies and standards and will continue to do so for the life of the project.

Development Plan Conditions of Approval (as Amended In 2002)/Previous Environmental Review

The conditions of approval (Exhibit D) incorporate the mitigation measures adopted with the previously certified EIRs and include a number of requirements to address visual resources that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The use of topsoil comparable to that found in Rocky Canyon for revegetation and to construct 'round offs' of manufactured slopes.
- Blending of slopes with surrounding landforms.
- Treating of finished slopes to blend visually with the surroundings as viewed from Highway 101.
- Revegetation of all finished slopes consistent with the adopted Revegetation Plan.
- Requiring final slopes to be set back from adjacent properties.
- Implementation of an ongoing monitoring and management plan as well as annual review of reclamation/revegetation activities.

Visual Impact Analysis Technical Study

The application materials submitted in 2019 include a visual resources impact assessment of the project prepared by SWCA Environmental Consultants in 2018. That study is incorporated by reference and is available for review in its entirety at the Department of Planning and Building, 976 Osos Street, San Luis Obispo. The following analysis provides a summary of the findings and conclusions of that study.

Discussion

(a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

For the purpose of determining significance under CEQA, a scenic vista is defined as a viewpoint that provides expansive views of a highly valued landscape for the benefit of the general public. If the project would substantially degrade the scenic landscape as viewed from public roads, designated scenic routes, or from other public or recreation areas, this would be considered a potentially significant impact on the scenic vista. Scenic vistas related to the viewing experience associated with this project include views of the Santa Lucia Mountains and foothills, patterns of natural vegetation, open space and agricultural pastoral land.

Implementation of Phases 3, 4, and 5 of the Rocky Canyon Quarry would cause a visible alteration of a portion of the Santa Lucia Hills backdrop as seen from certain viewpoints in and around southern Atascadero. These changes would include visible scarring of the hillsides, disruption of the natural vegetative patterns and alteration of the existing primary ridgeline that screens views of the mining area from off-site viewing areas. Public viewpoints to the project would be somewhat distant; however, because of the type of disturbance the project would potentially be visible from great distances.

Phases 3, 4, and 5 of the quarry operations would be seen mostly from southern Atascadero and the surrounding areas. Public viewpoints in these areas primarily include roadways and recreation areas such as parks. Since existing development in the area tends to be concentrated along transportation

corridors, the greatest amount of potential viewpoints tend to be in those areas. A moderating factor, however, is that the same development that provides an increased potential for viewing opportunities also includes more buildings and mature trees, which block views of the project. For example, views from Highway 101 which was previously identified in the PEIR and RPEIR as a viewing corridor with two KVAs (shown as KVA-4 and KVA-5 in the PEIR and RPEIR), have now been substantially reduced due to development along the eastern side of the highway. As a result, current analysis shows that Highway 101 and the previously identified KVAs no longer provide adequate representative viewpoints of the project and its visual effect on the community.

The assessment of the currently proposed project and program elements for Phases 3, 4, and 5 is based on current plans and descriptions provided by the project applicant. Currently proposed project features and program elements were compared to the previously approved project description, plans and related findings of the PEIR and the Revised PEIR. Planning documents and approved studies relevant to the project and the surrounding area were referenced for gaining an understanding of the project, applicable regulatory requirements, and established aesthetic values.

The findings of the visual impact study are based on multiple field visits during the months of August, September, and October of 2017. As part of the field studies, the project site and the surrounding area were reviewed, and resource inventories were conducted both on foot and from vehicles. Existing visual resources and site conditions were photographed and recorded.

The project site was viewed from potential public viewer group locations in the surrounding area as well as from within the quarry itself. KVAs defined in the approved PEIR and RPEIR were re-evaluated for current applicability. Based on that evaluation, it was determined that new off-site KVAs were required in order to accurately represent changes to project visibility throughout the surrounding community. These new KVAs (Figure 11) were selected based in part on dominance of the project site within the view, duration of views, and expected sensitivity of the viewer group. The report also includes a discussion of public views from within the quarry site itself along the Rocky Canyon Trail.

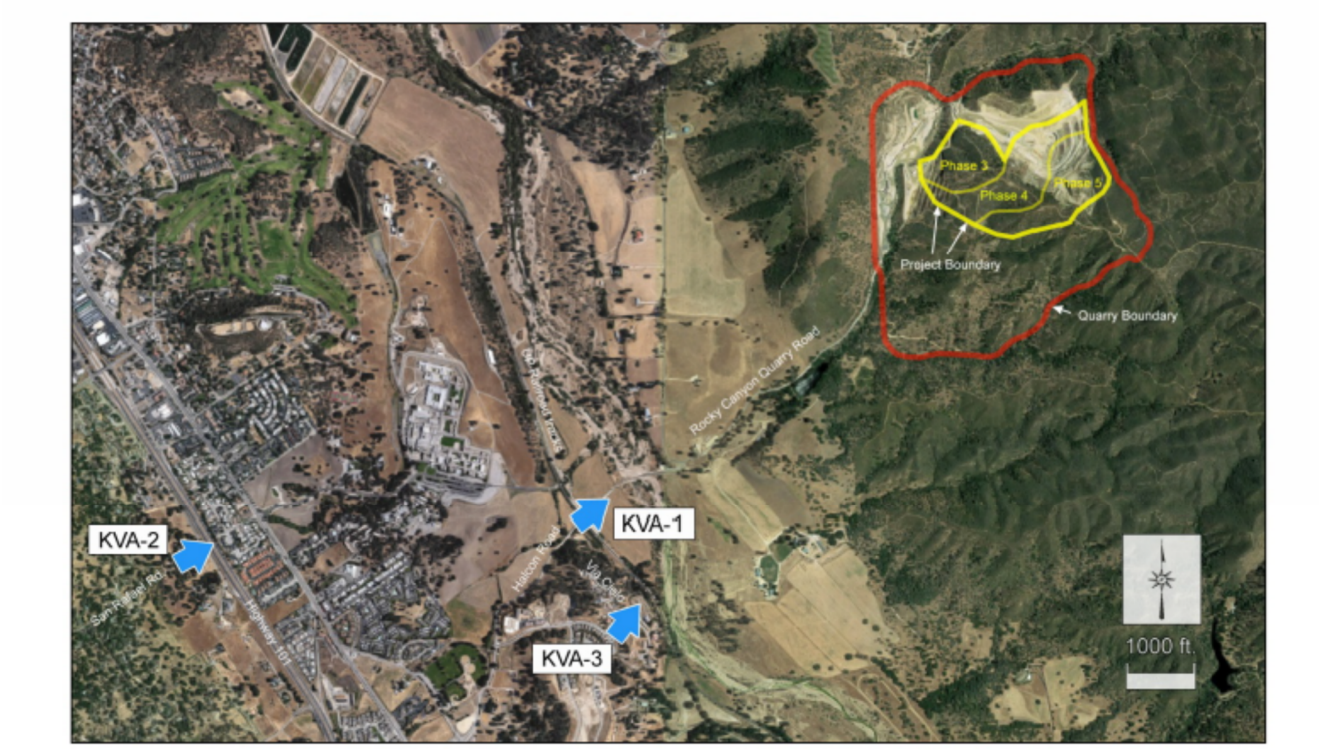


Figure 11 -- Key Viewing Areas

Photographs were taken from selected off-site KVAs (Figures 12 through 17). Photographs were taken with a 50-mm lens to replicate the un-aided view of the human eye. Accuracy of the visual simulations was ensured by analyzing the known dimensions and elevations of previous and existing mining operations, combined with three-dimensional topographic mapping analysis, and empirical field observation. These simulations were used to identify and quantify potential project visibility and related impacts. The project was then re-analyzed to determine the need for possible mitigation measures.

During Phase 3, quarry operations would generally expand operations of the project site to the northeastern limits of quarry operational build-out. The work associated with Phase 3 would not affect the ridgelines to the south, which currently block views of the quarry, nor would it extend above the elevation of existing landforms. As a result, the proposed disturbance resulting from Phase 3 would not be seen from public off-site viewing areas in the surrounding area. Since no visual changes as seen from off-site public viewpoints are expected with Phase 3, no photo-simulations are provided.



Figure 12 – Phase 4 as Seen From KVA-1 (Halcon Road) With Project



Figure 13 – Phase 4 As Seen From KVA-2 With Project



Figure 14 – Phase 4 As Seen From KVA-3 With Project



Figure 15 – Phase 5 As Seen From KVA-1



Figure 16 – Phase 5 As Seen From KVA -2



Figure 17 – Phase 5 As Seen From KVA-3

Restoration efforts, as required by the Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan and subsequent Conditions of Approval would reduce the noticeability of the quarry over time. Operational requirements such as maintaining screening berms along the leading edges of active work areas, contouring benches where they transition back to natural topography and other measures would also be moderately successful in reducing visibility of the project.

Although the restoration efforts would likely never completely disguise the existence of hillside scarring or ridgeline alteration, the extent of time over which the changes would occur (approximately 80 years, the timeframe for the restoration efforts associated with Phases 3, 4 and 5 to mature) would make the progression of visual alteration generally unnoticeable within a viewer's lifetime. As such the changes throughout Phases 3, 4, and 5 would be difficult to perceive compared to the "existing" visual context to which the viewer would experience the project.

With implementation of the visual protection measures identified in the Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan, Conditions of Approval, the Reclamation and Revegetation Plan, and Creek Enhancement Plan, combined with the slow pace of visual change spanning several generations, the potential impacts to the existing scenic vista would be *less than significant*.

(b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

The project would result in a significant impact if it results in a substantial adverse effect on a scenic resource as seen from a state scenic highway. The only designated State Scenic Highway in the County is State Route 1. However, the project site is not visible from SR 1 and there would be *no impact*.

(c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

As discussed in the visual resources impact study, the visual character of the project site and its surroundings is defined by the balance of built and natural elements. Much of the visual setting of the area is established by the combination of the background hillsides along with the native vegetative patterns. The Highway 101 corridor along southern Atascadero within sight of the project area is largely rural; however, residential and commercial development is increasingly visible and is altering the visual quality and character of the area.

The quality of the existing visual environment of the background hillsides is moderately high. The combining patterns of mature native trees and rolling topography contribute to an overall rural visual character that can be seen from a number of public viewpoints throughout southern Atascadero and the surrounding area.

Phases 3, 4, and 5 of the project would cause an alteration of the visual character of the Santa Lucia hills as seen from viewpoints to the west primarily due to the visible expansion of the industrial quarrying activities in the project area. Disturbance from previous quarrying operations can be currently seen on the hillside, which may for some viewers reduce sensitivity related to visibility of future quarrying at the site.

As discussed under item a., above, restoration requirements as defined in the Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan and Conditions of Approval would reduce noticeability of the quarry as they became established. Requirements such as the creation of screening berms along the leading edges of work

areas, contouring benches to natural topography and other measures would also be moderately successful in minimizing noticeability of the project.

Restoration efforts would likely never completely eliminate the visibility of the project; however, the extent of time over which the changes would occur would make the incremental visual alteration generally unnoticeable within a viewer's lifetime.

With implementation of the visual protection measures identified in the Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan, Conditions of Approval and the Reclamation and Revegetation Plan, combined with the slow pace of visual change spanning several generations, the potential impacts to the existing visual quality and character of the project site and surroundings would be *less than significant*.

The applicant/operator also is requesting an amendment to the conditions of approval of the Development Plan to reduce the minimum required bench width for manufactured slopes from 15 feet to 12.5 feet. This change would have a minor effect on the visual qualities of the finished project elements when viewed from offsite and is considered *less than significant*.

Lastly, the applicant/operator may relocate the rock mineral processing plant to a more centralized location to serve Phase 3, 4 and 5. The processing plant consists of a system of conveyors that transport raw materials to a rock crusher after which the material is sorted into different products which are then washed and stockpiled for loading onto trucks. The relocated processing plant would not be readily visible from public views offsite of the project. Therefore, this would have *no impact* relating to the degradation of the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings.

(d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

The project would result in a significant impact if it subjects public viewing locations to a substantial amount of point-source lighting visible at night, or if project illumination results in a noticeable spillover effect into the nighttime sky, increasing the ambient light over the region. The placement of lighting, source of illumination, and fixture types combined with viewer locations, adjacent reflective elements, and atmospheric conditions can affect the degree of change to nighttime views. If the project results in direct visibility of a substantial number of lighting sources, or allows a substantial amount of light to project toward the sky, significant impacts on nighttime views and aesthetic character would result.

Quarrying operations of Phases 3, 4, and 5 would be limited primarily to daylight hours. Security and safety lighting associated with buildings may be operated at night, although that lighting would be located at the canyon floor and would not be seen from off-site viewpoints. Potential visibility of equipment and other vehicles that may require lights while operating in active quarrying areas would be substantially reduced by the required berming along the perimeter of active work areas. As a result potential visual impacts caused by lighting or glare in the area would be considered *less than significant*.

Conclusion

The project will have a less than significant impact relating to degradation of the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings and would not result in a substantial change to scenic resources in the area. Compliance with the Rocky Quarry Specific Plan and conditions of approval as other

policies and standards in the County LUO and COSE related to the protection of scenic resources will be enforced as part of the CUP process. Impacts to aesthetic resources would be *less than significant*.

Mitigation

None are required.

Sources

Provided in Exhibit A.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

II. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:				
(a)	Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☒	☐	☒
(b)	Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(c)	Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(d)	Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(e)	Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Setting

The California Department of Conservation (CDOC) Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) produces maps and statistical data used for analyzing impacts to California's agricultural resources. Agricultural land is rated according to soil quality as well as current and previous land use. For purposes of CEQA compliance, the FMMP categories of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique

Farmland, Farmland of Local Importance, and Grazing Land as "agricultural land." Non-agricultural designations include Urban and Built-up Land, Other Land, and Water.

Chapter 6 of the County Conservation and Open Space Element (COSE) identifies resource management goals, policies, and strategies to protect agricultural soils from conversion to urban and residential uses. Important Agricultural Soils within the County are identified in Table SL-2 of the COSE and Policy SL 3.1 states that proposed conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses shall be evaluated using the applicable policies in the COSE and Agricultural Element.

Soils of the site are described in detail below. The acreage and corresponding farmland classifications are provided in Tables 4 and 5.

Map Unit: 126—Cieneba coarse sandy loam, 30 to 75 percent slopes, MLRA 15

Cieneba: 75 percent

The Cieneba component makes up 75 percent of the map unit. Slopes are 30 to 75 percent. This component is on hillslopes on hills, mountain slopes on mountains. The parent material consists of residuum weathered from granitic rock. Depth to a root restrictive layer, bedrock, paralithic, is 6 to 20 inches. The natural drainage class is somewhat excessively drained. Water movement in the most restrictive layer is moderately high. Available water to a depth of 60 inches (or restricted depth) is very low. Shrink-swell potential is low. This soil is not flooded. It is not ponded. There is no zone of water saturation within a depth of 72 inches. Organic matter content in the surface horizon is about 2 percent. This component is in the R015XE080CA Shallow Coarse Loamy 10-16 ecological site. Nonirrigated land capability classification is 7e. This soil does not meet hydric criteria.

Gaviota: 5 percent

Generated brief soil descriptions are created for major soil components. The Gaviota soil is a minor component.

Map Unit: 127—Cieneba-Andregg complex, 30 to 75 percent slopes

Cieneba: 35 percent

The Cieneba component makes up 35 percent of the map unit. Slopes are 30 to 75 percent. This component is on mountains. The parent material consists of residuum weathered from granitic rock. Depth to a root restrictive layer, bedrock, paralithic, is 12 to 20 inches. The natural drainage class is somewhat excessively drained. Water movement in the most restrictive layer is high. Available water to a depth of 60 inches (or restricted depth) is very low. Shrink-swell potential is low. This soil is not flooded. It is not ponded. There is no zone of water saturation within a depth of 72 inches. Organic matter content in the surface horizon is about 1 percent. This component is in the R015XE080CA Shallow Coarse Loamy 10-16 ecological site. Nonirrigated land capability classification is 7e. Irrigated land capability classification is 7e. This soil does not meet hydric criteria. There are no saline horizons within 30 inches of the soil surface.

Andregg: 25 percent

The Andregg component makes up 25 percent of the map unit. Slopes are 30 to 75 percent. This component is on mountains. The parent material consists of residuum weathered from granitic rock. Depth to a root restrictive layer, bedrock, paralithic, is 20 to 40 inches. The natural drainage class is well drained. Water movement in the most restrictive layer is high. Available water to a depth of 60

inches (or restricted depth) is very low. Shrink-swell potential is low. This soil is not flooded. It is not ponded. There is no zone of water saturation within a depth of 72 inches. Organic matter content in the surface horizon is about 2 percent. This component is in the R015XE102CA Coarse Loamy North ecological site. Nonirrigated land capability classification is 7e. Irrigated land capability classification is 7e. This soil does not meet hydric criteria. There are no saline horizons within 30 inches of the soil surface.

Vista, coarse sandy loam: 15 percent

Generated brief soil descriptions are created for major components. The Vista soil is a minor component.

Sesame, sandy loam: 10 percent

Generated brief soil descriptions are created for major components. The Sesame soil is a minor component.

Shimmon, loam: 5 percent

Generated brief soil descriptions are created for major components. The Shimmon soil is a minor component.

Map Unit: 153—Linne-Calodo complex, 30 to 50 percent slopes

Description Category: GENSOIL

Linne: 30 percent

The Linne component makes up 30 percent of the map unit. Slopes are 30 to 50 percent. This component is on hills. The parent material consists of residuum weathered from calcareous shale and/or sandstone. Depth to a root restrictive layer, bedrock, paralithic, is 20 to 40 inches. The natural drainage class is well drained. Water movement in the most restrictive layer is moderately high. Available water to a depth of 60 inches (or restricted depth) is low. Shrink-swell potential is moderate. This soil is not flooded. It is not ponded. There is no zone of water saturation within a depth of 72 inches. Organic matter content in the surface horizon is about 4 percent. This component is in the R015XE103CA Gravelly Fine Loamy ecological site. Nonirrigated land capability classification is 6e. Irrigated land capability classification is 6e. This soil does not meet hydric criteria. The calcium carbonate equivalent within 40 inches, typically, does not exceed 6 percent. There are no saline horizons within 30 inches of the soil surface.

Calodo: 25 percent

The Calodo component makes up 25 percent of the map unit. Slopes are 30 to 50 percent. This component is on hills. The parent material consists of residuum weathered from calcareous shale and/or residuum weathered from calcareous sandstone. Depth to a root restrictive layer, bedrock, paralithic, is 10 to 20 inches. The natural drainage class is well drained. Water movement in the most restrictive layer is moderately high. Available water to a depth of 60 inches (or restricted depth) is very low. Shrink-swell potential is moderate. This soil is not flooded. It is not ponded. There is no zone of water saturation within a depth of 72 inches. Organic matter content in the surface horizon is about 2 percent. This component is in the R015XE043CA Shallow Fine Loamy ecological site. Nonirrigated land capability classification is 7e. Irrigated land capability classification is 7e. This soil does not meet hydric criteria. The calcium carbonate equivalent within 40 inches, typically, does not exceed 6 percent. There are no saline horizons within 30 inches of the soil surface.

Nacimiento, silty clay loam: 15 percent

Generated brief soil descriptions are created for major components. The Nacimiento soil is a minor component.

Los osos, clay loam: 10 percent

Generated brief soil descriptions are created for major components. The Los Osos soil is a minor component.

Map Unit: 154—Linne-Calodo complex, 50 to 75 percent slopes

Linne: 30 percent

The Linne component makes up 30 percent of the map unit. Slopes are 50 to 75 percent. This component is on mountains. The parent material consists of residuum weathered from calcareous shale and/or sandstone. Depth to a root restrictive layer, bedrock, paralithic, is 20 to 40 inches. The natural drainage class is well drained. Water movement in the most restrictive layer is moderately high. Available water to a depth of 60 inches (or restricted depth) is low. Shrink-swell potential is moderate. This soil is not flooded. It is not ponded. There is no zone of water saturation within a depth of 72 inches. Organic matter content in the surface horizon is about 4 percent. This component is in the R015XE103CA Gravelly Fine Loamy ecological site. Nonirrigated land capability classification is 7e. Irrigated land capability classification is 7e. This soil does not meet hydric criteria. The calcium carbonate equivalent within 40 inches, typically, does not exceed 6 percent. There are no saline horizons within 30 inches of the soil surface.

Calodo: 25 percent

The Calodo component makes up 25 percent of the map unit. Slopes are 50 to 75 percent. This component is on mountains. The parent material consists of residuum weathered from calcareous shale and/or residuum weathered from calcareous sandstone. Depth to a root restrictive layer, bedrock, paralithic, is 10 to 20 inches. The natural drainage class is well drained. Water movement in the most restrictive layer is moderately high. Available water to a depth of 60 inches (or restricted depth) is very low. Shrink-swell potential is moderate. This soil is not flooded. It is not ponded. There is no zone of water saturation within a depth of 72 inches. Organic matter content in the surface horizon is about 2 percent. This component is in the R015XE043CA Shallow Fine Loamy ecological site. Nonirrigated land capability classification is 7e. Irrigated land capability classification is 7e. This soil does not meet hydric criteria. The calcium carbonate equivalent within 40 inches, typically, does not exceed 6 percent. There are no saline horizons within 30 inches of the soil surface.

Unnamed, similar to linne soil: 15 percent

Generated brief soil descriptions are created for major components. The Unnamed soil is a minor component.

Zakme, clay: 15 percent

Generated brief soil descriptions are created for major components. The Zakme soil is a minor

Unnamed, similar to calodo soil: 8 percent

Map Unit: 210—Vista coarse sandy loam, 9 to 15 percent slopes, cool, MLRA 15

Vista: 75 percent

The Vista component makes up 75 percent of the map unit. Slopes are 9 to 15 percent. This component is on hills, uplands. The parent material consists of residuum weathered from granitic rock. Depth to a root restrictive layer, bedrock, paralithic, is 20 to 39 inches. The natural drainage class is well drained. Water movement in the most restrictive layer is very low. Available water to a depth of 60 inches (or restricted depth) is very low. Shrink-swell potential is low. This soil is not flooded. It is not ponded. There is no zone of water saturation within a depth of 72 inches. Organic matter content in the surface horizon is about 1 percent. This component is in the R015XE009CA Coarse Loamy ecological site. Nonirrigated land capability classification is 4e. Irrigated land capability classification is 4e. This soil does not meet hydric criteria. There are no saline horizons within 30 inches of the soil surface.

Greenfield: 10 percent

Generated brief soil descriptions are created for major soil components. The Greenfield soil is a minor component.

As shown in Table 4, none of the soils of the project site are considered Prime by the COSE.

Table 4 – Farmland Classifications of the COSE and Corresponding Acreages

Soil	COES Classification	Total Acres	Impacted Acres
Linne-Calodo, 30 – 50 percent slopes	Not Prime	0.52	0.0
Linne-Calodo, 50 – 75 percent slopes	Not Prime	9.3	0.0
Cieneba Coarse Sand Loam, 30 – 75 percent slopes	Not Prime	160.0	82.0
Cieneba Andregg complex 30 - 75 percent slopes	Not Prime	110.25	0.0
Vista Coarse Sandy Loam, 9-15 percent slopes	Not Prime	4.7	0.0
	Total:	**286.5**	**82.0**

Source: Classifications based on Table SL-2 of the County General Plan's Conservation/Open Space Element

Table 4 provides a summary of farmland classifications for soils on the project site as determined by the FMMP. As shown in Table 5, all of the area of disturbance is considered Other Land.

Table 5 – Farmland Classifications of the FMMP and Corresponding Acreages

FMMP Classification	Total Acres	Impacted Acres
Other Land	189.1	82.0
Grazing	97.4	0.0
Total:	**286.5**	**82.0**

Source: Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program

The Land Conservation Act of 1965, commonly referred to as the Williamson Act, enables local governments to enter into contracts with private landowners for the purpose of restricting specific parcels of land to agriculture or related open space use. In return, landowners receive property tax assessments that are much lower because they are based upon farming and open space uses as

opposed to full market value. The project site is within the El Pomar Agricultural Preserve and, according to the County's Ag Preserve Administrator, the project does not occur on land subject to an active LCA contract.).

According to California Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 12220(g), forest land is defined as land that can support 10% native tree cover of any species, including hardwoods, under natural conditions, and that allows for management of one or more forest resources, including timber, aesthetics, fish and wildlife, biodiversity, water quality, recreation, and other public benefits. Timberland is defined as land, other than land owned by the federal government and land designated by the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection as experimental forest land, which is available for, and capable of, growing a crop of trees of a commercial species used to produce lumber and other forest products, including Christmas trees.

Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan

The specific plan does not address agricultural resources specifically. However, it does speak to the issue of compatibility of mining operations with surround land uses, including agricultural activities.

Development Plan Conditions of Approval (as Amended In 2002)/Previous Environmental Review

The conditions of approval (Exhibit D) incorporate the mitigation measures adopted with the previous EIRs but do not directly address compatibility with agricultural operations. The conditions require excavation activities to be setback a minimum 25 feet from surrounding properties.

(a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?

The area of disturbance consists of 82.1 acres of steep terrain covered by non-native grasses, chaparral and scattered stands of oak trees. As shown in Table 4, the project will not impact any land classified as Prime farmland by the COSE. As shown in Table 5, the project will impact a total of 82 acres of Other Land according to the FMMP.

Therefore, the project will not adversely impact important farmland and project impacts would be *less than significant* and *less than cumulatively considerable.*

(b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?

The subject property is located within the Agriculture and Rural Lands land use categories. As discussed in the setting, the 35.2 acre parcel located in the northwest portion of the project site is subject to an active Williamson Act contract. In accordance with the County's Rules and Procedures to Implement the Land Conservation Act of 1965, resource extraction may be considered a conditionally allowable use within an area subject to an active Williamson Act contract but is subject to review and recommendation of the Agricultural Preserve Review Committee. Accordingly, the project was referred to the County's Ag Preserve Administrator for review and comment. In their referral response (e-mail of August 17, 2026 from Kip Morais) the administrator determined that the project does not occur on land subject to an active LCA contract.

The project was also referred to the Agriculture Department for review and comment. Their referral response (letter of July 7, 2026, Ian Landreth) indicates that the Agriculture Department finds that the project is not expected to result in adverse impacts to agricultural resources with continued

compliance with the Development Plan conditions as well as the policies and standards of the Rocky Canyon Quarry specific plan.

Therefore, as conditioned, the project would not result in a conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract and *no impacts would occur.*

(c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?

The project site does not include land use designations or zoning for forest land or timberland as defined by the Public Resources Code; *no impacts would occur.*

(d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

The project site does not support resources that meet the definition of "forest land" as prescribed in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g):

> *"Forest land" is land that can support 10-percent native tree cover of any species, including hardwoods, under natural conditions, and that allows for management of one or more forest resources, including timber, aesthetics, fish and wildlife, biodiversity, water quality, recreation, and other public benefits.*

The ten phases identified for mining activities in the Specific Plan cover an area of about 375 acres which includes currently mined areas for Phases 1 and 2 and the undisturbed areas associated with phases 3 through 10. As discussed in section IV. Biological Resources, the project site contains 19.3 acres of *Foothill Woodland (Oak Woodland)* which is about 5 percent of the site and does not meet the definition of Forest Land. Therefore, there would be *no impact* relating to the conversion of forest land to a non-forest use.

(e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

The project site is surrounded by ranches and rural residences where livestock grazing and animal husbandry are the primary land uses. There are no other nearby crop-producing agricultural operations that would be affected by the project. Therefore, potential impacts would be *less than significant.*

Conclusion

The project would result in less than significant impacts relating to the conversion of farmland, forest land, or timber land to non-agricultural uses or non-forest uses and would not conflict with agricultural zoning or otherwise adversely affect agricultural resources or uses. Potential impacts to agricultural resources would be *less than significant* and *less than cumulatively considerable* and no mitigation measures are necessary.

Mitigation

None necessary.

Sources

Provided in Exhibit A.

III. AIR QUALITY

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:					
(a)	Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(b)	Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(c)	Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(d)	Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Setting

San Luis Obispo County Clean Air Plan

The San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District (SLOAPCD) San Luis Obispo County 2001 Clean Air Plan (CAP) is a comprehensive planning document intended to evaluate long-term air pollutant emissions and cumulative effects and provide guidance to the SLOAPCD and other local agencies on how to attain and maintain the state standards for ozone and particulate matter 10 micrometers or less in diameter (PM_{10}). The CAP presents a detailed description of the sources and pollutants that impact the jurisdiction's attainment of state standards, future air quality impacts to be expected under current growth trends, and an appropriate control strategy for reducing ozone precursor emissions, thereby improving air quality. Project consistency with the CAP is determined by considering whether the project incorporates the relevant land use planning and transportation control measures and strategies outlined in the CAP.

The County is currently designated as a non-attainment area for ozone and PM_{10} under state ambient air quality standards. Construction and operation of the project would result in emissions of ozone precursors including reactive organic gasses (ROG) and nitrous oxides (NO_X) as well as fugitive dust emissions (PM_{10}) and exhaust particulates.

SLOAPCD Criteria Pollutant Thresholds

The SLOAPCD has developed a CEQA Air Quality Handbook (most recently updated in 2023) to help local agencies determine the significance of project-specific air quality impacts and to determine whether mitigation measures are needed. To assist in this task, the Handbook includes screening criteria to determine the significance of project impacts. For example, according to the Handbook, a project with grading in excess of 4.0 acres and moving 1,200 cubic yards of earth per day can exceed the construction threshold for respirable particulate matter (PM_{10}).

The use of heavy equipment and earth-moving operations for construction activities can generate fugitive dust and engine combustion emissions that may have substantial temporary impacts on local air quality. Combustion emissions, such as nitrogen oxides (NOx), reactive organic gases (ROG), greenhouse gases (GHG), and diesel particulate matter (DPM), are most significant when using large, diesel-fueled scrapers, loaders, bulldozers, haul trucks, compressors, generators, and other heavy equipment. The SLOAPCD has established thresholds of significance for each of these contaminants.

Operational impacts are focused primarily on the indirect emissions (i.e., motor vehicles) associated with residential, commercial, and industrial development. Certain types of projects can also include components that generate direct emissions, such as power plants, gasoline stations, dry cleaners, and refineries (referred to as stationary source emissions). Table 1-1 of the APCD's CEQA Handbook provides screening criteria based on the size of different types of projects that would normally generate sufficient motor vehicle trips that would cause an exceedance of the operational thresholds for ozone precursors. A project consisting of 99 single family residences generating 970 average daily vehicle trips would be expected to exceed the 25 lbs/day operational threshold for ozone precursors.

The APCD has also estimated the number of vehicular round trips on an unpaved roadway necessary to exceed the 25 lbs/day threshold of significance for the emission of particulate matter (PM10). According to the APCD estimates, an unpaved roadway of one mile in length carrying 6.0 round trips would likely exceed the 25 lbs/day PM10 threshold.

The prevailing winds in the project vicinity are from the north and west.

Sensitive Receptors

Sensitive receptors are people with an increased sensitivity to air pollution or environmental contaminants, such as the elderly, children, people with asthma or other respiratory illnesses, and others who are at a heightened risk of negative health outcomes due to exposure to air pollution. Some land uses are considered more sensitive to changes in air quality than others, due to the population that occupies the uses and the activities involved. Sensitive receptor locations include schools, parks and playgrounds, day care centers, nursing homes, hospitals, and residences. The nearest sensitive receptors to the site are single-family residences located to the north, east, and south at a distance of greater than ½ mile or more from the area of disturbance.

Naturally Occurring Asbestos

Naturally Occurring Asbestos (NOA) is identified as a toxic air contaminant by the California Air Resources Board (CARB). Serpentine and other ultramafic rocks are fairly common throughout San Luis Obispo County and may contain NOA. If these areas are disturbed during construction, NOA-containing particles can be released into the air and have an adverse impact on local air quality and human health. Based on SLOAPCD's NOA Screening Map, the project site is not located in an area identified as having the potential for soils containing NOA.

Developmental Burning

As of February 25, 2000, the APCD prohibits developmental burning of vegetative material within San Luis Obispo County. However, under certain circumstances where no technically feasible alternatives are available, limited developmental burning under restrictions may be allowed. Any such exception must complete the following prior to any burning: APCD approval; payment of fee to APCD based on the size of the project; and issuance of a burn permit by the APCD and the local fire department authority. As a part of APCD approval,

the applicant shall furnish them with the study of technical feasibility (which includes costs and other constraints) at the time of application.

Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan and Development Plan Conditions of Approval (as Amended In 2002

The policies and standards of the Specific Plan (Exhibit C) and the conditions of development plan approval (Exhibit D) require all mining activities to be conducted in accordance with the permitting requirements of the SLO APCD.

It should be noted that the mineral processing plant currently operates under permit No. 380-10 issued by the SLO APCD in November 3, 2016. For purposes of this Initial Study, it is assumed that the quarry has operated in compliance with the active permit and adopted conditions.

Previous Environmental Review

The 2002 Subsequent EIR assessed air quality impacts associated with the implementation of Phase 2 of the specific plan assuming production volumes increased of 100,000 cubic yards of aggregate per year for the first five years and a possible incremental increase up to 200,000 cubic yards beginning in year six. The EIR recommended the following mitigation measure:

AQ/mm-1 The following mitigation measures, while not likely capable of reducing project impacts to less than significant levels, will reduce overall air quality impacts:

a. Replace on-site haul trucks with electric conveyor systems to reduce on-site truck trips when feasible.

b. Early replacement of older, higher emitting off-road or stationary engines/equipment with new, CARB certified engines/equipment (1996 or newer) where feasible;

c. Future off-road or stationary equipment purchases consider only CARB certified engines/equipment (1996 or newer) if feasible;

d. Maintain all equipment in-tune as per manufactures specifications;

e. Use of CARB certified diesel fuel only (sulfur limit of 500ppm);

f. Install catalytic particulate filters and oxidation catalysts on existing and new diesel powered off-road and stationary engines where appropriate;

g. Replace diesel powered engines with electric motors where appropriate;

h. Other measures capable of reducing diesel powered off-road equipment emissions.

The FEIR concluded that the emission of reactive organic gases and oxides of nitrogen (ROG+Nox) would be significant and unavoidable (Class I). Accordingly, findings of overriding consideration were made for air quality impacts that concluded that the benefits of the project outweighed the significant unavoidable impacts. For purposes of the following air quality impact analysis, this MND tiers from the analysis contained in the 2002 Subsequent EIR which is incorporated by reference and available for review at the Department of Planning and Building, 976 Osos Street, San Luis Obispo.

Technical Study of Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Impacts

The application materials include an Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Impacts Assessment of Phases 3, 4 and 5 prepared by Ambient Air Quality and Noise Consultants in January 2018. The study is incorporated by reference and available for review in its entirety at the Department of Planning and Building, 976 Osos Street, San Luis Obispo. The following analysis provides a summary of the findings and conclusions of that study.

Discussion

(a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

To be considered consistent with the 2001 San Luis Obispo County CAP, a project must be consistent with CAP's land use planning and transportation control measures and strategies (SLOAPCD 2002). These strategies include, but are not limited to, planning compact communities with higher densities, providing for mixed land use, and balancing jobs and housing.

Adopted transportation control measures include, but are not limited to, a voluntary commute options program, local and regional transit system improvements, bikeway enhancements, and telecommuting programs. The voluntary commute options program targets employers in the county with more than 26 full time employees; the project would employ less than one half that number. The project would not conflict with regional plans for transit system or bikeway improvements.

The existing quarry is not considered a large development project that would have the potential to result in a substantial increase in population, or employment. In comparison to existing operations, the proposed project would not result in a change in operational emissions and on-site stationary sources are in compliance with SLOAPCD permit requirements. As a result, the proposed project would not conflict with the SLOAPCD's 2001 CAP, nor would the project result in increase public exposure to PM. This impact is considered *less than significant*.

(b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?

The County is currently designated as non-attainment for ozone and PM_{10} under state ambient air quality standards. Construction and operation of the project would result in emissions of ozone precursors including reactive organic gasses (ROG) and nitrous oxides (NO_X) as well as fugitive dust emissions (PM_{10}).

Construction Emissions

The project would not result in short-term construction activities unless the alternative plant/stockpile location is implemented. In this case, the existing plant would not be removed until the new plant was operational, to allow on-going operations of the quarry during the construction process, construction of the new plant and removal of the existing plant would occur over an estimated six-month period and would likely involve the intermittent use of a crane, aerial lifts, and forklifts. Construction of the new plant would occur within the lower elevations of the proposed Phase 3/Phase 4 area and would not result in increased ground disturbance. The intermittent use of off-road equipment required for construction of the new plant and removal of the existing plant would generate daily and quarterly emissions as presented in Tables 6 and Table 7, respectively. A summary of construction-generated emissions in comparison to SLOAPCD significance thresholds is presented in Table 8.

Table 6 -- Daily Emissions – Alternate Location for Processing Plant

Source	Daily Emissions (lbs)	
	ROG+NOx	Exhaust PM10
Off-Road Equipment	6.4	0.2
Haul Trucks	0.1	<0.1
Worker Commute	0.1	<0.1
Total:	6.6	o.2
Threshold of Significance	137	7
Exceed Threshold?	No	No

Notes:
1. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

Table 7 -- Quarterly Emissions – Alternate Location for Processing Plant

Source	Quarterly Emissions (tons)			
	ROG+NOx	PM10		
		Dust	Exhaust	Total
Off-Road Equipment	0.2	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1
Haul Trucks	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1
Worker Commute	<0.1	0.1	<0.1	0.1
Total:	0.2	0.2	<0.1	0.02
Threshold of Significance	2.5	2.5	0.13	None
Exceed Threshold?	No	No	No	No

Notes:
1. Quarterly thresholds are based on the more conservative Tier 1 thresholds.
2. To be conservative, total exhaust PM10 emissions were compared to SLOAPCD's DPM threshold. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

Table 8 -- Summary of Construction Emissions – Alternate Location for Processing Plant

Criteria	Project Emissions	Threshold	Exceed Threshold?
Maximum Daily Emissions of ROG+Nox	6.6 lbs/day	137 lbs/day	No
Maximum Daily Emissions of DPM	0.2 lbs/day	7 lbs/day	No
Maximum Quarterly Emissions of ROG+Nox	0.2 tons/qtr	2.5 tons/qtr	No
Maximum Quarterly Emissions of DPM	<0.1 tons/qtr	0.13 tons/qtr	No
Maximum Quarterly Emissions of Fugitive PM	0.2 tons/qtr	2.5 tons/qtr	No

Notes:
1. Quarterly thresholds are based on the more conservative Tier 1 thresholds.

As shown in Tables 6 and 8, maximum daily emissions associated with construction of the proposed project would total approximately 6.6 lbs/day of ROG+NOX and approximately 0.2 lbs/day of PM10. Quarterly construction-generated emissions would total approximately 0.2 tons of ROG+NOX, approximately 0.2 tons of fugitive PM10, and less than 0.1 tons of exhaust PM10.
Construction emissions would not exceed SLOAPCD's daily or quarterly significance thresholds. As a result, this impact would be considered *less than significant*.

Operation-Related Emissions. As discussed in the setting, the 2002 Subsequent EIR concluded that the emission of reactive organic gases and oxides of nitrogen (ROG+Nox) associated with mining operations would be significant and unavoidable (Class I). Accordingly, findings of overriding consideration were made for air quality impacts that concluded that the benefits of the project outweighed the significant unavoidable impacts. As discussed in CEQA Guidelines section 15152, where a lead agency determines that a cumulative effect has been adequately addressed in the prior EIR, that effect is not treated as significant for purposes of the later EIR or negative declaration, and need not be discussed in detail and a new statement of overriding considerations is not required. Instead, the tiered MND must demonstrate that:

- The specific project does not create any new or substantially more severe significant impacts beyond what was examined in the prior EIR.
- The project has incorporated all applicable mitigation measures from the prior EIR to minimize its contribution to those previous impacts.

In this case, the continuation of surface mining activities into areas identified as Phases 3, 4 and 5 will employ the same limitations on the quantities of materials removed per year, and the same number of employees, hours of operations and mining methodologies as those described in the Baseline Conditions and which were assessed by the air quality analysis provided in the 2002 Subsequent EIR. As conditioned, the current project will incorporate the applicable mitigation measure identified in the previous EIR.

Lastly, as discussed above, the Development Plan currently requires the project to undertake spraying activities to minimize the generation of particulates from mining and truck operations.

As discussed in the air quality impact study, in comparison to existing operations, the proposed project would not result in a change in operational emissions, and on-site stationary sources are in compliance with SLOAPCD permit requirements. Accordingly, project-specific and cumulative operational impacts are considered *less than significant* and *less than cumulatively considerable*.

(c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Sensitive receptors are people or other organisms that may have a significantly increased sensitivity to exposure to air pollution by virtue of their age and health (e.g. schools, day care centers, hospitals, nursing homes), regulatory status (e.g. federal or state listing as a sensitive or endangered species), or proximity to the source.

Localized PM Concentrations

Emissions of PM associated with existing quarry operations are predominantly associated with on-site material processing and handling activities. In addition, existing haul trucks traveling along area roadways also contribute to localized concentrations of DPM.

As noted above, the project would not result in any operational changes, such as the installation of any additional stationary sources of emissions, off-road equipment, changes in processing rates, hours of operation, or additional vehicle trips. As a result, continued operation of the existing quarry would not result in increased on-site or off-site emissions. In addition, continued compliance with the Rocky Canyon Specific Plan, which includes a transition area around the mining area in order to regulate land uses on adjacent properties to ensure land use compatibility, would minimize potential

exposure of nearby sensitive land uses to onsite emission sources. The plan also includes policies that require implementation of pollution control measures sufficient to avoid and reduce adverse environmental impacts. For these reasons, this impact would be considered less *than significant*.

Mobile-Source CO Concentrations

Localized concentrations of CO are of primary concern in areas located near congested roadway intersections. Of particular concern are signalized intersections that are projected to operate at unacceptable levels of service (LOS) E or F.

One signalized intersection is located along the haul truck route at El Camino and Santa Barbara Road. Based on the traffic analysis prepared for this project (refer to section XII.Transportation), this intersection operates at LOS B, or better, during existing a.m. and p.m. peak traffic hours, under existing and future cumulative conditions. The proposed project would not contribute to unacceptable levels of service (i.e., LOS E or F) at primarily affected signalized intersections. In addition, the proposed project would not result in emissions of CO in excess of the SLOAPCD's significance threshold of 550 lbs/day. This impact is considered *less than significant*.

Naturally Occurring Asbestos

Naturally Occurring Asbestos (NOA) has been identified as a toxic air contaminant by the ARB. In accordance with ARB Air Toxics Control Measure (ATCM), prior to any grading activities a geologic evaluation should be conducted to determine if NOA is present within the area that will be disturbed. If NOA is not present, an exemption request form, along with a copy of the geologic report, must be filed with the SLOAPCD. If NOA is found at the site, the applicant must comply with all requirements outlined in the Asbestos ATCM.

Based on geological studies conducted at the site, ultramafic rock, serpentine, or other evidence of NOA have not been identified in the quarry area (OEC 2017). As a result, this impact would be considered *less than significant*.

Reclamation

Reclamation of the expansion areas would involve fewer pieces of off-road equipment and activities than during excavation and would not involve the trucking of quarry materials. Reclamation activities would be on-going as finish slopes are completed in the approved mining areas. In addition, continued compliance with the Rocky Canyon Specific Plan, which includes a transition area around the mining area in order to regulate land uses on adjacent properties to ensure land use compatibility, would minimize potential exposure of nearby sensitive land uses to onsite emission sources. As a result, this impact is considered *less than significant*.

(d) *Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?*

The occurrence and severity of odor impacts depends on numerous factors, including: the nature, frequency, and intensity of the source; wind speed and direction; and the sensitivity of the receptors. While offensive odors rarely cause any physical harm, they still can be very unpleasant, leading to considerable distress among the public and often generating citizen complaints to local governments and regulatory agencies. Projects with the potential to frequently expose members of the public to objectionable odors would be deemed to have a significant impact.

The proposed project would not result in the installation of any equipment or processes that would be considered major odor-emission sources. Exhaust fumes from off-road equipment and on-road haul trucks may be considered objectionable by some people but dissipate rapidly under most conditions. In addition, continued compliance with the Rocky Canyon Specific Plan, which includes a transition area around the mining area in order to regulate land uses on adjacent properties to ensure land use compatibility, would minimize potential exposure of nearby sensitive land uses to onsite emission sources. The plan also includes policies that require implementation of pollution control measures sufficient to avoid and reduce adverse environmental impacts. For these reasons, continued operation of the quarry would not result in increased expose of a substantial number of people to frequent odorous emissions. For these reasons, potential exposure of sensitive receptors to odorous emissions would be considered *less than significant*.

Reclamation

Reclamation of the expansion areas would involve fewer pieces of off-road equipment and activities than during excavation and would not involve the trucking of quarry materials. Reclamation activities are ongoing as finish slopes are completed in the approved mining areas. In addition, continued compliance with the Rocky Canyon Specific Plan, which includes a transition area around the mining area in order to regulate land uses on adjacent properties to ensure land use compatibility, would minimize potential exposure of nearby residential land uses to onsite emission sources. As a result, this impact is considered *less than significant*.The project does not propose to burn any onsite vegetative materials and would be subject to SLOAPCD restrictions on developmental burning of vegetative material; therefore, the project would have *no impact* relating to substantial air pollutant emissions from such activities.

Conclusion

The project is consistent with the SLOAPCD's Clean Air Plan and will not generate operational emissions beyond baseline conditions. Potential construction related emissions associated with the relocation of the processing plant will fall below thresholds of significance employed by the SLOAPCD will not adversely impact surrounding sensitive receptors. Therefore, potential impacts to air quality would be *less than significant* and *less than cumulatively considerable*.

Mitigation

None are required.

Sources

Provided in Exhibit A.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
(a)	Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐
(b)	Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐
(c)	Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☒	☐	☐
(d)	Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	☐	☒	☐	☐
(e)	Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☒	☐	☐
(f)	Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Regulatory Setting

Federal Laws and Regulations

Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA)prohibits anyone, without a permit issued by the Secretary of the Interior, from taking (pursue, shoot, shoot at, poison, wound, kill, capture, trap, collect, molest or disturb) bald or golden eagles, including their parts, nests, or eggs. This includes substantially interfering with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior. Activities that may result in the take of a bald or golden eagle require permits; the three activities eligible for permits include to remove or relocate an eagle nest; to transport, exhibit, collect, or control eagles or eagle parts, and for incidental take of eagles.

Clean Water Act. The Clean Water Act (CWA) establishes the basic structure for regulating discharges of pollutants into the waters of the United States and regulating quality standards for surface waters. The purpose of the CWA is to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of all waters of the U.S. Permitting is required for filling waters of the U.S. (including wetlands). Permits may be issued on an individual basis or may be covered under approved nationwide permits.

Endangered Species Act. The federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) provides the legal framework for the listing and protection of species (and their habitats) identified as being endangered or threatened with extinction. "Critical Habitat" is a term within the FESA designed to guide actions by federal agencies and is defined as "an area occupied by a species listed as threatened or endangered within which are found physical or geographical features essential to the conservation of the species, or an area not currently occupied by the species which is itself essential to the conservation of the species." Actions that jeopardize endangered or threatened species and/or critical habitat are considered a 'take' under the FESA. "Take" under federal definition means to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.

Projects that would result in "take" of any federally listed threatened or endangered species, or critical habitats, are required to obtain permits from the USFWS through either Section 7 (interagency consultation with a federal nexus) or Section 10 (Habitat Conservation Plan) of FESA, depending on the involvement by the federal government in permitting and/or funding of the project. Through Section 10, it is required to prepare a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) to be approved by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), which results in the issuance of an Incidental Take Permit (ITP). Through Section 7, which can only occur when a separate federal nexus in a project exists (prompting interagency consultation), a consultation by the various federal agencies involved can take place to determine appropriate actions to mitigate negative effects on endangered and threatened species and their habitat.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act. All migratory, non-game bird species that are native to the U.S. or its territories are protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918 (50 C.F.R. Section 10.13), as amended under the Migratory Bird Treaty Reform Act of 2004. MBTA makes it illegal to purposefully take (pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect) any migratory bird, or the parts, nests, or eggs of such a bird, except under the terms of a valid Federal permit. Migratory non-game native bird species are protected by international treaty under the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA).

State Law and Regulations

California Endangered Species Act. The California Endangered Species Act (CESA), similar to FESA, contains a process for listing of species and regulating potential impacts to listed species. State threatened and endangered species include both plants and wildlife, but do not include invertebrates. The designation "rare species" applies only to California native plants. State threatened and endangered plant species are regulated largely under the Native Plant Preservation Act in conjunction with the CESA. State threatened and endangered animal species are legally protected against "take." The CESA authorizes the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to enter into a memorandum of agreement for take of listed species to issue an incidental take permit for a state-listed threatened and endangered species only if specific criteria are met.

Section 2080 of the CESA prohibits the take of species listed as threatened or endangered pursuant to the Act. Section 2081 allows CDFW to authorize take prohibited under Section 2080 provided that: 1) the taking is incidental to an otherwise lawful activity; 2) the taking will be minimized and fully mitigated; 3) the applicant ensures adequate funding for minimization and mitigation; and 4) the authorization will not jeopardize the continued existence of the listed species.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). CEQA defines a "project" as any action undertaken from public or private entity that requires discretionary governmental review (a non-ministerial permittable action). All "projects" are required to undergo some level of environmental review pursuant to CEQA, unless an exemption applies. CEQA's environmental review process includes an assessment of existing resources, broken up by categories (i.e., air quality, aesthetics, etc.), a catalog of potential impacts to those resources caused by the proposed project, and a quantifiable result determining the level of significance an impact would generate. The goal of environmental review under CEQA is to avoid or mitigate impacts that would lead to a "significant effect" on a given resource; section 15382 of the CEQA Guidelines defines a "significant effect" as *a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance. An economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment, but may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant.*

California Fish and Game Code (CFGC). The California Fish and Game Code (CFGC) is one of the 29 legal codes that form the general statutory law of California. A myriad of statutes regarding fish and game are specified in the CFGC; the following codes are specifically relevant to the proposed Project:

California Native Plant Protection Act. Sections 1900-1913 of the California Fish and Game Code contain the regulations of the Native Plant Protection Act of 1977. The intent of this act is to help conserve and protect rare and endangered plants in the state. The act allowed the CFGC to designate plants as rare or endangered.

Lake and Streambed Alteration. Section 1602 of the CFGC requires any person, state, or local governmental agency to provide advance written notification to CDFW prior to initiating any activity that would: 1) divert or obstruct the natural flow of, or substantially change or remove material from the bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream, or lake; or 2) result in the disposal or deposition of debris, waste, or other material into any river, stream, or lake. The state definition of "lakes, rivers, and streams" includes all rivers or streams that flow at least periodically or permanently through a well-defined bed or channel with banks that support fish or other aquatic life, and watercourses with surface or subsurface flows that support or have supported riparian vegetation.

Nesting Birds. Sections 3503, 3503.5 and 3513 of CFGC states that it is "unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird, except as otherwise provided by this code or any regulation made

pursuant thereto," and "unlawful to take, possess, or destroy any birds of prey or to take, possess, or destroy the nest or eggs of any such bird" unless authorized.

Regional Water Quality Control Board. The Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) not only regulates impacts to water quality in federal waters of the U.S. under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, but also regulates any isolated waters that are impacted under the state Porter Cologne Act utilizing a Waste Discharge Requirement. Discharge of fill material into waters of the State not subject to the jurisdiction of the USACE pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act may require authorization pursuant to the Porter Cologne Act through application for waste discharge requirements or through waiver of waste discharge requirements.

Special Status Species and Sensitive Habitat Regulations

For the purposes of this biological resources assessment, special status species are those plants and animals listed, proposed for listing, or candidates for listing as threatened or endangered by the USFWS under the FESA; those listed or proposed for listing as rare, threatened, or endangered by the CDFW under the CESA; animals designated as "Species of Special Concern," "Fully Protected," or "Watch List" by the CDFW; and plants with a California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) of 1, 2, 3, or 4.

California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB)

"Special Plants" and "Special Animals" are broad terms used to refer to all the plant and animal taxa inventoried by the CNDDB, regardless of their legal or protection status (CNDDB 2020a and 2020b). The Special Plants list includes vascular plants, high priority bryophytes (mosses, liverworts, and hornworts), and lichens. The Special Animals list is also referred to by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) as the list of "species at risk" or "special status species."

According to the CNDDB (2020a, 2020b), Special Plants and Animals lists include: taxa that are officially listed or proposed for listing by California or the Federal Government as Endangered, Threatened, or Rare; taxa which meet the criteria for listing, as described in Section 15380 of CEQA Guidelines; taxa deemed biologically rare, restricted in range, declining in abundance, or otherwise vulnerable; population(s) in California that may be marginal to the taxon's entire range but are threatened with extirpation in California; and/or taxa closely associated with a habitat that is declining in California at a significant rate. Separately, the Special Plants List includes taxa listed in the California Native Plant Society's Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California, as well as taxa determined to be Sensitive Species by the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or U.S. Forest Service. The Special Animals List distinctively includes taxa considered by the CDFW to be a Species of Special Concern (SSC) and taxa designated as a special status, sensitive, or declining species by other state or federal agencies.

Federal and State Endangered Species Listings

The Federal and California Endangered Species Acts are the regulatory documents that govern the listing and protection of species, and their habitats, identified as being endangered or threatened with extinction (see Sections 1.5.1and 1.5.2). Possible listing status under both Federal and California ESA includes Endangered and Threatened (FE, FT, CE, or CT). Species in the process of being listed are given the status of either Proposed Federally Endangered/Threatened, Candidate for California Endangered/Threatened (PE, PT, CCE, or CCT). The CESA has one additional status: Rare (CR).

Global and State Ranks

Global and State Ranks reflect an assessment of the condition of the species (or habitats, see 1.6.6 below) across its entire range. Basic ranks assign a numerical value from 1 to 5, respectively for species with highest risk to most secure. Other ranking variations include rank ranges, rank qualifiers, and infraspecific taxon ranks. All Heritage Programs, such as the CNDDB use the same ranking methodology, originally developed by The Nature Conservancy and now maintained and recently revised by NatureServe. Procedurally, state programs such as the CNDDB develop the State ranks. The Global ranks are determined collaboratively among the Heritage Programs for the states/provinces containing the species. Rank definitions, where G represents Global and S represents State, are as follows:

- **G1/S1:** Critically imperiled globally/in state because of extreme rarity (5 or fewer populations).
- **G2/S2:** Imperiled globally/in state because of rarity (6 to 20 populations).
- **G3/S3:** Vulnerable; rare and local throughout range or in a special habitat or narrowly endemic (on the order of 21 to 100 populations).
- **G4/S4:** Apparently secure globally/in state; uncommon but not rare (of no immediate conservation concern).
- **G5/S5:** Secure; common, widespread, and abundant.
- **G#G#/S#S#:** Rank range - numerical range indicating uncertainty in the status of a species, (e.g., G2G3 more certain than G3, but less certain that G2).
- **G/S#?:** Inexact numeric rank
- **Q:** Questionable taxonomy - Taxonomic distinctiveness of this entity is questionable.
- **T#:** Infraspecific taxa (subspecies or varieties) – indicating an infraspecific taxon that has a lower numerical ranking (rarer) than the given global rank of species.

California Rare Plant Ranks

Plant species are considered rare when their distribution is confined to localized areas, their habitat is threatened, they are declining in abundance, or they are threatened in a portion of their range.

The California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) categories range from species with a low threat (4) to species that are presumed extinct (1A). All but a few species are endemic to California. All of them are judged to be vulnerable under present circumstances, or to have a high potential for becoming vulnerable. Threat ranks are assigned as decimal values to a CRPR to further define the level of threat to a given species. The rare plant ranks and threat levels are defined below.

- **1A:** Plants presumed extirpated in California and either rare or extinct elsewhere.
- **1B:** Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere.
- **2A:** Plants presumed extirpated in California, but common elsewhere
- **2B:** Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California, but more common elsewhere
- **4:** Plants of limited distribution - a watch list
- **0.1:** Seriously threatened in California (over 80% of occurrences threatened/high degree and immediacy of threat)
- **0.2:** Moderately threatened in California (20-80% occurrences threatened/moderate degree and immediacy of threat)

- **0.3:** Not very threatened in California (less than 20% of occurrences threatened/low degree and immediacy of threat or no current threats known)

California Department of Fish and Wildlife Animal Rank

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) assigns one of three ranks to Special Animals: Watch List (WL), Species of Special Concern (SSC), or Fully Protected (FP). Unranked species are referred to by the term Special Animal (SA).

Animals listed as Watch List (WL) are taxa that were previously designated as SSC, but no longer merit that status, or taxa that which do not yet meet SSC criteria, but for which there is concern and a need for additional information to clarify status.

Animals listed as California Species of Special Concern (SSC) may or may not be listed under California or federal Endangered Species Acts. They are considered rare or declining in abundance in California. The Special Concern designation is intended to provide the CDFW biologists, land planners, and managers with lists of species that require special consideration during the planning process to avert continued population declines and potential costly listing under federal and state endangered species laws. For many species of birds, the primary emphasis is on the breeding population in California. For some species that do not breed in California but winter here, emphasis is on wintering range. The SSC designation thus may include a comment regarding the specific protection provided such as nesting or wintering.

Animals listed as Fully Protected (FP) are those species considered by CDFW as rare or faced with possible extinction. Most, but not all, have subsequently been listed under the CESA or FESA. Fully Protected species may not be taken or possessed at any time and no provision of the California Fish and Game code authorizes the issuance of permits or licenses to take any Fully Protected species.

Sensitive Habitats

Sensitive Natural Community is a state-wide designation given by CDFW to specific vegetation associations of ecological importance. Sensitive Natural Communities rarity and ranking involves the knowledge of range and distribution of a given type of vegetation, and the proportion of occurrences that are of good ecological integrity (CDFW 2018a). Evaluation is conducted at both the Global (G) and State (S) levels, resulting in a rank ranging from 1 for very rare and threatened to 5 for demonstrably secure. Natural Communities with ranks of S1-S3 are considered Sensitive Natural Communities in California and may need to be addressed in the environmental review processes of CEQA and its equivalents.

Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan

The policies and standards of the Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan (Exhibit C) provide guidance for the protection of biological resources through the phased expansion of quarry operations.

Development Plan Conditions of Approval (as Amended In 2002)/Previous Environmental Review

The conditions of approval (Exhibit D) incorporate the mitigation measures adopted with the previously certified EIRs and include a number of requirements to protect biological resources that include, but are not limited, to the following:

- Standards for revegetation and reclamation as well as monitoring requirements to ensure compliance.
- Worker awareness training.
- Strategies and standards for the protection of creek and riparian resources and the protection of surface water quality.

Environmental Setting

Biological Resources Assessments

The project site was subject to a biological resources assessment (BRA) prepared by Terra Verde Environmental Consultants, 2017. A subsequent analysis was prepared by SWCA Environmental Consultants in 2024 to confirm that the findings of the 2017 study remain valid for the current project. These studies are incorporated by reference and are available for review in their entirety at the Department of Planning and Building, 976 Osos Street, San Luis Obispo. The following is a summary of the findings and recommendations of those studies.

Methodology

Prior to conducting field surveys, the biologists completed desktop research and a literature review of known, regionally-occurring resources, which included the following:

- Aerial photographs (Google Earth, 1994-2017) and project site plans;
- Aerial photographs of the project site (Google Earth 2025);
- USGS Santa Margarita 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle (USGS, 2018);
- Online Soil Survey of San Luis Obispo County, California; (Natural Resources Conservation Service [NRCS], 2018);
- Consortium of California Herbaria (CCH) online database of plant collections (CCH, 2018 and 2025);
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) list of state and federally listed special-status species with potential to occur within the Santa Margarita 7.5-minute quadrangle and the surrounding eight quadrangles (Atascadero, Templeton, Creston, Shedd Canyon, Wilson Corner, Santa Margarita Lake, Lopez Mountain, San Luis Obispo), (California Department of Fish and Wildlife [CDFW], 2018);
- CNDDB map of state and federally listed special-status species that have been documented within a five-mile radius of the project site (CDFW, 2018) (see Appendix A of the BRA – Figure 4a: 5-mile Botanical CNDDB Map and Figure 4b: 5-mile Wildlife CNDDB and Critical Habitat Map);
- California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants for the Santa Margarita 7.5-minute quadrangle and surrounding eight quadrangles (CNPS, 2018 and 2025);
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Critical Habitat Portal (USFWS, 2018a and 2025a); and,
- USFWS National Wetland Inventory Map for San Luis Obispo County (USFWS, 2018b and 2025a).

A list of regionally-occurring, special-status species was compiled based on records reported in the scientific database queries (see Appendix C of the BRA – List of Regionally-occurring Special-status Species). This species list was utilized to focus the field survey efforts and to inform appropriate survey periods for special-status botanical species with the potential to occur on site.

Table 9 -- Summary of Field Surveys

Date	Survey Type	Site Conditions
05/06/16	Vegetation Mapping,	Temp: mid-60's F

05/11/16	Spring Botanical / Wildlife Survey	Wind: 0-5 mph Visibility: Clear
08/01/16 08/02/16	Tree Inventory, Summer Botanical Survey	Temp: low-90's F Wind: 0-5 mph Visibility: Clear
09/01/16 09/02/16	Tree Inventory, Summer Botanical Survey	Temp: mid-80's F Wind: 0-5 mph Visibility: Clear
03/14/17	Early Spring Botanical Survey	Temp: mid-60's F Wind: 0-5 mph Visibility: Clear
06/05/17	Tree Inventory, Late Spring Botanical Survey	Temp: mid-80's F Wind: 0-5 mph Visibility: Clear
06/14/17	Wetland Delineation, Jurisdictional Analysis	Temp: mid-80's F Wind: 0-5 mph Visibility: Clear
6/24/25	Late Spring Botanical Survey	--

Surveys were pedestrian in nature and lasted approximately six to ten hours each day. During each survey, all detected plant and wildlife species were documented (see Appendix D of the B2017 RA – Botanical and Wildlife Species Observed), including direct and indirect observations of wildlife via sign (e.g., tracks, scat, skeletal remains, dens, burrows, or vocalizations). Botanical surveys followed guidelines developed by CDFW and CNPS to determine presence/absence of special-status plant species (CDFW, 2009; CNPS, 2009). Botanical species identifications and taxonomic nomenclature followed *The Jepson Manual: Vascular Plants of California*, 2nd edition (Baldwin et al., 2012) as well as taxonomic updates provided in the Jepson eFlora (Jepson Flora Project, 2018). Vegetation communities and land cover types were mapped, and natural communities were classified using the second edition of *A Manual of California Vegetation* (MCV) classification system (Sawyer et al., 2009). In addition, for consistency with existing plans issued for the site, *Preliminary Descriptions of the Terrestrial Natural Communities of California* (Holland, 1986) was cross-referenced in mapping and characterizing vegetation communities.

The survey conducted in 2025 was appropriately timed for the detection of a majority of special-status blooming plant species with potential to occur and focused on areas where sensitive biological resources had been previously identified on site within the BSA. The biologists assessed the resources within these areas and determined if site conditions had changed since 2018, when the BRA was prepared. Botanical species identifications and taxonomic nomenclature followed *The Jepson Manual: Vascular Plants of California, 2nd edition* (Baldwin et al. 2012), as well as taxonomic updates provided in the Jepson eFlora (Jepson Flora Project 2025). If new taxa were observed, they were added to the plant list. If new special-status species were observed, they were mapped using a submeter-accurate GPS unit.

The native tree inventory included documentation of all native trees greater than five inches in diameter at breast height (DBH) (i.e., measured at 4.5 feet above the ground) within the survey area. Each tree was tagged with an identification number, and the species and DBH were recorded on data sheets. For trees with multiple trunks, the total DBH was recorded by summing the diameter of all trunks at breast height. The location of each tree was documented using a hand-held global positioning system (GPS) unit (Figure 19). The jurisdictional determination within East Creek and South Ravine included an assessment of hydrologic

indicators, including the presence of a defined bed and bank and connectivity to traditionally navigable waters. The wetland delineation focused on a single, seasonal wetland feature located near the headwaters of South Ravine. This feature was historically used as a cattle pond and currently remains as a depressional wetland that supports seasonal ponding. See Appendix E of the BRA – Wetland Delineation Report, for details pertaining to the methods and results of the formal wetland delineation.

The habitat requirements for each regionally-occurring, special-status species listed in Appendix B of the BRA were analyzed and compared to the type and quality of habitats observed on site during field surveys. The potential for many species to occur within the project area was eliminated due to lack of suitable habitat, elevation range, appropriate soils/substrate, and/or known distribution of the species. Special-status species for which suitable habitat was identified on site are discussed in-depth in the following section; those determined to have no potential to occur based upon a lack of suitable habitat are not discussed any further.

Habitats/Vegetative Communities of the Project Site

The survey area includes disturbed areas within the existing mining operation, as well as adjacent areas of intact natural habitat. Three soil types and five vegetation communities were documented within the survey area, along with areas exhibiting anthropogenic/ruderal characteristics. Anthropogenic/ruderal areas are characterized as having minimal and generally weedy vegetation and are typically associated with historic and/or existing mining areas. A majority of the proposed Phase 3 through Phase 5 expansion area consists of relatively intact natural habitat that supports or has a potential to support special-status species.

In addition to anthropogenic/ruderal areas, which are characterized by significant, regular disturbance and minimal vegetation cover, a total of five natural vegetation communities were identified and mapped within the survey area: foothill woodland/oak woodland, chamise chaparral, California sagebrush/coyote brush scrub, mixed riparian woodland, and freshwater wetland. A total of 172 vascular plant species were identified within the survey area during field surveys. Of those 172 plants, 42 are non-native (24 percent). A comprehensive list of all the plant species observed within the survey area during the field surveys is included in Appendix D of the BRA.

Three sensitive vegetation communities were identified in the CNDDB as potentially occurring on site (i.e., coastal valley freshwater marsh, northern interior cypress forest, serpentine bunchgrass); however, none were identified within the survey area. During the June 2025 survey, SWCA botanists noted that the vegetation communities observed on-site are consistent with what was identified in the 2017 BRA in species composition, density, and distribution. Refer to the BRA for a detailed description of vegetation communities observed on-site. Plant communities identified on site are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Foothill Woodland (Oak Woodland) (19.3 acres)

This community occurs primarily on the slopes and canyons of the project site. This community consists of a mix of oak (*Quercus*) and pine (*Pinus)* trees as the dominant trees in the canopy and is interchangeably referenced as oak woodland throughout this BRA. Species composition varies within this community throughout the site; however, a majority of this community is characterized by a dense tree canopy of coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), with occasional foothill pine (*Pinus sabiniana*), and blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*) trees. The understory includes a diverse mix of herbs, shrubs, and vines at variable cover, often dominated by western poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*). In addition, transitional habitat zones occur along the boundaries between oak woodland and chaparral or scrub habitats on site, where species from these habitats comingle. This community typically occurs in alluvial terraces, canyon bottoms, stream banks, slopes, and flats and provides valuable habitat for nesting birds, small mammals, and other wildlife.

This species composition was used in determining the community classification, which most closely corresponds with the *Quercus agrifolia* Woodland Alliance, coast live oak woodland, in MCV classification system.

Chamise Chaparral (42.3 acres)

This community occurs primarily on lower to upper slopes on all aspects, but especially southfacing slopes within the survey area. This community is dominated by chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*) in the shrub canopy, with black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), big berry manzanita (*Arctostaphylos glauca*), and California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*) occurring commonly. Other characteristic shrubs include woolly blue curls (*Trichostema lanatum*), bush poppy (*Dendromecon rigida*), deerweed (*Acmispon glaber*), and climbing penstemon (*Keckiella cordifolia*). Isolated individuals of coast live oak, blue oak, and foothill pine are also scattered throughout this community. This community provides suitable habitat for nesting birds, reptiles, and small mammals, as well as several special-status species, including La Panza mariposa lily (*Calochortus simulans*) and Blainville's horned lizard (*Phrynosoma blainvillii*), both of which were both observed on site.

This species composition was used in determining the community classification, which most closely corresponds with the *Adenostoma fasciculatum* Shrubland Alliance, chamise chaparral, in MCV classification system.

California Sagebrush/Coyote Brush Scrub (11.3 acres)

This community occurs in transitional areas bordering dense chamise chaparral stands and generally exhibits characteristics of past anthropogenic disturbance. This community is dominated by coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*) California buckwheat, California sagebrush, orange bush monkeyflower (*Diplacus aurantiacus*), chamise, and deerweed. This community provides valuable habitat for nesting birds, reptiles, and small mammals. This species composition was used in determining the community classification, which most closely corresponds with the *Baccharis pilularis* Shrubland Alliance, coyote brush scrub, in MCV classification system.

Mixed Riparian Woodland (3.2 acres)

This community occurs along Rocky Canyon Creek in the western portion of the survey area and is dominated by arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*), western sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*), Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*), and coast live oak. The understory vegetation is dense with a mix of shrubs, vines, and herbs including mule fat (*Baccharis salicifolia*), fuchsia flowered gooseberry (*Ribes speciosum*), coyote brush, western poison oak, and California blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*). Typical wetland plants observed along the channel bottom included curly dock (*Rumex crispus*), clustered dock (*Rumex conglomeratus*), rabbitfoot grass (*Polypogon monspeliensis*), fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*), and sedges and rushes (i.e., *Eleocharis* sp. and *Carex* sp.). This community provides valuable habitat for amphibians, nesting birds, reptiles, and small mammals.

This species composition was used in determining the community classification, which most closely corresponds with the *Platanus racemosa* Woodland Alliance, California sycamore woodlands, in MCV classification system.

Freshwater Wetland (0.04 acre)

This community was identified within the depressional wetland feature near the headwaters of South Ravine. This area holds seasonal water during and following high-intensity precipitation events. Dominant species within this community include toad rush (*Juncus bufonius*), rabbitfoot grass

(*Polypogon monspeliensis*), Parish's spike rush (*Eleocharis parishii*), pygmy-weed (*Crassula connata*), and jersey cudweed (*Pseudognaphalium luteoalbum*) with non-native annual grasses (i.e., bromes and oats) defining the transitional zone. No ponded water was observed during the May 2016, March 2017, or June 2017 survey efforts; however, evidence of temporary ponding following rain events (i.e., salt crust, mud cracks, water marks) were observed. A formal wetland delineation was completed to document the jurisdictional limits of this feature. See Appendix E for a detailed description of the methods and results of the wetland delineation.

This species composition does not correspond to a community classification in MCV, but may provide important habitat for birds, reptiles, and small mammals.

Anthropogenic/Ruderal (40.1 acres)

Portions of the characterized by anthropogenic disturbance and ruderal vegetation include the existing processing plant, active mining areas, and associated access roads. These areas are typically devoid of vegetation, or if vegetation has established, densities are relatively low and consist primarily of disturbance-adapted species including non-native annual grasses (i.e., bromes and oats), smooth cat's ear (*Hypochaeris glabra*), cudweed (*Pseudognaphalium beneolens*), and tocalote (*Centaurea melitensis*). This community provides very limited habitat for wildlife.

This land cover type does not correspond to a vegetation community is included in the MCV classification system.

The acreage is summarized in Table 10. Figure 18 provides a habitat map showing the location and extent of habitat types on the proposed project site.

Table 10 – Summary of Habitat Types By Acres

Community	Acres in the Study Area[1]	Impacted Acres
Foothill Woodland	19.3	12.3
Chamise Chaparral	42.3	33.2
California Sagebrush/Coyote Brush Scrub	11.3	9.5
Mixed Riparian Woodland	3.2	0.0
Freshwater Wetland	0.04	0.0
Anthropogenic/Ruderal	40.1	28.1
Total:		

Source: Terra Verde, 2019

Aquatic Resources

Three jurisdictional drainage features were identified within the survey area, including two USGS blue line drainages (Rocky Canyon Creek and East Creek), and an ephemeral drainage (South Ravine) (see Figure 17). In addition, one depressional wetland was identified near the headwaters of South Ravine, in association with an abandoned cattle stock pond. Each of these hydrologic features is described in further detail below.

Rocky Canyon Creek is a mapped USGS blue line drainage that flows south along the western boundary of the survey area, eventually connecting with the Salinas River approximately 0.75 mile southwest of the survey area. Within the project area, Rocky Canyon creek supports variable cover by mixed riparian woodland and foothill woodland. This feature has a clearly defined bed and bank, including evidence of ordinary high water mark (OHWM). As such, it is assumed this drainage would be considered waters of the state under the

jurisdiction of CDFW and RWQCB, and waters of the U.S. under the jurisdiction of the Corps. Mining activities associated with Phase 3 through 5 will not impact Rocky Canyon Creek.

East Creek is a mapped USGS blue line drainage that flows north along the northeastern boundary of the survey area, before bending west and connecting with Rocky Canyon Creek north of the survey area. East Creek is ephemeral in nature and is characterized by a narrow, meandering channel with steep banks vegetated with open to dense chaparral and foothill woodland habitat. This feature has a clearly defined bed and bank, including evidence of OHWM. As such, it is assumed this drainage would be considered waters of the state under the jurisdiction of CDFW and RWQCB, and waters of the U.S. under the jurisdiction of the Corps. Mining activities associated with Phase 3 through 5 are not expected to impact East Creek.

South Ravine is an ephemeral drainage feature that flows west along the southern boundary of the survey area, converging with Rocky Canyon Creek near the southwestern corner of the site. South Ravine is characterized by a narrow channel and steep banks vegetated with dense chaparral and foothill woodland habitat. This feature has a clearly defined bed and bank, including evidence of OHWM. As such, it is assumed this drainage would be considered waters of the state under the jurisdiction of CDFW and RWQCB, and waters of the U.S. under the jurisdiction of the Corps. The depressional wetland (remnant cattle pond) located near the headwaters of this drainage is characterized by seasonal ponding. Surface flows from the upper limits of South Ravine and the surrounding landscape drain into the wetland/pond feature from the north and east before exiting via a grated metal culvert located at the southern edge of the wetland. A formal wetland delineation was completed to document the extent of agency jurisdiction within this feature (see Appendix E of the 2017 BRA). Mining activities associated with Phase 3 through 5 are not expected to impact South Ravine or the associated wetland.

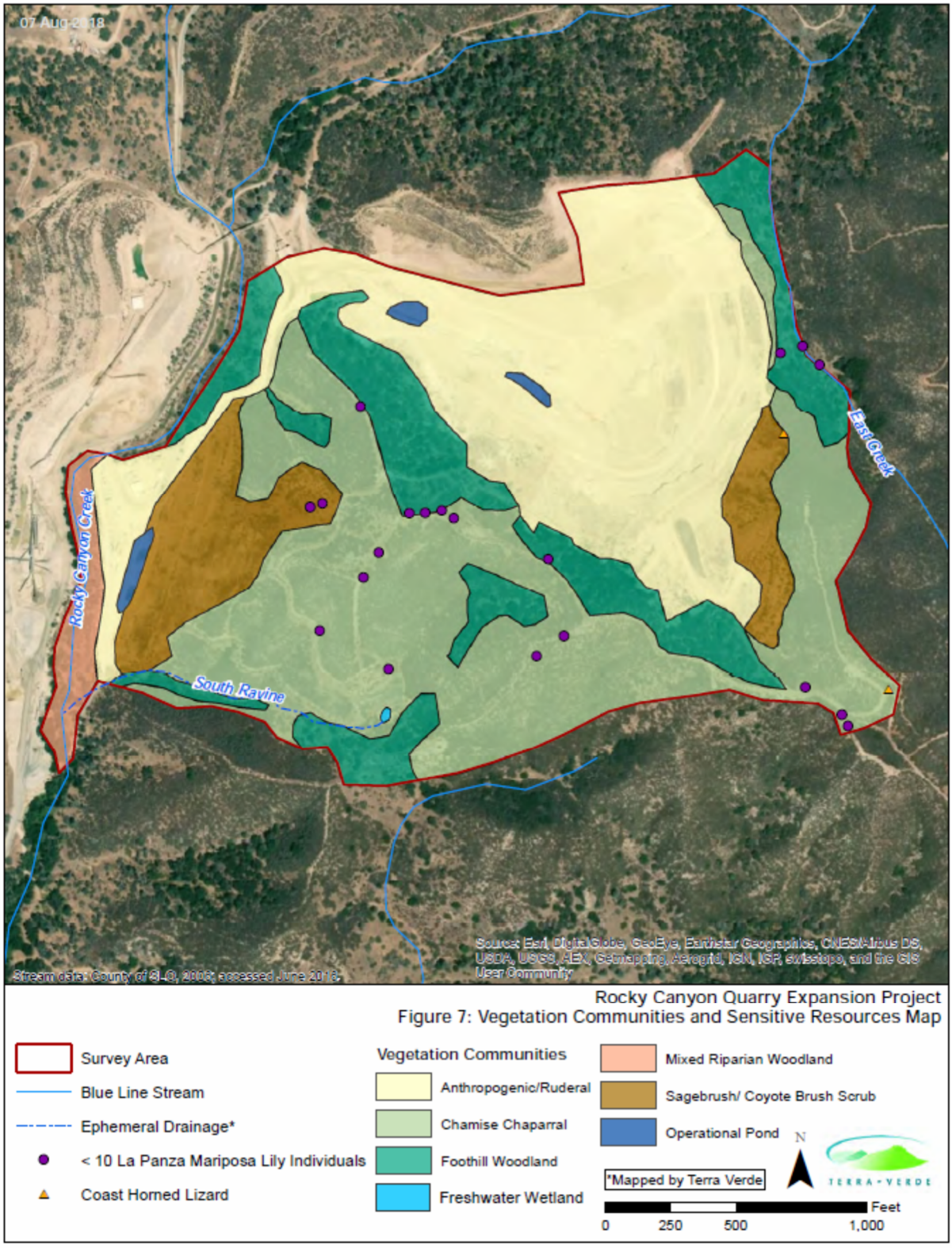


Figure 18 -- Habitat Types

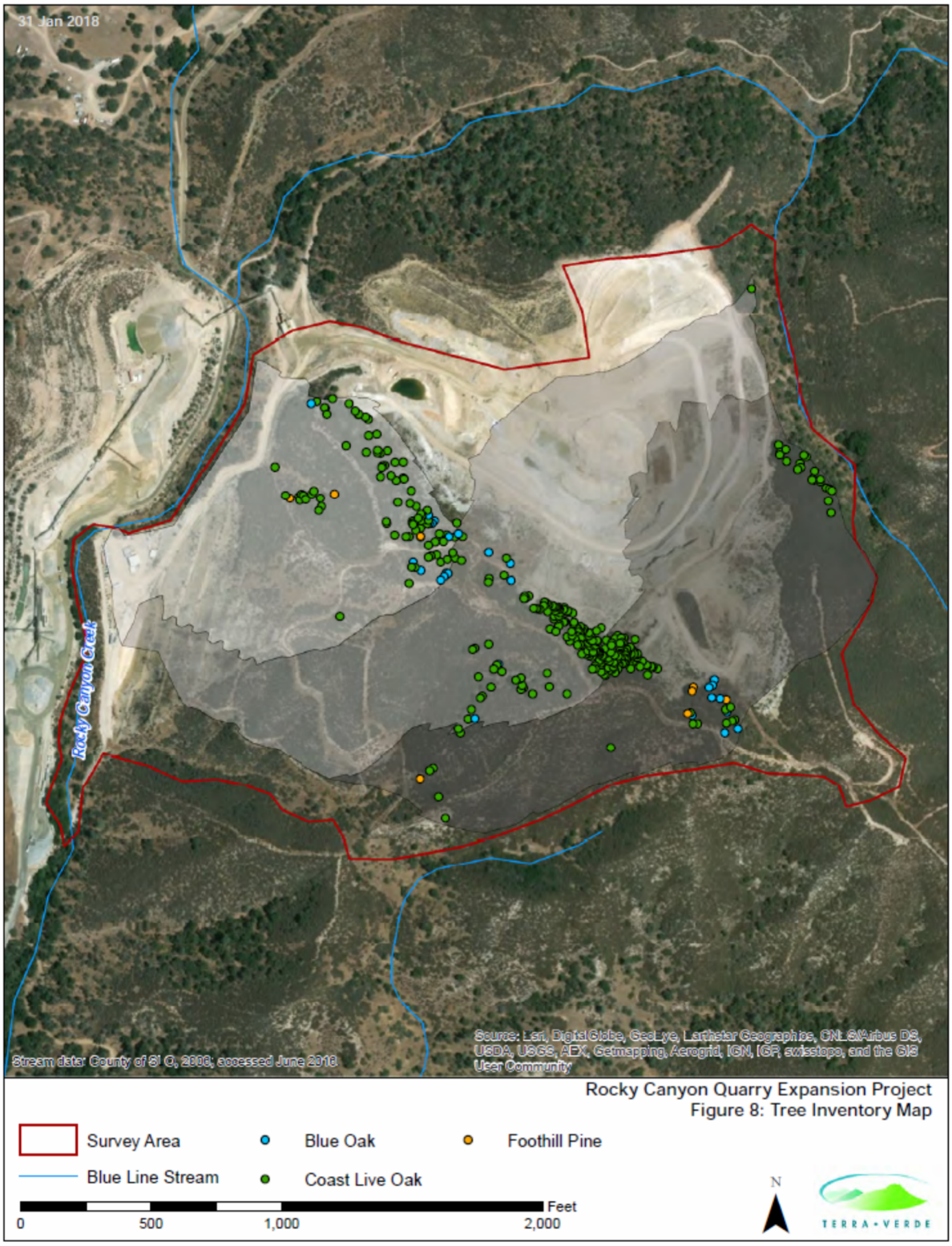


Figure 19 -- Tree Inventory

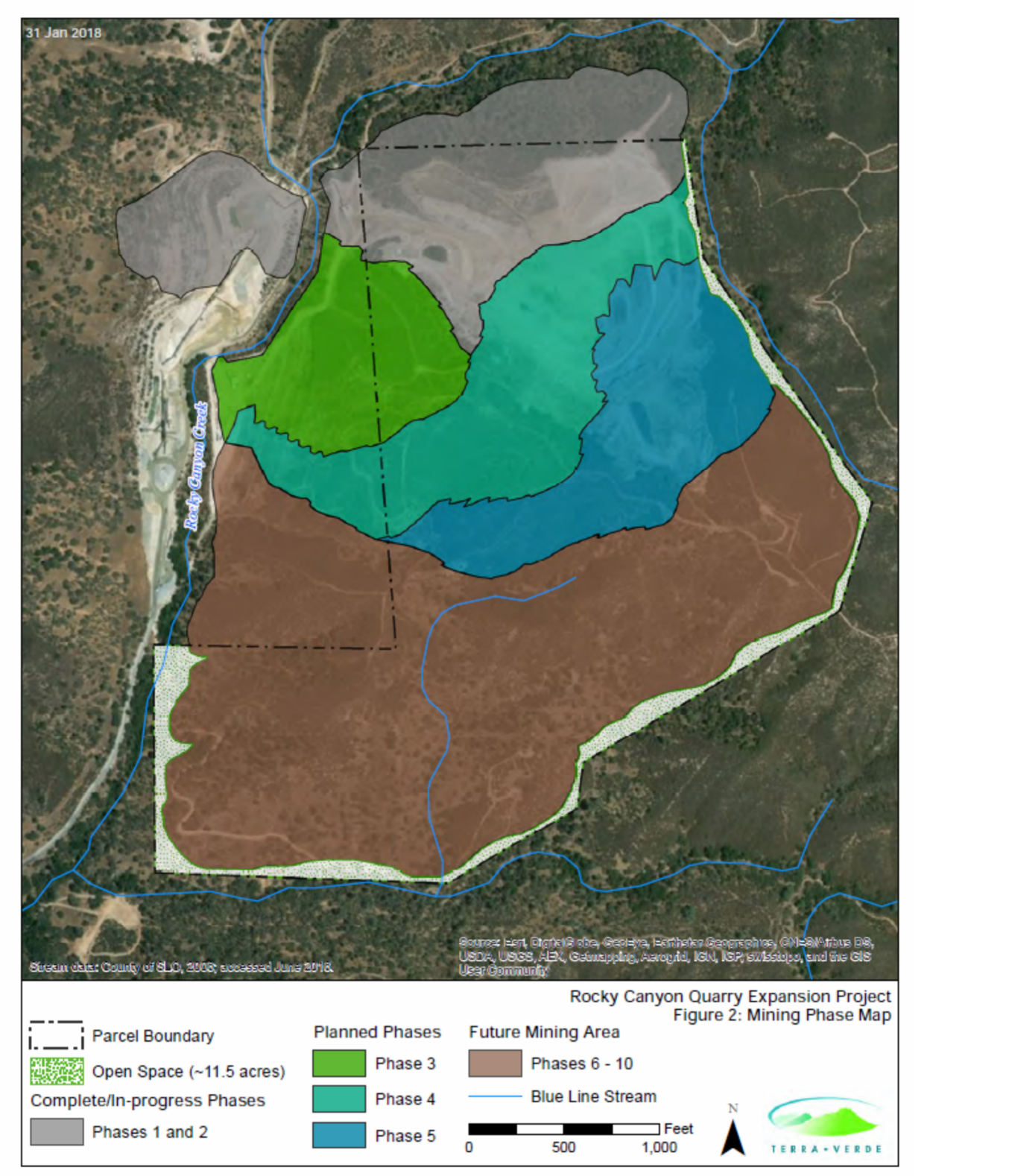


Figure 20 – Potential Open Space Area

Sensitive Resources

Sensitive resources considered here include botanical species listed on the CNPS Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants, botanical and wildlife species listed on the California and federal Endangered Species Acts, USFWS-designated Critical Habitat, CDFW-listed sensitive natural communities, individual oak trees and oak woodland habitat, and jurisdictional waters and wetlands. Based on the results of the background research and literature review, 3 sensitive natural communities, 48 special-status botanical species, and 39 special-status wildlife species occur in the project region. The habitat requirements for each of these species were compared to the type and quality of habitat documented site conditions. This assessment narrowed the list of potentially occurring species to 11 special-status botanical species and 13 special-status wildlife species, as well as migratory nesting birds.

Updated background research was completed by SWCA in June 2025, and the target list was revised to include 12 of the original species, one of which is no longer considered sensitive and the addition of one species that was not listed and/or included within the regional search at the time the BRA was prepared, for a total of 12 special-status wildlife species with potential to occur on-site in addition to migratory nesting birds. A discussion of the sensitive resources deemed to have potential to occur on site is included below.

Special Status Resources

Special-status species are those plants and animals listed, proposed for listing, or candidates for listing as threatened or endangered by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) or the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) under the federal Endangered Species Act (FESA); those considered "species of concern" by the USFWS; those listed or proposed for listing as rare, threatened, or endangered by the CDFW under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA); animals designated as "Species of Special Concern" by the CDFW; and plants occurring on lists 1B, 2, and 4 of the CNPS Inventory of Rare and Endangered Vascular Plants of California. Natural Communities of Special Concern are habitat types considered rare and worthy of tracking in the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) by the CNPS and CDFW because of their limited distribution or historic loss over time.

The search and review of the CNDDB revealed 19 special-status species composed of seven special- status plants and 12 special-status wildlife species, and no natural communities of special concern with recorded occurrences within the five-mile search radius of the proposed project site. The two valley oak trees do not constitute a Valley Oak Woodland habitat. The following briefly describes or summarizes the special-status species issues and potential for occurrence on the project site. Table B-2 in Appendix B of the BRA provides a list of special-status species recorded in the CNDDB and includes scientific and common name and listing status.

Special-status Wildlife Species

Suitable habitat for 13 special-status wildlife species, including 3 sensitive mammals, 5 sensitive birds, 1 sensitive amphibian, and 4 sensitive reptiles were identified within the survey area, as well as habitat for migratory nesting birds. Suitable habitat for 4 of these species only occurs within the riparian corridor of Rocky Canyon Creek which would not be affected by the proposed project.

No new wildlife taxa were observed during the 2025 survey effort. An inventory of all wildlife species observed within the BSA can be found in the BRA. One special-status wildlife species, coast horned lizard, was observed in two locations within the chamise chaparral habitat during the 2016/2017 survey efforts. This species was not observed during the 2025 survey effort; however, based on the lack of observed changes to habitat and site conditions, this species is expected to still be present in the chaparral habitat on-site.

A description of each of these species, their habitats, conservation status, and their likelihood for occurrence within the overall survey area is provided below.

Sensitive Mammal Species

Monterey Dusky-footed Woodrat**,** State Status – CSC

Monterey dusky-footed woodrats are known only from the Santa Lucia Mountains in southeastern Monterey and northwestern San Luis Obispo Counties. This species typically occurs in dense chaparral, hardwood conifer, mixed forests, and riparian woodlands. In most instances, this species constructs its houses in inaccessible areas, such as thorny thickets, poison oak patches, or nettles (Zeiner et al., 1988-1990a).

This species was not identified within the project vicinity during searches of relevant databases (CDFW, 2018); however, woodrat houses were identified among oak woodland and chaparral communities throughout the site. No invasive survey techniques were used (i.e., trapping and handling) to determine the species present. Therefore, it could not be determined if the houses were occupied and by which species of woodrat. Based on the presence of woodrat houses and the site occurring within the species known range, there is a moderate potential for this species to occur within the expansion area and overall survey area.

Pallid Bat (*Antrozous pallidus*), State Status – CSC

Pallid bat is common to low elevations of California and occurs throughout a variety of habitat types including grasslands, shrublands, woodlands, and mixed conifer forest. This species is most common in open, dry habitats with rocky areas for roosting however may occasionally day roost in hollow trees and buildings. Day roosts must be protected from high temperatures. Night roosts are generally more open such as porches and open buildings (Zeiner et al., 1988 – 1990b).

The nearest documented occurrence of this species is greater than five miles from the project site (CDFW, 2018). Oak woodlands within the expansion area may provide marginally suitable roosting opportunity for pallid bat. In addition, mature western sycamore trees as well as dead tree snags within the Rocky Canyon Creek corridor provide suitable roost sites for pallid bat. These larger trees situated within the riparian corridor provide opportunity for insect forage in the herbaceous understory near suitable roosting tree cavities and hollows. No accumulated guano, urine staining, prey remains, or other evidence of bat roosts were observed during site surveys. The potential for pallid bat to roost within the expansion area is considered low.

Yuma Myotis (*Myotis yumanensis*), State Status – Special Animal

Yuma myotis is common and widespread in California occurring in a variety of habitat types at elevations ranging from sea level to 3,300 meters. Optimal habitats include open forests and woodlands with sources of water to feed over. This species will generally forage on insects over ponds, streams, and stock tanks. Roost sites may occur in buildings, mines, caves, crevices, abandoned swallow nests, under bridges, and woodlands. Generally, separate roosts are utilized for day and night with night roosts occurring in more open areas (Zeiner et al., 1988 – 1990c).

The nearest documented occurrence of this species is greater than five miles from the project area (CDFW, 2018). Based on limited tree cavities and smaller structure of existing oak trees in the expansion area, the potential for this species to roost in the oak woodlands is considered low. However, more suitable roost sites including mature riparian trees and tall snags are present within the Rocky Canyon Creek corridor. Insect activity associated with damp, riparian understory vegetation is also likely to provide an abundance of insect forage for this species near suitable roosting cavities and tree hollows. Consequently, there is moderate potential for Yuma myotis to occur within the Rocky Canyon Creek corridor.

Sensitive Amphibian Species

California Red-legged Frog (*Rana draytonii*), State Status – CSC, Federal Status – Threatened

California red-legged frog (CRLF) requires permanent or semi-permanent bodies of water such as lakes, streams, and ponds with plant cover for foraging and breeding habitat. These frogs use lowland and grassland areas to hunt and forage for food. Reproduction occurs in aquatic habitats and occurs from late November to early April. Egg masses are laid in the water, often attached to submerged vegetation. Adult frogs consume invertebrates, mice, fish, frogs, and larvae of other amphibians. Tadpoles are thought to consume algae off the water surface or off rocks and plants. This species is known to occur from Mendocino County to Northern Baja California and eastward through the Northern Sacramento Valley and Sierra Nevada foothills. It is known to occur from sea level to 1,525 meters (Zeiner et al., 1988- 1990d).

Critical habitat for this species is present within five miles of the project site; however, it does not overlap the project area (USFWS, 2018a) (see Appendix A of the BRA – Figure 4b). In addition, no CRLF occurrences have been documented within a five-mile radius of the project site (CDFW, 2018). Rocky Canyon Creek provides a suitable dispersal corridor from an existing reservoir located approximately 0.50 mile downstream of the site on the adjacent property. Specifically, the riparian corridor offers protective cover, dense understory vegetation, and no barriers for amphibian dispersal. However, no surface water was present in the creek channel at the time of surveys and no evidence of pool habitat adequate for CRLF breeding was identified throughout its length.

Two unnamed, ephemeral drainages were also included in the survey area, of which only one was observed with low levels of flowing water (East Creek) during field surveys. The drainages appear to be highly ephemeral in nature, steeply sloped, and lack typical habitat characteristics to support CRLF (i.e., exposed root wads and overhanging banks, protective canopy cover, emergent and/or low herbaceous cover, and pool habitat). Operational ponds within the site were also assessed for potential to support CRLF. The northernmost operational ponds were devoid of any vegetation along banks or within the water feature, laden with silts, and surrounded by highly disturbed conditions with no suitable upland refugium and/or burrows. A rinse-water pond is also present at the base of the existing processing plant. The rinse pond has some existing, emergent vegetation although it appears to be frequently maintained. The rinse pond also appears shallow and susceptible to high water temperatures. Bordering the rinse pond is a sheer cliff to the east and active mining operations on all other sides. Operational and rinse ponds are constantly maintained and relocated as part of mining operations and are considered unlikely to support CRLF.

Based on the above, the likelihood of CRLF occurrence in the proposed expansion area is considered low. The portion of Rocky Canyon Creek and the steep and rocky ephemeral drainages occurring in the project site provide no suitable aquatic breeding habitat for CRLF. Further, habitat throughout the majority of the expansion area consists of steep slopes with dense chamise chaparral with little to no understory which provides low quality upland habitat for CRLF dispersal. However, there is potential for CRLF to utilize the Rocky Canyon Creek corridor for temporary dispersal, if present within the downstream reservoir, especially during periods of extended wet weather.

Western Spadefoot Toad (*Spea hammondii*), State Status – CSC

Western spadefoot toad is almost completely terrestrial, entering seasonal ponds only to breed. This species is rarely seen as it buries itself by burrowing underground with its hind legs emerging only after substantial rains to enter temporary breeding pools from January to May. Females may lay up to 500 eggs which typically hatch in 3 – 4 days. Tadpoles transform in 4 – 11 weeks and juveniles leave to breeding pools a few days after metamorphosis (Nafis, 2018a).

Western spadefoot toad has been documented within a five-mile radius of the project site (CDFW, 2018). Suitable breeding pools with adjacent sandy soils are present throughout the Salinas River corridor within five miles of the project area. Potentially suitable breeding habitat for this species may occur within the seasonal wetland/pond feature, although it is unknown whether the pond sustains sufficient hydroperiod to allow for metamorphosis. Soil conditions surrounding the pond are compact with very sparse small mammal burrows, soil fractures, or other upland refugium. No other potential breeding pools were observed during surveys in East Creek, South Ravine, or Rocky Canyon Creek. Based on the lack of suitable upland habitat surrounding the abandoned cattle pond, it is unlikely this species is present within the project area.

Sensitive Reptile Species

Blainville's Horned Lizard**,** State Status – CSC

This species typically occurs in the valleys, foothills, and semiarid mountains of western and southern California from sea level to 2,438 meters. This species inhabits grasslands, coniferous forests, woodlands, and chaparral, with open areas and patches of loose, sandy soil. It is frequently found near native ant hills. The breeding season is from May to September (Zeiner et al., 1988-1990e).

Blainville's horned lizard was observed in two areas of chamise chaparral within the expansion area and along an existing haul road bordering chaparral habitat (Figure 17). As such, this species is considered present throughout the chaparral community and immediate surroundings in the expansion area.

Northern California Legless Lizard (*Anniella pulchra*), State Status – CSC

Northern California legless lizard requires sandy or loose loamy soils within coastal dune scrub, coastal sage scrub, chaparral, woodland, riparian, or forest habitats. It requires cover such as logs, leaf litter, or rocks and will cover itself with loose soil. Relatively little is known about the specific behavior and ecology of this species, but it is thought to be a diurnal species that breeds between the months of March and July. It gives birth to live young in the early fall. This species occurs from Antioch in Contra Costa County south through the Coast, Transverse, and Peninsular Ranges, along the western edge of the Sierra Nevada, and in parts of the San Joaquin Valley and Mojave Desert to El Consuelo in Baja. Northern California legless lizard is known to occur at elevations that range from approximately sea level to 1,800 meters. Population declines have been attributed to agricultural development, sand mining, use of off-road recreational vehicles, and habitat loss through spread of invasive, non-native vegetation such as freeway iceplant (*Carpobrotus edulis*) (Zeiner et al., 1988-1990f). This species has been documented within five miles of the survey area (CDFW, 2018).

Northern California legless lizard was not discovered during survey efforts, although detection of this species is difficult as they often occur within the thick duff layer below vegetation and quickly retreat underground when disturbed. Based on the presence of suitable habitat (i.e., thick duff) within the woodland and chaparral portions of the expansion area and documented occurrences within a five-mile radius, there is moderate potential for this species to occur where suitable cover exists.

Two-striped Gartersnake (*Thamnophis hammondii*), State Status – CSC

Two-striped gartersnake is primarily an aquatic species which forages for food in and under water. Forage consists of tadpoles, new larvae, small frogs, fish, and occasionally fish eggs. Generally, this species is found around pools, creeks, cattle tanks, and other water sources often in rocky areas. The species range occurs continuously from Monterey County mostly west of the Coast Ranges south to northern Baja California at elevations from sea level to 2,130 meters (Nafis, 2018b).

Although two-striped gartersnake was not identified in the nine-quad search or CNDDB query, suitable habitat for this species is present within the riparian corridor of Rocky Canyon Creek within proximity to the

expansion area. Specifically, the reservoir located downstream of the project area as well as emergent wetlands at the upper limits of the reservoir likely provide suitable forage and cover for this species. However, habitat within the upper limits of Rocky Canyon Creek immediately adjacent to the project area, as well as the ephemeral drainages on site, is likely suboptimal based on a lack of perennial water supporting juvenile fish. Furthermore, the lack of breeding habitat for amphibians in the project area is also likely to reduce potential prey availability such as larvae and tadpoles. Based on the lack of perennial water supporting prey within the project area, the potential for this species to occur within the Rocky Canyon Creek corridor and associated drainages is considered low. Further, no impacts are anticipated to the creek corridor or associate drainages and no other suitable habitat was identified in the expansion area.

Western Pond Turtle (*Actinemys marmorata*), State Status - CSC

Western pond turtles are commonly found in a variety of freshwater aquatic habitats including ponds, lakes, rivers, streams, and marshes. Preferentially, this species utilizes deeper pools with abundant vegetation and muddy bottoms where it can burrow in the mud to hibernate during winter months or aestivate during summer droughts. Nest sites are located in uplands, typically within 300 feet of aquatic habitat, but have been documented up to 1,500 feet from aquatic habitat. Pond turtles are omnivorous, utilizing food sources such as aquatic plants, invertebrates, frog eggs, crayfish, and occasionally fish. Historically, this species was distributed along the entire west coast from British Columbia to Baja California but has become extirpated in much of its southern range as well as highly fragmented north of California (Nafis, 2018c).

Western pond turtle has been documented within the reservoir located approximately 0.50 mile downstream of the project site in Rocky Canyon Creek. Although no pool habitat was observed within the project limits in Rocky Canyon Creek, this species may utilize the riparian corridor as a dispersal corridor. Uplands surrounding Rocky Canyon Creek consists of steep slopes with dense chamise chaparral habitat and highly compacted soils which may not be suitable for nesting. Further, no suitable pool habitat was observed within any of the other ephemeral water features in the project area. Based on the presence of western pond turtle in the downstream reservoir and lack of barriers for movement, there is moderate potential for this species to occur within the Rocky Canyon Creek corridor. Due to lack of suitable habitat features outside the creek corridor, it is considered unlikely this species would occur within the upland areas of the expansion area.

Sensitive Avian Species

Golden Eagle**,** State Status – Fully Protected

The golden eagle is designated as a Fully Protected species by the CDFW. Fully Protected species may not be taken under any circumstances, and authorization for take may not be granted. The golden eagle is also protected under the federal Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. Golden eagles typically occur in semi-open and open habitats and are most common in mountainous areas with large trees for nesting and open hunting grounds where prey are abundant (Zeiner et al., 1988-1990g).

Golden eagles were observed during the surveys foraging over the expansion area and roosting in an oak tree adjacent to the easterly portion of the property. Oak woodlands provide suitable nest trees; however, no nest sites or remnant stick nests of suitable size for this species were noted. Consequently, due to suitable habitat and observations of the species in the project vicinity there is high potential for golden eagle to occur within the expansion area and overall survey area.

Oak Titmouse (*Baeolophus inornatus*), State Status – Special Animal – Nesting

Oak titmouse is an oak woodland obligate, nesting in cavities of oak trees. It is a common species in oak woodlands on the central coast but is tracked by the CDFW due to state-wide losses of oak woodland habitat (Zeiner et al., 1988-1990h).

Although not identified in the nine-quad search or documented within a five-mile radius of the survey area (CDFW, 2018), oak woodlands within the expansion area and overall survey area provide highly suitable nesting habitat for this species. Due to common occurrences of this species in the central coast area and suitable habitat on site, oak titmouse has moderate potential to occur in the expansion area and overall survey area among oak woodlands.

White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*), State Status – Fully Protected – Nesting

White-tailed kites require coastal and valley lowlands along with herbaceous open space habitats, often near water sources. Kites will nest in various types of trees including dense oaks, willows, pines, or other tree stands. Nests are placed atop trees at least 6 to 20 meters above the ground and are made from sticks, twigs, or other ground litter. This species forages for small mammals during long distance flights over a wide variety of terrain including grasslands, meadows, and farmlands. Kites hover above the ground at 30 meters then descend onto prey with wings held high. Kites spend the majority of time perched in roosting and nesting sites that are adjacent or close to foraging habitats. This species' current range in California consists of what is often referred to as cismontane California. This range includes lands west of the Cascade-Sierra Nevada-Peninsular Ranges. Kite nesting season is typically from February to October with a peak from May to August (Zeiner et al., 1988-1990i).

This species has not previously been documented within a five-mile radius of the project site (CDFW, 2018) and was not observed during surveys. However, oak woodlands throughout the expansion area as well the riparian corridor associated with Rocky Canyon Creek provide nesting opportunity for this species. Further, open grassland habitat areas for foraging are located north and west of the proposed expansion area. Consequently, white-tailed kite has moderate potential to occur within oak woodlands, especially near drainage corridors of the expansion area and the overall survey area.

Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), State Status – CSC – Nesting

Typical habitat for loggerhead shrike includes open woodlands with short vegetation and shrubs or trees, particularly those with spines or thorns. Often, this species can be seen along mowed roadsides with barbed wire fence lines within open habitat areas. Forage occurs by impaling prey items on spines of vegetation or fence barbs. A wide variety of prey items are consumed including insects, amphibians, reptiles, and other birds. Nest sites are generally built in thorny vegetation, trees, shrubs, and even tumbleweeds from about 2.5 to 4 feet above the ground (Zeiner et al., 1988-1990j).

This species was identified in the nine-quad search but has not been documented within a five-mile radius of the survey area (CDFW, 2018) or discovered during on-site surveys. Suitable habitat for this species was identified in the understory of oak woodlands and chamise chaparral. Therefore, due to regional occurrences and suitable habitat this species has moderate potential to occur within the expansion area and overall survey area.

Purple Martin (*Progne subis*), State Status – CSC – Nesting

Purple martin use low-elevation wooded habitats such as valley foothill, montane hardwood conifer and riparian forests. Nesting usually occurs in cavities of tall, old trees as well as isolated tree snags or woodland between April and August. Less common nest locations include culverts and under bridges. During migration,

purple martins can be found in grasslands, wet meadows, and freshwater emergent wetland areas. Forage is comprised of gliding insects, ants, and other ground insects. Declines in this species have been attributed to loss of riparian habitat, removal of snags, and nest cavity competition from European starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) and house sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) (Zeiner et al., 1988-1990k).

This species has not been documented within five miles of the survey area and was not detected during survey efforts. Suitable nesting habitat is present for purple martin within the Rocky Canyon Creek riparian corridor. Specifically, western sycamore trees within the corridor provide suitable nesting cavities. No suitable habitat for this species was found outside of the Rocky Canyon Creek riparian corridor. Consequently, this species has moderate potential to occur within the overall survey area but is not likely to occur in the proposed expansion area due to a lack of suitable nesting habitat.

Sensitive Insect Species

Crotch's bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*); State Candidate Endangered (SCE)

Crotch's bumble bee inhabits open grassland and scrub habitats primarily in California, from Sacramento south into Mexico, and from the coast east into Nevada. Bumble bee colonies are annual, with the queen mating in the fall before overwintering alone starting in October. In the spring, the queen emerges and establishes a new colony by producing female workers and male drones. Not much is known about Crotch's bumble bee overwintering sites (Hatfield et al. 2020). Generally, bumble bees overwinter in soft, disturbed soil (Goulson 2010) or under leaf litter or other debris (Williams et al. 2014). Queens emerge between February and April (Thorp et al. 2010) and establish a colony. Colonies are usually underground in abandoned holes made by ground squirrels, mice, and rats, or occasionally abandoned bird nests (Osborne et al. 2008). However, bumble bee may also nest aboveground in tufts of grass or cavities in downed wood, rock walls, or brush piles. Crotch's bumble bee is a generalist forager, feeding on a variety of flowering plants (Hatfield et al. 2020). Like other bumble bees, this species feeds on both nectar and pollen. Select food plant genera include Fabaceae, Apocynaceae, Asteraceae, Lamiaceae, and Boraginaceae (Hatfield et al. 2020). Threats to this species include loss of habitat due to agriculture and development and degradation of habitat due to invasive species, livestock grazing, herbicide use, and decreases in small mammal population due to poisoning.

In September 2022, Crotch's bumble bee (Bombus crotchii), western bumble bee (Bombus occidentalis), Franklin's bumble bee (Bombus franklini) and Suckley's cuckoo bumble bee (Bombus suckleyi) became the first insect species to become candidates for listing under CESA. They are protected by the same take prohibitions given to species listed as endangered and threatened under CESA. On August 19, 2026, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) published comprehensive guidelines that are intended to assist CDFW staff, project proponents and others in understanding where and when the four bumble bee species that are candidates for listing under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) may be present on the landscape and provide examples of measures that may help avoid or minimize impacts to them. The new guidelines are non-regulatory and provided for informational purposes only. They do not establish legal requirements, CDFW policy or mandatory avoidance and minimization measures, nor does it replace project-specific review or applicable federal, state or local laws and regulations.

Special-status Plant Species

Comprehensive botanical surveys were conducted within the entire proposed project area, which coincided with the peak and late blooming periods for a majority of regionally occurring specialstatus botanical species. Updated background research was conducted by SWCA in June 2025, and the target list was revised to include

the original 11 species and one additional species that was not listed and/or included within the regional search at the time the BRA was prepared, for a total of 12 special-status plant species with potential to occur on-site.

No new plant taxa were observed during the 2025 survey effort. An inventory of all plant species observed within the BSA can be found in the BRA. One special-status plant species, La Panza mariposa lily, was observed in multiple locations within the chamise chaparral habitat during the May 2016 survey efforts. Due to drier than normal climatic conditions, this species was not observed during the 2025 survey effort even though the survey was appropriately timed for this species. However, based on the lack of observed changes to habitat and site conditions, this species is expected to still be present in the chaparral habitat on-site.

Based on a lack of observed changes to the habitat types/conditions between 2016/2017 and 2025, all special-status plant species discussed and assessed in the BRA are still applicable. The following paragraphs provide a description of the 12 special-status botanical species that have the potential to occur on site.

La Panza Mariposa Lily (*Calochortus simulans*) CRPR 1B.3

La Panza mariposa lily is a perennial herb that is endemic to California. This species typically occurs in sandy, often granitic, chaparral, grassland, and closed-cone coniferous forests at elevations up to 1,150 meters. The typical blooming period for this species is April to June (Jepson Flora Project, 2018). Documented threats to this species include grazing and development, as well as recreational activities and road maintenance (CNPS, 2018). This species was observed in multiple locations within chamise chaparral on site during the May 2016 survey efforts (Figure 17).

Dwarf Calycadenia (*Calycadenia villosa*), CRPR 1B.1

Dwarf calycadenia is an annual herb that is endemic to California. It is known to occur along the outer South Coast Ranges. This species typically occurs on dry and rocky hills, ridges, grasslands, and openings in foothill woodland. It has been documented at elevations between 250 to 850 meters. The typical blooming period is May to September (Jepson Flora Project, 2018). Documented threats to this species include urbanization, vehicles, grazing, alteration of fire regimes, and non-native plants (CNPS, 2018). According to CNDDB, the nearest documented occurrence was recorded in 1998 on Creston Road within oak woodland on hard, rocky soils approximately six miles from the survey area (CDFW, 2018). This species was not observed during survey efforts. Based on a lack of detection during appropriately timed botanical surveys, this species is not expected to occur.

San Luis Obispo Owl's-clover (*Castilleja densiflora* subsp. *obispoensis*), CRPR 1B.2

San Luis Obispo owl's-clover is an annual herb that is endemic to San Luis Obispo County. Specifically, it is known to occur mostly in coastal areas along the Outer South Coast Ranges from just south of Ragged Point to Avila Beach, with several populations occurring in the Irish Hills. This species typically occurs in coastal grasslands at elevations up to 400 meters, and may be somewhat tolerant of disturbance. The typical blooming period is from March to June (Jepson Flora Project, 2018). Documented threats to this species include development and grazing (CNPS, 2018). According to CNDDB the nearest documented occurrence was recorded in 2005 less than one mile from the survey area on the south side of Rocky Canyon Road in annual grassland habitat with granitic soil (CDFW, 2018). This species was not observed during survey efforts. Based on a lack of detection during appropriately timed botanical surveys, this species is not expected to occur.

Brewer's Spineflower (*Chorizanthe breweri*), CRPR 1B.3

Brewer's spineflower is an annual herb that is endemic to California. This species typically occurs on rocky or gravelly soils (sometimes serpentine) in a variety of dry habitats at elevations between 60 and 800 meters.

The typical blooming period for this species is March through July (Jepson Flora Project, 2018). Documented threats to this species include pipeline construction with other possible threats including road construction and maintenance (CNPS, 2018). According to CNDDB, the nearest documented occurrence of this species was recorded in 1979 southeast of eagle peak along the north side of Kathleen Valley approximately five miles southwest of the survey area (CDFW, 2018). This species was not detected during survey efforts. Based on a lack of detection during appropriately timed botanical surveys, this species is not expected to occur.

Douglas' Spineflower (*Chorizanthe douglasii*)**,** CRPR 4.3

Douglas' spineflower is an annual herb that is endemic to California. This species typically occurs in sandy or gravelly soils at elevations between 300 and 1,600 meters. The typical blooming period for this species is April through July (Jepson Flora Project, 2018). The nearest documented occurrence of this species is a 1989 occurrence along the southeast facing slopes above Highway 58 approximately three miles from the survey area (CCH, 2018). This species was not detected during survey efforts. Based on a lack of detection during appropriately timed botanical surveys, this species is not expected to occur.

Straight-awned Spineflower (*Chorizanthe rectispina*), CRPR 1B.3

Straight-awned spineflower is an annual herb that is endemic to the Outer South Coast Ranges, particularly in south Monterey and San Luis Obispo Counties. This species typically occurs in sand or gravel soils in a variety of dry and exposed habitats at elevations between 200 and 600 meters. The typical blooming period for this species is May through July (Jepson Flora Project, 2018). Known threats to this species are not well documented, but may include development and non-native plants. According to CNDDB, the nearest documented occurrence was recorded in 1959 on hills along Santa Barbara Road in Atascadero approximately three miles southeast of the survey area (CDFW, 2018). This species was not detected during survey efforts. Based on a lack of detection during appropriately timed botanical surveys and nearby occurrence details, this species is not expected to occur.

Yellow-flowered Eriastrum (*Eriastrum luteum)*, CRPR 1B.2

Yellow-flowered eriastrum is an annual herb that is endemic to California. It is known to occur along the inner South Coast Ranges in San Luis Obispo and Monterey Counties. This species typically occurs on drying slopes in sandy or gravelly soils in association with chaparral and woodland habitats. This species has been documented at elevations up to 1,000 meters. The typical blooming period for this species is from May to June (Jepson Flora Project, 2018). Documented threats to this species include vehicles, grazing, and possibly development (CNPS, 2018). The nearest documented occurrence of this species is located approximately 3.5 miles west of the survey area (CCH, 2018). This species was not detected during survey efforts. Based on a lack of detection during appropriately timed botanical surveys, this species is not expected to occur.

Mesa Horkelia (*Horkelia cuneata* var. *puberula*)**,** CRPR 1B.1

Mesa horkelia is a perennial herb that is known from the Outer South Coast Ranges, as well as areas in the South Coast and Peninsular Ranges. This species typically occurs on dry, sandy soils in coastal chaparral habitat at elevations between 70 and 870 meters. The typical blooming period for this species is March to July (Jepson Flora Project, 2018). Known threats to this species are not well documented, but may include habitat conversion. According to CNDDB, the nearest documented occurrence of this species was recorded in 1959 in Atascadero approximately three miles east of the survey area (CDFW, 2018). This species was not observed during survey efforts. Based on a lack of detection during appropriately timed botanical surveys and nearby occurrence details, this species is not expected to occur.

Spring Lessingia (*Lessingia tenuis*), CRPR 4.3

Spring lessingia is an annual herb that is endemic to California with populations scattered throughout the Inner and Outer South Coast Ranges, the inner Western Transverse Ranges, and portions of the San Francisco Bay Area. This species typically occurs in openings in chaparral and woodland habitat at elevations between 50 and 2,200 meters. The typical blooming period for this species is May through July (Jepson Flora Project, 2018). The nearest documented occurrence of this species is located approximately 0.75 mile east of the survey area (CCH, 2018). This species was not observed during survey efforts. Based on a lack of

detection during appropriately timed botanical surveys, this species is not expected to occur.

Jones' Bush-mallow (*Malacothamnus jonesii*), CRPR 4.3

Jones' bush-mallow is a perennial shrub that is endemic to California. This species typically occurs in open chaparral in foothill woodland at elevations between 250 and 830 meters. The typical blooming period for this species is May through July (Jepson Flora Project, 2018). Several documented occurrences from 1939 to 2002 are located within five miles of the survey area (CCH, 2018). This species was not detected during survey efforts. Based on a lack of detection during appropriately timed botanical surveys, this species is not expected to occur.

California Spineflower (*Mucronea californica*), CRPR 4.2

California spineflower is an annual herb that is endemic to California. This species typically occurs in sandy soils in chaparral and coastal scrub habitats at elevations up to 1,000 meters. The typical blooming period for this species is March through August (Jepson Flora Project, 2018). Documented threats to this species include aggregate mining, vehicles, flood control modification, urbanization, and water percolation projects (CNPS, 2018). The nearest documented occurrence of this species is from 1958, approximately 3.4 miles west of the survey area (CCH, 2018). This species was not observed during survey efforts. Based on a lack of detection during appropriately timed botanical surveys and nearby occurrence details; this species is not expected to occur.

Santa Lucia Horkelia

Santa Lucia horkelia is a perennial herb that is known to occur in the Outer South Coast Ranges. This species occurs in association with sandy/granitic meadow edges, seasonal streambeds in chaparral, and foothill-pine woodland habitats at elevations ranging from 300 to 3,900 feet (350–1,900 meters). The typical blooming period is from June to September (Jepson Flora Project 2025). Documented threats to this species include recreational vehicles (CNPS 2025a).

According to Consortium of California Herbaria Portal 2 (CCH2; CCH 2025), the nearest documented occurrence of this species is approximately 3.8 miles southeast of the BSA. Suitable habitat for this species is present on-site within the chaparral and woodland habitats; however, no *Horkelia* spp. were observed within the BSA during the appropriately timed surveys in 2016/2017 or 2025. As such, this species is not expected to occur within the project area.

Critical Habitats and Special Status Natural Communities

Oak Woodlands

Oak woodlands are considered a sensitive resource by the state of the California and impacts must be included in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review process. Specifically, oaks and oak woodlands are regulated under California Public Resources Code 21083.4 and County of San Luis Obispo Oak

Woodland Ordinance No. 3346. Oak woodland communities, mapped as foothill woodland in this BRA, are present within the survey area.

A comprehensive tree inventory was completed as a part of survey efforts and included documenting all native trees within the proposed Phase 3 through Phase 5 expansion area. A total of 485 oak trees with a DBH of five inches or greater were documented over an area totaling 19.3 acres within the survey area. Of the 19.3 acres and 485 oak trees, 12.3 acres and 371 oak trees occur within the proposed Phase 3 through Phase 5 expansion area (Figures 18 and 19).

An updated oak tree inventory was not conducted as a part of the 2025 survey effort; however, based on a lack of observed changes in site conditions and habitat, this resource is likely similar to what was assessed in 2016/2017.

Waters and Wetlands

As noted previously, three drainages occur within the survey area (Rocky Canyon Creek, East Creek, and South Ravine) that were identified as jurisdictional waters of the state and U.S. due to the presence of a well-defined bed and bank, including evidence of OHWM and a significant. nexus to navigable waters of the U.S. (i.e., the Pacific Ocean via the Salinas River). For the purposes of the BRA and jurisdictional determination, the 100-year floodplain was used as a basis for determining the limits of waters of the State (see Appendix B of the 2017 BRA). In addition, one seasonal wetland was identified, which exhibited all three parameters to be considered a federal wetland (i.e., hydrology, hydrophytic vegetation, and hydric soils), as determined during a formal wetland delineation (see Appendix E of the 2017 BRA).

Based on updated background literature review, no changes to USFWS designated critical habitat or documented CDFW Sensitive Natural Communities were noted. In addition, during the June 2025 survey, SWCA did not observe notable changes to the jurisdictional aquatic habitat (Rocky Canyon Creek, USGS blue line drainage, and unnamed ephemeral drainage) or distribution of the one sensitive habitat (foothill woodland) identified on-site. The sensitive habitats observed during the June 2025 survey are consistent with those previously identified in the BRA.

Federal waters and wetlands are regulated by the Corps and may be subject to Section 404 permitting per the CWA, if impacted. State waters and wetlands are regulated by the RWQCB and CDFW pursuant to Section 401 of the CWA and Section 1600 of the Fish and Game Code, respectively. The proposed project has been designed to avoid direct impacts to jurisdictional drainage features and potential wetlands.

Discussion

(a) *Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?*

The proposed project has a potential to directly and/or indirectly impact nine special-status wildlife species, in addition to migratory nesting birds. Indirect impacts could result from increased construction noise, harassment, dust emissions, and reduction of suitable nesting and/or foraging habitat. There is also potential for direct impacts to wildlife including crushing or trampling by construction equipment.

Additionally, expanded mining activities are expected to directly impact one special-status plant species. Further, there is a potential to directly and/or indirectly impact individual oak trees and oak [foothill] woodland habitat, as well as federal/state waters and wetlands.

As designed, no direct impacts to federal or state waters and wetlands are anticipated from proposed expansion activities. However, there is potential for secondary impacts to waters and wetlands from silt and sediment deposition. The total area of disturbance is estimated to be 81.3 acres, including portions of existing anthropogenic/ruderal areas (i.e., existing mining areas).

Special-Status Plants

One special-status plant species, La Panza mariposa lily, was documented within the 2017 survey area in isolated locations within chaparral habitat. Direct impacts to this species will occur through direct removal of mature individuals and seed bank during project implementation. Indirect impacts include removal occupied and potential habitat (i.e., chaparral). Though not observed during appropriately timed surveys in 2025, this species is expected to still be present in the chaparral habitat on-site. No additional special-status plant species were observed during the 2025 survey. Based on a lack of observed changes in site conditions or habitat, no other special-status plant species are expected to occur on-site. No changes to the project description are proposed.

With implementation of mitigation measures BIO-3 and BIO-4, project impacts to special status plant species are considered *less than significant with mitigation*.

Special Status Wildlife

Direct and indirect impacts to special-status mammals may occur as a result of project activities. Specifically, if present, the proposed project could impact southwestern pond turtle, Northern California legless lizard, pallid bat, Crotch's bumble bee, Yuma myotis, coast horned lizard, California red-legged frog, and western spadefoot. If special-status wildlife species are present at the time of construction, they may be vulnerable to vehicle strikes and crushing by equipment. Indirect impacts include noise disturbance from construction equipment and deterring movement patterns of wildlife caused by construction disturbances.

Special-status Mammals

No changes to the project description are proposed. As such, anticipated direct and/or indirect impacts to these species are consistent with the analysis provided in the 2017 BRA.

Numerous woodrat nests were discovered within chaparral and oak woodland habitat during field survey efforts. Based on observation of numerous woodrat houses and the project location occurring within the species range, Monterey dusky-footed woodrat may be present.

With implementation of mitigation measure BIO-5, project impacts to mammal species are considered *less than significant with mitigation*.

Within the expansion area, smaller structured oak trees and chaparral habitats are not likely to provide suitable roosting habitat for special-status bat species. Furthermore, no rock outcrops or associated crevices were noted which could provide a temperature controlled, protective environment for bat roosting. Suitable cavities for roosting were noted within mature riparian trees and tree snags associated with Rocky Canyon Creek located adjacent to the proposed expansion area. Consequently, no direct or indirect impacts to bat species are expected due to a lack of ideal roost habitat in the expansion area and avoidance of the Rocky Canyon Creek corridor.

Special-status Amphibians

No suitable breeding habitat and/or perennial waters sources for CRLF were observed within the proposed expansion area during the surveys. However, suitable habitat for CRLF is present within the Rocky Canyon Creek corridor, especially downstream of the project area where perennial water is available and suitable breeding habitat exists. The riparian corridor also provides a potential dispersal corridor for CRLF from suitable breeding locations downstream to enter the upper limits of Rocky Canyon Creek adjacent to the project site. Consequently, there is potential, however low, for transient CRLF to occur within the upper limits of the Rocky Canyon Creek riparian corridor and adjacent areas especially during wet conditions. Protection of the riparian corridor associated with Rocky Canyon Creek including all buffer areas is likely to avoid direct and indirect impacts to CRLF if present during project operations.

Western spadefoot toad may occur in terraces of the Salinas River within five miles of the project area but are not expected to occur in the project area due a lack of breeding habitat and adjacent upland refugium habitat. Consequently, no impacts to western spadefoot toad are expected as result of project implementation and *no impacts* will occur.

Special-status Reptiles

Direct and indirect impacts may occur to Blainville's horned lizard and northern California legless lizard as a result of project activities. Blainville's horned lizard species were observed in two locations within chaparral habitat in the northeastern portion of the survey area. Suitable habitat for this species is present in and surrounding the chaparral habitat on site. Northern California legless lizard was not observed during survey efforts; however, this species is typically difficult to detect. Suitable habitat for northern California legless lizard is present within the oak woodland portions of the survey area. Direct impacts to these species may occur as a result of trampling and/or crushing by heavy equipment during vegetation removal and mining activities. Indirect impacts to this species may occur due to habitat loss or construction-related disturbances such as increased noise and vibrations.

Suitable habitat for two-striped gartersnake and western pond turtle is present in and around the Rocky Canyon Creek reservoir downstream of the project area. These species may utilize the riparian corridor to enter the upper limits of Rocky Canyon Creek within proximity to the project area. Oak woodlands and scrub communities outside the riparian corridor are not likely to be occupied by two-striped gartersnake due to a lack of protective cover and typical prey items.

Further, steep terrain and upland soil conditions are not likely suitable for western pond turtle nesting. As such, no impacts to these species are expected due to lack of suitable habitat within the expansion area. Further, protection of the riparian corridor associated with Rocky Canyon Creek is likely to avoid direct and indirect impacts these species if present and moving through the corridor.

With implementation of mitigation measure BIO-6, project impacts to reptile species are considered *less than significant with mitigation*.

Special Status Insects

Crotch's bumble bee

According to CNDDB records (CDFW 2025), the nearest occurrence of Crotch's bumble bee is approximately 2.5 miles west of the project site. Suitable foraging and nesting habitat is present within the project site. As such, there is potential for this species to occur on-site. With implementation of mitigation measure BIO-16, impacts to special status insect species are considered *less than significant with mitigation*.

Based on the preceding analysis, project impacts to listed wildlife species are considered *less than significant with mitigation*.

(b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?

The increased mining areas have been modified considerably to avoid direct and indirect impacts to waters and wetlands on site. Specifically, all project activities will maintain a 50-foot buffer from Rocky Canyon Creek consistent with the existing buffer requirements. Similarly, all project activities are proposed outside of the 100-year floodplain of both South Ravine and East Creek. As such, the proposed project is not expected to directly impact federal or state waters and wetlands or mixed riparian woodland habitat on site. However, there is still a potential for indirect impacts via silt and sedimentation. With implementation of mitigation measure BIO-12, project impacts to wetlands and riparian resources are considered *less than significant*.

If project plans are altered, resulting in direct impacts to the ephemeral drainages or wetland, the owner would be responsible for obtaining all necessary agency permits with jurisdiction over those project areas (i.e., CDFW, Corps, and RWQCB).

(c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

As discussed above under item b., the increased mining areas have been modified considerably to avoid direct and indirect impacts to waters and wetlands on site. However, there is still a potential for indirect impacts via silt and sedimentation. With implementation of mitigation measure BIO-12, project impacts to wetlands and riparian resources are considered *less than significant*.

(d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?

Wildlife Corridors

Maintaining connectivity between areas of suitable habitat is critical for dispersal, migration, foraging, and genetic health of plant and wildlife species. Wildlife movement corridors can be both large and

small scale. The project site is not located within an Essential Connectivity Area, as mapped in the *California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project: A Strategy for Conserving a Connected California* (CDFW, 2010). The project site is located in a semi-rural area of Atascadero, near the outskirts of the City limits, with low density residential and high-density agricultural parcels nearby (i.e., within one mile). The project site is situated within a pocket of land that has remained undeveloped with minimal barriers to restrict wildlife movement through the area.

Expansion of mining activities is likely to temporarily detour use of some upland travel routes by reduction in protective cover and overall land alterations. However, protection of Rocky Canyon Creek and other drainages on site, would allow wildlife to continue to utilize these corridors for movement through the expansion area. Further, proposed future habitat reclamation activities following mining are expected to restore migration corridors throughout the project site overtime.

During the June 2025 survey, the biologists noted that the site conditions are consistent with what was identified in the 2017 BRA. Nonetheless, the Project may temporarily introduce significant features that would be expected to affect wildlife movement through surrounding natural habitats. With implementation of mitigation measure BIO-13 impacts to wildlife movement are considered *less than significant with mitigation*.

Migratory Nesting Birds and Sensitive Avian Species
The federal MBTA and the Convention for the Protection of Migratory Birds and Animals, as well as agreements between the United States and Canada and the United States and Mexico, respectively, afford protection for migratory birds by making it unlawful to collect, sell, pursue, hunt, or kill native migratory birds, their eggs, nests, or any parts thereof. Certain game birds have been omitted from this protection. The laws were adopted to eliminate the commercial market for migratory bird feathers and parts, especially those of larger raptors and other birds of prey.

No changes to the project description are proposed as a result of the 2025 surveys. As such anticipated direct and/or indirect impacts to these species are consistent with the analysis provided in the 2017 BRA. Suitable nesting habitat is provided by the diverse communities on site. Migratory birds were observed nesting during field surveys, and the likelihood of the presence of nesting birds during the typical avian breeding season is considered very high.

Direct and indirect impacts to golden eagles, oak titmouse, white-tailed kite, loggerhead shrike, or other bird species are most likely to occur if habitat modification activities occur during the typical avian nesting season, generally February 1 through September 15, and as early as January for golden eagles. Direct impacts may include disturbance to nest structures themselves during vegetation removal or nest abandonment. Indirect impacts may also occur due to habitat loss (e.g., removal of suitable nesting trees) or construction-related disturbances that may deter nesting behaviors.

Suitable nesting habitat for purple martin is limited to mature riparian trees and tree snags within the Rocky Canyon Creek corridor. No impacts to vegetation within the corridor are proposed and consequently, no direct impacts to purple martin are expected. Indirect impacts may occur if construction related disturbances in expansion areas adjacent to the corridor disrupt nesting behaviors. Although unlikely, based on expansion area setbacks from the riparian corridor, there is potential to disrupt nesting behaviors of purple martin during project implementation. With implementation of mitigation measures BIO-7 and BIO-8, project impacts to migratory and nesting birds are considered *less than significant*.

(e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

Up to 371 mature oak trees within 12.3 acres of foothill woodland (oak woodland) habitat may be impacted as a result of proposed project activities. Direct impacts are anticipated as a result of tree removal and vegetation clearing to prepare for mining activities. Specifically, the following direct impacts are expected based on the phased approach:

- Phase 3 – 93 oaks and 5.6 acres of foothill woodland removed
- Phase 4 – 158 oaks and 3.4 acres of foothill woodland removed
- Phase 5 – 120 oaks and 3.3 acres of foothill woodland removed

In addition, trees and habitat immediately adjacent to the project site may be indirectly impacted as a result of the proposed project. Specifically, trimming of limbs, overland travel within the critical root zone of trees, dust emissions, and edge effects associated with removal of contiguous canopy may result in indirect impacts to individual oak trees. Per the 2017 Sudden Oak Death (SOD) BLITZ, no positive samples of the fungal pathogen SOD (Phytophthora ramorum) have been documented in the County (CNPS, 2017). Further, no California bay laurel trees (Umbellularia californica), the pathogen host plant, were observed during survey efforts. Based on the above, it is unlikely that vegetation removal and grading will result in the spread of SOD within existing and/or adjacent oak woodland communities.

Oak woodlands are regulated under the State of California PRC 21083.4 for the purposes of determining significant impacts in compliance with the CEQA review process and the County Oak Woodland Ordinance (Title 22 of the County Code Chapter 22.58 [Ordinance No. 3346]) (County of San Luis Obispo, 2017). According to the County Oak Woodland Ordinance, the owner would be required to apply for a minor use permit for clearcutting of oak woodlands of one to three acres and a CUP for clear-cutting of more than three acres of oak woodland over a 10-year period. If permitted, the owner would be required to prepare and submit for approval an oak woodland management plan, which has a limit on the cumulative amount of clear-cutting allowed as being no greater than five percent of the site's oak woodland canopy.

With implementation of mitigation measures BIO-10 and BIO-11, project impacts to oak woodlands are considered *less than significant*.

(f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?

The project is not located within an area subject to an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan. Therefore, the project would not conflict with the provisions of an adopted plan and there would be *no impact.*

Conclusion

The project may adversely impact listed plant and animal species. Upon implementation of mitigation measures BIO-1 through BIO-16 potential impacts to biological resources would be *less than significant*.

Mitigation

BIO-1 Environmental Awareness Training Program. An environmental awareness training program shall be developed for the Rocky Canyon Quarry Expansion Project by a qualified biologist familiar with the sensitive resources on site. The environmental training program shall be presented to all construction personnel prior to the start of project activities. The environmental training program shall include an overview of specialstatus species and sensitive resources with potential to occur on the project site, habitat requirements, and their protection status with emphasis on the Rocky Canyon Creek riparian corridor. In addition, the training will discuss the avoidance and minimization measures that shall be implemented to avoid significant impacts to biological resources, biological information regarding natural communities of the project site, wildlife species likely to be encountered, and revegetation/reclamation efforts and requirements. A training signature page will be completed by all personnel who have received the training and the log will be available for annual Surface Mining and Reclamation Act inspection.

BIO-2 Operations and Site Maintenance. The following general measures are recommended to minimize impacts during active construction:

- The use of heavy equipment and vehicles shall be limited to the proposed project limits and defined staging areas/access points. The boundaries of each work area shall be clearly defined and marked with high visibility fencing or similar method to avoid disturbance of adjacent habitat areas. No work shall occur outside these designated limits.

- Secondary containment such as drip pans shall be used to prevent equipment leaks and spills of potential contaminants from impacting soils or surface waters.

- Washing of concrete, paint, or equipment, and refueling and maintenance of equipment shall occur only in designated areas. Appropriate containment methods shall be employed in designated staging areas. Additionally, spill kits shall be available at staging areas and personnel shall be trained in proper use of the kits to minimize impacts associated with inadvertent spills.

- Construction equipment shall be inspected and maintained by the operator regularly to ensure that equipment is in good working order and no fuel or lubricant leaks are present.

BIO-3 Mitigation of Impacts to La Panza Mariposa Lily. La Panza mariposa lily has been detected within the expansion area and is also likely to occur in the surrounding chamise chaparral habitat. To protect suitable habitat for this species outside of the expansion area, high visibility fencing or other clear delineation fencing shall be installed and maintained at project disturbance limits, as described in BIO Measure 2, above. In addition, it is likely that La Panza mariposa lily is present in the adjacent undisturbed chaparral habitat located within the perimeter lands on the property. As such, the following measures shall be implemented to offset impacts to La Panza mariposa lily:

1. To the maximum extent feasible, impacts to La Panza lily shall be avoided and minimized. Any mapped individuals and/or populations located within 50 feet of the proposed mining areas are to be avoided and protected and shall be clearly fenced or flagged prior to ground disturbance to avoid inadvertent impacts.

2. The topsoil associated with all suitable habitat for La Panza mariposa that will be impacted shall be salvaged in accordance with the criteria set forth in BIO-4 prior to initial ground disturbing activities and stored separately according to specifications provided in the approved *Reclamation Plan* and any subsequent amendments.

3. Prior to the onset of ground disturbing activities associated with Phase 3, a mitigation plan for La Panza mariposa lily shall be prepared and submitted for approval to the County. The mitigation plan shall include the following details, at a minimum

    a. The objective of the plan and who is responsible for implementation.

    b. A description of anticipated impacts, proposed mitigation ratios, and where proposed mitigation will be implemented.

    c. The plan shall include the establishment of a permanent conservation easement of approximately 11.5 acres of suitable habitat for La Panza mariposa lily located outside of the 10-phase mining area as shown on Figure 20 of the 2025 BRA. Preservation and protection of this habitat will also serve to protect suitable habitat for special-status wildlife and help preserve wildlife corridors and habitat connectivity. It is expected that the preserved habitat supports similar biotic diversity of special-status and common species as the proposed expansion area.

    d. A description of the proposed planting and restoration methods and how they will be implemented. As appropriate, these measures will include:

        1. A detailed description of topsoil salvage procedures and long-term soil stockpile storage methods and the removal of non-native species;

        2. Methods and timing of any proposed seed collection and storage;

        3. Locations and methods for restoration, replanting, and/or reseeding (e.g., decompaction, recontouring, scarification, mulching, hand broadcasting, hydroseeding, and weed control); and

        4. Short- and/or long-term monitoring protocols and/or performance standards by which success of mitigation can be measured.

BIO-4 Special-status Plants. The applicant will ensure the proper collection, storage, and preservation of topsoil for reclamation purposes as described in the *Reclamation Plan* (Holland, 2014) and all subsequent plan amendments. Preservation of the existing seed bank will not only assist in reclamation efforts including the re-establishment of a genetically similar chaparral community but will be essential to preserving and re-establishing herbaceous species on site. Topsoil salvage shall, at a minimum, follow the procedures outlined below:

- The top six to twelve inches of soil shall be salvaged according to specifications provided in the approved *Reclamation Plan* and any subsequent amendments. If not addressed in the *Reclamation Plan* or subsequent amendments, a topsoil salvage protocol shall be developed outlining salvage techniques, proper storage methods, acceptable cover material, and expiration for use and/or

farming methods to ensure a viable native seed bank. The Topsoil Salvage Protocol shall be submitted for approval to the County prior to the onset of construction.

BIO-5 Protecting Monterey Dusky-footed Woodrat and other Woodrat Species. Prior to vegetation clearing in oak woodland and scrub communities, a biologist shall clearly identify the locations of woodrat houses. Woodrat houses outside of the expansion area shall be flagged for avoidance and provided a 10-foot no disturbance buffer area. The location of woodrat houses within the expansion area that cannot be avoided will be identified with construction personnel. A biological monitor shall be present during initial vegetation removal and initial earth disturbance to monitor the mechanical dismantling of woodrat houses. Due to potential health hazards associated with disturbing woodrat houses, hand removal is not recommended. Dismantling will be completed by an operator by gently disturbing the top of the nests with a piece of equipment (e.g., excavator with thumb or similar equipment that can accomplish the task) and allowing woodrats to evacuate unharmed prior to completely dismantling the nest. As necessary, the biological monitor will temporarily halt work within the immediate vicinity of any observed woodrats to allow the species to evacuate the immediate area of impact.

BIO-6 Blainville's Horned Lizard and Northern California Legless Lizard. Within 48-hours of initial site disturbance in suitable habitat areas, a qualified biologist shall conduct a pre-activity survey immediately prior to initial habitat disturbance (e.g., initial clearing, grubbing, vegetation removal) to detect special-status and or other wildlife species with emphasis on the presence/absence of Blainville's horned lizard and Northern California legless lizard. Surveys will be conducted by gently disturbing scrub understory and upper layers of oak tree duff. If either species is discovered, a qualified biologist will hand capture the animals for relocation to suitable habitat areas located outside the area of impact. Construction monitoring shall also be conducted by a qualified biologist during all initial ground disturbing and vegetation removal activities (e.g., grading, grubbing, vegetation trimming, vegetation removal including tree removal, etc.). If either species is discovered during the monitoring, the species will be hand captured and relocated to suitable habitat outside the area of impact. Common wildlife encountered during pre-activity surveys or initial clearing shall also be allowed opportunity to leave the area on their own volition. As necessary, a qualified biologist may also relocate common wildlife species to suitable habitat areas located outside of the area of impact.

BIO-7 Pre-activity Survey for Special-status Avian and Nesting Birds. Vegetation clearing shall be avoided between February 1 and September 15. If vegetation clearing cannot be avoided during the nesting season, a qualified biologist shall conduct a survey for nesting birds of the vegetation clearing areas and a 250-foot buffer within one week prior to initiation of disturbance. If active nests (i.e., nest containing eggs or chicks) are detected, they shall be avoided until the nest is no longer active and the young are no longer reliant on the nest for parental care. A non-disturbance buffer of 50 feet will be placed around non-listed, passerine species and a 250-foot buffer will be implemented for raptor species. Non-disturbance buffer distances can be modified as determined by a qualified biologist when there is a compelling biological or ecological reason to do so, such as when the project work area would be concealed from a nest site by intervening habitat features and/or existing topography. Buffer reductions would vary by species and the disturbance context surrounding the nest site. The qualified biologist shall monitor all active nest sites during initial site disturbance to ensure work outside the established buffer does not jeopardize the nest success. If disturbance is noted, the biologist shall work with facility management to increase buffer distances, as needed to avoid nest disruption. The appropriate resource protection agency shall be contacted if nests of state listed,

federally listed, or fully protected species are detected. No new site disturbance (i.e. vegetation clearing) will be initiated without further guidance from resource protection agencies if nests of state listed, federally listed, or fully protected species are detected.

BIO-8 **Pre-activity Survey for Golden Eagle.** The removal of vegetation or initial ground disturbance will take place from September 15 to January 1. If removal of vegetation or ground disturbance occurs between January 1 and September 15, pre-construction golden eagle nest surveys will be conducted covering the impacted area(s) where vegetation will be removed and a surrounding 0.5-mile area within one week of clearing activities. If nesting golden eagles are found during pre-construction surveys, an exclusion buffer of 0.25 mile will be established around each active nest and maintained until the nest is inactive. Buffers may be reduced in size if a qualified biologist determines that a reduced buffer will not result in adverse impacts and there is concurrence from CDFW and USFWS to proceed. Surveys shall be repeated annually if additional clearing activities are proposed within 0.25 mile of potentially suitable habitat (e.g., foothill woodland).

BIO-9 **Non-sensitive Habitats.** The *Reclamation Plan* (Holland, 2014) was developed to restore reclaimed slopes to pre-project conditions and mitigate for unavoidable temporary impacts to non-sensitive habitats that may provide suitable habitat for special-status species. The *Reclamation Plan* (Holland, 2014) and any other subsequent amendments will be utilized to continue efforts to restore reclaimed slopes to pre-project conditions per the CUP conditions and in accordance with the *Specific Plan* (County Planning and Building, 2002). As such, the approved *Reclamation Plan* (Holland, 2014) and any subsequent plan amendments shall be implemented.

BIO-10 **Native Tree Protection.** As described in Section 3.2.3, approximately 371 oak trees and 8 pine trees, constituting approximately 12.3 acres of oak woodland habitat are present within the survey area and may be affected by project activities. A majority of these trees are located within the primary expansion area. However, those trees located along the margins may be indirectly impacted as a result of overland travel and/or equipment staging within their critical root zone. To avoid and/or minimize indirect impacts to those trees located along the margins and those located within 25 feet of the proposed project limits, a Native Tree Protection Plan shall be developed. The Native Tree Protection Plan shall include at a minimum, the following guidelines:

- All mature trees within 25 feet of ground disturbance shall be marked for protection and their critical root zone (i.e., the distance from the trunk to the dripline of the tree) shall be fenced prior to any grading. The critical root zone of a tree shall be determined in consultation with an approved biologist/botanist/arborist. If work activities are expected to occur within the critical root zone of a tree, the limits of grading shall be marked in the field for fence placement.

- Temporary fencing shall be installed at the limits of the dripline or the limits of grading with high-visibility fencing (e.g., construction fencing or t-posts and yellow rope).

- Placement of tree protective fencing shall be verified by a qualified biologist/botanist/arborist.

- Grading, trenching, compaction of soil or placement of fill shall be avoided within these fenced areas.

- Tree removal shall be monitored by a qualified biologist/botanist/arborist and as-built impacts documented for mitigation purposes.

- Trimming of branches shall be minimized, especially for larger lower branches, and the amount done in one season shall be limited to no more than 10 percent of the canopy to reduce stress/shock.

BIO-11 Oak Woodland. Though a majority of impacts are expected to be offset with implementation of the *Reclamation Plan* (Holland, 2014) and any subsequent amendments, additional mitigation for long-term impacts to oak woodland are being proposed. Mitigation for unavoidable impacts to oak woodland will follow provisions outlined in the CEQA Oak Protection Act, as well as guidance set forth by the State of California PRC 21083.4, and local County Ordinance No. 3346. Specifically, up to 50 percent of required mitigation can be achieved through on-site planting efforts (i.e., reclamation). If planting is not feasible, or to meet the remaining required mitigation after planting efforts, either a conservation easement or an in-lieu fee may be utilized.

The County typically requires a 4:1 and 2:1 mitigation ratio for direct and indirect impacts to oaks, respectively. As such, if it is assumed that 371 oaks will be directly impacted and 50 percent of mitigation oak trees are planted on site, a total of 742 oaks may be planted as a part of reclamation efforts. Per the County Ordinance, an oak woodland management plan may be required for removal of oak woodland habitat in excess of three acres, but not to exceed five percent of the site's total oak woodland canopy. The existing *Reclamation Plan* (Holland, 2014) and any subsequent amendments shall be used for re-establishing oak woodland on site and is intended to satisfy conditions in lieu of an oak woodland management plan.

If permanent conservation is utilized for mitigation, through either conservation easement or fee-simple ownership by a qualified conservation organization, the mitigation ratio would include a minimum 1:1 ratio for acreage of total oak woodland impacts and would require coordination with a willing third party (e.g., land trust). If in-lieu fees are utilized for any portion of mitigation, contributions may be made to an oak woodland conservation fund currently managed by a qualified conservation organization. The current in-lieu fee amount is approximately $970 per tree removed or $485 per tree impacted and is applied on a 1:1 basis for all impacted trees. It should be noted that the fee is determined on a case-by-case basis by the County and is subject to change upon the County's discretion.

Based on the above options, impacts to individual oak trees and oak woodland could be mitigated through the following options:

- On-site mitigation planting of up to 50 percent of the impacted trees at a 4:1 mitigation ratio (i.e., up to 742 oak trees). Due to the existing foothill woodland community composition on site, mitigation plantings may include establishment of native associate species including foothill pine and toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*). However, these associate species may not constitute more than 10 percent of the overall planting efforts. Mitigation plantings shall be implemented in accordance with the *Reclamation Plan (*Holland, 2014) and any subsequent plan amendments.

- Establishment of a permanent conservation easement over an area supporting at least 12.3 acres of foothill woodland/oak woodland habitat. If on-site planting is utilized for a portion of proposed mitigation, a revised acreage shall be calculated to meet mitigation requirements.

- Payment of an in-lieu fee of up to $359,870 to an oak woodland conservation fund, qualified conservation organization, or similar County-approved oak tree mitigation bank. Fees may be paid

in up to three increments based on phased impacts to oak trees. The table below provides a summary of the proposed fee payment schedule:

Mining Phase	Number of Trees Removed	In-lieu Fee Balance*
3	93	$90,210
4	158	$153,260
5	120	$116,400
3 to 5	371	$359,870

* To be paid to an oak woodland conservation fund or similar County-approved conservation organization or oak tree mitigation bank prior to the commencement of any individual Phase.

It should be noted that the fees above assume 100 percent of trees removed will be mitigated through in-lieu fees and that the fee per removed tree is $970. The table does not include costs for impacted trees (i.e., impacts to the critical root zone and/or trimming of more than 10 percent of a trees canopy), which would be added to the total cost at $485 per tree. As-built impacts would be calculated to determine the final in-lieu fee payment. Actual tree costs may be subject to change on a case-by-case basis by the County, which may affect the total balance due. Similarly, if on-site planting is utilized for a portion of proposed mitigation, a revised fee amount/payment schedule shall be calculated to meet mitigation requirements.

BIO-12 Protecting Aquatic Resources and Water Quality. The following general measures are recommended to minimize impacts to jurisdictional drainages on site including associated aquatic resources and water quality:

- The Rocky Canyon Creek riparian corridor and minimum 50-foot buffer area shall be clearly shown on all final Phase 2 through 5 plan sets and clearly marked in the field prior to initiation of mining operations. This shall include interpretative signage indicating that the creek corridor is a sensitive resource area. Creek corridor delineation and interpretive signage shall be inspected periodically during all mining operations to ensure the limits remain clearly marked and are being avoided.

- All mining operations will be limited to areas located outside the 100-year floodplain of the East Creek and the South Ravine. The 100-year floodplain limits shall be shown on all final Phase 2 through 5 plan sets and shall be clearly marked in the field prior to initiation of mining operations. Areas shall be inspected periodically during all mining operations to ensure the limits remain clearly marked and are being avoided.

- All temporarily disturbed areas (e.g., access routes, staging areas, and stockpile areas) will be located at a minimum of 50 feet from any water feature (i.e., the ephemeral drainages, creek corridor, and depressional wetland pond feature, etc.). This distance should be increased wherever feasible.

- All detention basins shall be designed and operated to ensure discharges to waters meet local, state, and federal water quality standards consistent with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Industrial General Permit requirements for Rocky Canyon Quarry. Surface flows shall be directed away from disturbed areas to the extent feasible to avoid mobilizing sediment in run off. Best management practices shall be utilized to minimize off-site silt and sediment deposition.

BIO-13 Maintaining Dispersal Corridors for Wildlife. The proposed project shall be phased to minimize impacts to wildlife movement throughout the area. Proposed project phasing will maintain corridors between Rocky Canyon Creek, ephemeral drainages, and adjacent open space habitat areas not affected by the proposed expansion activities (Figure 20).

BIO-14 Landscaping and Screening. All landscaping and/or screening shall use locally-sourced native species either collected from on site or grown in a local nursery.

BIO-15 Lighting. Exterior lighting will be positioned to avoid illumination of open space areas, drainages, and the Rocky Canyon Creek riparian corridor. No permanent night lighting will be installed, except for security and maintenance needs of the constructed facility. Temporary construction lighting will be kept to the minimum amount necessary and shall be directed toward active work areas and away from open spaces and/or drainages.

BIO-16 Preconstruction Surveys and Avoidance for Crotch's Bumble Bee. Prior to the start of project activities, and if work is planned to occur during the flight period of April 1 to September 1, a qualified biologist shall survey for Crotch's bumble bee within the work area 2 weeks prior to the start of initial ground disturbance. If a Crotch's bumble bee nest is observed, no work shall occur within 25 feet of the nest until it is no longer active. If an exclusion buffer is not feasible, the applicant shall contact the County of San Luis Obispo (County) for further guidance. If Crotch's bumble bee is found during the active spring and summer period, or presence is unknown (e.g., if a survey during the active period was not completed) and work is planned between October and March, potential overwintering habitat shall be avoided by a minimum of 50 feet. If potential overwintering habitat cannot be avoided, the County shall be contacted. The County shall coordinate with appropriate resource agencies for guidance to implement project activities and avoid take or proceed with an Incidental Take Permit. The results of the surveys shall be provided to the County prior to initial project activities.

Because bumble bees move nest sites each year, surveys shall be conducted each year prior to ground disturbance within undisturbed habitat in the project site.

Sources

Provided in Exhibit A.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
(a)	Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to § 15064.5?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(b)	Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(c)	Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Setting

San Luis Obispo County possesses a rich and diverse cultural heritage and has an abundance of historic and prehistoric cultural resources dating as far back as 9,000 B.C. The County protects and manages cultural resources in accordance with the provisions detailed by CEQA and local ordinances.

As defined by CEQA, a historical resource includes:

1. A resource listed in or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR).
2. Any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript that a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant. The architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural records of California may be considered to be a historical resource, provided the lead agency's determination is supported by substantial evidence.

The COSE identifies and maps anticipated culturally sensitive areas and historic resources within the county and establishes goals, policies, and implementation strategies to identify and protect areas, sites, and buildings having architectural, historical, Native American, or cultural significance.

Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan

The policies and standards of the Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan (Exhibit C) provide guidance for the protection of cultural resources by referencing the requirements of Guidelines Section 15064.5 relating to the discovery of resources during mining activities.

Development Plan Conditions of Approval (as Amended In 2002)/Previous Environmental Review

The conditions (Exhibit D) incorporate the mitigation measures adopted with the previously certified EIRs and include the following as it relates to cultural resources:

52. If during excavation, any buried or isolated cultural materials are unearthed or discovered, work in that area shall halt and the County Environmental Coordinator notified in accordance with Section 22.05.140 of the Land Use Ordinance. Work shall not commence until the requirements of Section 22.05.140 and CEQA are met.

Phase I Archaeological Investigation

A Phase I archeological investigation was conducted for the area of disturbance associated with Phase 3, 4 and 5 by SWCA Environmental Consultants in January, 2018. That study is incorporated by reference and available for review in its entirety at the Department of Planning and Building, 976 Osos Street, San Luis Obispo.

Discussion

(a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5?

The project site has no historic structures or other improvements associated with an important historical location or event as defined by section 15064.5. In addition, a Phase I survey was conducted in January, 2018 (SWCA Environmental Consultants) which included a records search for historical and archaeological resources associated with the site and the area. No resources or sites were identified for the project site or in the vicinity. Therefore, the project would result in *no impacts* associated with an adverse change in the significance of an historical resource.

(b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5?

The site is not subject to the Archaeology combining designation. As discussed above, a Phase I survey conducted in January, 2018 (SWCA Environmental Consultants) which included a records search for historical and archaeological resources associated with the site and the area. The records search data revealed two previously conducted cultural resource studies, SL-1641 and SL-3120, within the project area or a 0.25-mile radius. Study SL-1641, *Carrizo Plain Heritage Reserve Land Exchange and Acquisition Cultural Resource Inventory/Assessment Report*, conducted a reconnaissance-level field survey of approximately 20 acres in the northern portion of the project area. Study SL-3120, *Cultural Resources Survey and Impact Assessment for the Rocky Canyon Quarry Extension, San Luis Obispo County, California* conducted an archaeological survey of approximately 160 acres, which overlapped with the southern and eastern portions of the project area.

Study SL-1641 identified a single prehistoric isolate, P-40-30850 (a chert flake), within the northern portion of the study area, which is currently an active mining area. No additional archaeological resources have been identified within the project area or a 0.25-mile radius.

The archaeologist conducted a survey of the safely accessible portions of the approximately 152-acre project area on November 29, 2017. Steep areas (greater than 20 degrees), comprising approximately 61.5 acres, and active mining areas (44.6 acres) were subject to cursory visual survey from areas that were safe to traverse. As prehistoric archaeological sites are not typically located on such steep slopes, the goal of the cursory survey was to identify resources that may occur in such settings, such as areas of potential bedrock that may contain features (e.g., rock art, milling features) or historic-era features.

In the intensively surveyed areas (12.9 acres), primarily along ridgelines and in drainages, the archaeologist examined all areas of exposed ground surface for prehistoric artifacts (e.g., chipped

stone tools and production debris, stone milling tools), historic artifacts (e.g., metal, glass, ceramics), soil discoloration that might indicate the presence of a cultural midden, linear features, soil depressions, and other features indicative of the former presence of historic structures or buildings (e.g., foundations).

No historical resources or unique archaeological resources, as defined by CEQA, were identified within the project area, and no further archaeological study is recommended at this time.

There is always the possibility, however remote, that significant cultural resources could lie buried below the surface. Therefore, if artifacts, burials, or other indicators of significant cultural resources are encountered during grading or other earth-moving construction activities, work should stop immediately and a qualified archaeologist should be called to the site to evaluate the find and suggest mitigation measures, if necessary.

Based on the preceding analysis, impacts related to a substantial adverse change in the significance of archaeological resources would be *less than significant*.

(c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?

Based on existing conditions, and the findings of the Phase 1 archaeological survey, buried human remains are not expected to be present in the area proposed for excavation in Phases 3, 4 and 5. Nonetheless, in the event of an accidental discovery or recognition of any human remains, California State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 and LUO 22.10.040 (Archaeological Resources) require that no further disturbances shall occur until the County Coroner has made the necessary findings as to origin and disposition pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. With adherence to State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 and County LUO, impacts related to the unanticipated disturbance of archaeological resources and human remains would be reduced to less than significant; therefore, potential impacts would be *less than significant.*

Conclusion

No historic or cultural resources are present on the project site. Adherence with County LUO standards and State Health and Safety Code procedures would reduce potential impacts. Accordingly, impacts related to a substantial adverse change in the significance of archaeological resources would be *less than significant*.

Mitigation

None required.

Sources

Provided in Exhibit A.

VI. ENERGY

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
(a)	Result in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?		☐	☒	☐
(b)	Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?		☐	☒	☐

Setting

The Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) is the primary electricity provider for urban and rural communities within San Luis Obispo County. Approximately 38% of electricity provided by PG&E is sourced from renewable sources and an additional 43% is sourced from non-renewable GHG-free resources (PG&E 2024).

PG&E offers two programs through which consumers may purchase electricity from renewable sources: the Solar Choice program and the Regional Renewable Choice program. Under the Solar Choice program, a customer remains on their existing electric rate plan and pays a modest additional fee on a per kilowatt-hour (kWh) basis for clean solar power. The fee depends on the type of service, rate plan, and enrollment level. Customers may choose to have 50% or 100% of their monthly electricity usage to be generated via solar projects. The Regional Renewable Choice program enables customers to subscribe to renewable energy from a specific community-based project within PG&E's service territory. The Regional Renewable Choice program allows a customer to purchase between 25% and 100% of their annual usage from renewable sources.

The Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas) is the primary provider of natural gas for urban and rural communities within San Luis Obispo County. SoCalGas has committed to replacing 20% of its traditional natural gas supply with renewable natural gas by 2030 (Sempra 2019).

Local Energy Plans and Policies

The COSE establishes goals and policies that aim to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT), conserve water, increase energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy, and reduce GHG emissions. This element provides the basis and direction for the development of the County's EnergyWise Plan (EWP), which outlines in greater detail the County's strategy to reduce government and community-wide GHG emissions through a number of goals, measures, and actions, including energy efficiency and development and use of renewable energy resources.

State Building Code Requirements

The California Building Code (CBC) contains standards that regulate the method of use, properties, performance, or types of materials used in the construction, alteration, improvement, repair, or rehabilitation of a building or other improvement to real property. The CBC includes mandatory green building standards for residential and nonresidential structures, the most recent version of which are referred to as the *2025 Building Energy Efficiency Standards*. These standards focus on four key areas: smart residential photovoltaic systems, updated thermal envelope standards (preventing heat transfer from the interior to the exterior and vice versa), residential and nonresidential ventilation requirements, and non-residential lighting requirements. While the CBC has strict energy and green-building standards, U-occupancy structures (such as greenhouses used for cultivation activities) are typically not regulated by these standards.

Vehicle Fuel Economy Standards

In October 2012, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), on behalf of the Department of Transportation, issued final rules to further reduce GHG emissions and improve corporate average fuel economy (CAFE) standards for light duty vehicles for model years 2017 and beyond. NHTSA's CAFE standards have been enacted under the Energy Policy and Conservation Act since 1978. This national program requires automobile manufacturers to build a single light-duty national fleet that meets all requirements under both federal programs and the standards of California and other states. This program would increase fuel economy to the equivalent of 54.5 miles per gallon (mpg) limiting vehicle emissions to 163 grams of carbon dioxide (CO_2) per mile for the fleet of cars and light-duty trucks by the model year 2025.

As part California's overall approach to reducing pollution from all vehicles, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) has established standards for clean gasoline and diesel fuels and fuel economies of new vehicles. CARB has also put in place innovative programs to drive the development of low-carbon, renewable, and alternative fuels such as their Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS) Program pursuant to California Assembly Bill (AB) 32 and the Governor's Executive Order S-01-07.

In January 2012, CARB approved the Advanced Clean Cars Program which combines the control of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) missions and criteria air pollutants, as well as requirements for greater numbers of zero-emission vehicles, into a single package of standards for vehicle model years 2017 through 2025. The new rules strengthen the GHG standard for 2017 models and beyond. This will be achieved through existing technologies, the use of stronger and lighter materials, and more efficient drivetrains and engines. The program's zero-emission vehicle regulation, the Advanced Clean Cars II rule, establishes a year-by-year roadmap so that by 2035 100% of new cars and light trucks sold in California will be zero-emission vehicles, including plug-in hybrid electric vehicles. The regulation realizes and codifies the light-duty vehicle goals set forth in Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-79-20.

The program also includes a clean fuels outlet regulation designed to support the commercialization of zero-emission hydrogen fuel cell vehicles planned by vehicle manufacturers by 2015 by requiring increased numbers of hydrogen fueling stations throughout the state. The number of stations will grow as vehicle manufacturers sell more fuel cell vehicles. By 2025, when the rules will be fully implemented, the statewide fleet of new cars and light trucks will emit 34 percent fewer global warming gases and 75 percent fewer smog-forming emissions than the statewide fleet in 2016 (CARB 2016).

All self-propelled off-road diesel vehicles 25 horsepower (hp) or greater used in California and most two-engine vehicles (except on-road two-engine sweepers) are subject to the CARB's Regulation for In-Use Off-Road Diesel Fueled Fleets (Off-Road regulation). This includes vehicles that are rented or leased (rental or leased fleets). The overall purpose of the Off-Road regulation is to reduce emissions of oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) and particulate matter (PM) from off-road diesel vehicles operating within California through the

implementation of standards including, but not limited to, limits on idling, reporting and labeling of off-road vehicles, limitations on use of old engines, and performance requirements.

Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan

The policies and standards of the Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan (Exhibit C) do not address energy use.

Development Plan Conditions of Approval (as Amended In 2002)/Previous Environmental Review

The conditions (Exhibit D) incorporate the mitigation measures adopted with the previously certified EIRs but do not address energy use.

Discussion

(a) *Result in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?*

(b) *Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?*

Construction Activities

The project does not propose new construction except for the potential relocation of the rock crusher and conveyance system which would use conventional construction equipment subject to fuel efficiency standards. Therefore, construction activities would have a *less than significant impact* associated with construction related energy use.

Project Operations

Electricity and Natural Gas Use. There is one building (office) on the project site. In addition, the rock crusher and conveyance system is powered by electricity. As discussed in the Baseline Conditions, current electricity use is estimated to be 541,238 kWh/year. The project's operational electricity needs would be met by a connection to PG&E infrastructure. Gas for heating and cooking is provided by on-site propane.

The CBC includes mandatory green building standards for residential and nonresidential structures, the most recent version of which are referred to as the *2025 Building Energy Efficiency Standards.* Stationary mining equipment such the rock crusher and conveyors are subject to compliance with these standards. Therefore, project impacts associated with electricity and natural gas use are considered *less than significant* and *less than cumulatively considerable*.

Fuel Use. The continuation of mining activities would result in fuel use that does not exceed Baseline Conditions. All vehicles used in the mining operation and by employees would continue to be subject to applicable state and federal fuel economy standards and State-mandated smog inspections.

Based on the fact that mining operations will continue as described in the Baseline Conditions, along with adherence to applicable state and federal vehicle fuel regulations, project fuel use would not result in a potentially significant environmental impact and would not be wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary.

Therefore, potential impacts associated with potentially significant environmental impacts due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources and potential conflict with state or local plans regarding renewable energy or energy efficiency would be *less than significant.* and *less than cumulatively considerable.*

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Conclusion

The project would not result in a potentially significant energy demand and inefficient energy use during long-term operations that would be considered wasteful, inefficient and unnecessary. Potential impacts related to energy would be *less than significant* and *less than cumulatively considerable*.

Mitigation

None are required.

Sources

Provided in Exhibit A.

VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
(a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
(i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	☐	☐	☒	☐
(ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(iv) Landslides?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	☐	☒	☐	☐
(d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	☐	☐	☐	☒

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
(f)	Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Setting

The quarry occupies portions of three contiguous parcels with a total area of about 286.5 acres located at the northerly terminus of Rocky Canyon Road about one mile southeast of the City of Atascadero. Topography of the site consists of relatively steep hillsides with moderate to dense assemblages of oak woodlands and chaparral; quarried areas of the site are characterized by steep manufactured slopes that have been replanted in accordance with the approved restoration plan. The project site is divided by a portion of Rocky Canyon Creek, an ephemeral drainage the flows southwest out of the foothills of the Santa Lucia Range to the Salinas River. The creek supports sparse to moderately dense riparian vegetation in the vicinity of the project site.

Soils of the area of disturbance are described in Section II. Agricultural Resources, and consist of *Cieneba Coarse Sand Loam, 30 – 75 percent slopes*.

The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act (Alquist-Priolo Act) is a California state law that was developed to regulate development near active faults and mitigate the surface fault rupture potential and other hazards. The Alquist-Priolo Act identifies active earthquake fault zones and restricts the construction of habitable structures over known active or potentially active faults. San Luis Obispo County is located in a geologically complex and seismically active region. The Safety Element of the County of San Luis Obispo General Plan identifies three active faults that traverse through the county and are currently zoned under the Alquist-Priolo Act: the San Andreas, the Hosgri-San Simeon, and the Los Osos.

The County Safety Element also identifies 17 other faults that are considered potentially active or have uncertain fault activity. The Safety Element establishes policies that require new development to be located away from active and potentially active faults. The element also requires that the County enforce applicable building codes relating to seismic design of structures and require design professionals to evaluate the potential for liquefaction or seismic settlement to impact structures in accordance with the Uniform Building Code. The nearest potentially capable fault line is the Rinconada fault which may underlie the site.

The County LUO identifies a Geologic Study Area (GSA) combining designation for areas where geologic and soil conditions could present new developments and/or their occupants with potential hazards to life and property. The project site is not located within a Geologic Study Area (GSA) combining designation. According to maps included in the Safety Element, the project site is located in an area with a low risk of landslides and a low liquefaction potential.

Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan

The policies and standards of the Specific Plan (Exhibit C) provide guidance for the excavation of geologic materials, protection from geologic hazards, and the prevention of erosion through the phased expansion of quarry operations. Topics addressed by these policies and standards include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Risk management.
- The requirement for a detailed mining plan for each phase that identifies finished slopes as well as the location of processing equipment and access roads, and reclamation and revegetation standards.
- Standard 28.1 states:

  28.1Any changes to the slopes proposed in Figures 7-3 and 7-4 and 7-6 through 7-15, in the first or subsequent phases require that an engineering geologist, acceptable to the Department of Planning and Building, shall prepare revised maps and a report verifying that the change is geologically stable. The maps and report shall be submitted to the Department of Planning and Building for county approval. If such changes occur during mining then all work is to cease in the affected area until approval is given.

Development Plan Conditions of Approval (as Amended In 2002)/Previous Environmental Review

The conditions (Exhibit D) incorporate the mitigation measures adopted with the previously certified EIRs and include a number of requirements to address geologic resources that include, but are not limited, the following:

- The treatment of excavation areas and the design of temporary and final slopes. With regard to temporary slopes, condition No. 37 states:

  37. Temporary cut slopes which are to remain in place until later removal (referred to as interim slopes) shall consist of slopes no steeper than 1: 1, with 15-foot wide benches at 50-foot vertical spacing.

- The conditions require the operator to implement drainage and erosion control Best Management Strategies as required by the LUO, and the drainage system and surface water management system will be subject to ongoing monitoring and inspection.
- All ditches along access roads are to be lined or otherwise designed to prevent erosion.
- Revegetation activities will continue in accordance with the Reclamation/Revegetation Plan under the monitoring of a qualified biologist..

Engineering Geology Investigation

The project application materials include preliminary mining plans for each phase (Figures 6, 7 and 8) as well as an engineering geology investigation prepared by GeoSolutions, Inc. in February, 2019. That study is incorporated by reference and available for review in its entirety at the Department of Planning and Building located at 976 Osos Street, San Luis Obispo. The following analysis is a summary of the findings and conclusions of that study.

Discussion

(a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:

(a-i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.

The project site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Fault Hazard Zone. However, the potential for ground rupture at the site during ground shaking is considered moderate. The closest known Quaternary age fault is the main Rinconada fault located approximately 1.5 miles to the east which is considered potentially active; a portion of the fault may underly the project site. Therefore, according to the engineering geology investigation (GeoSolutions, Inc. in February, 2019), the potential for ground rupture and ground shaking is considered moderate since a splay of the Rinconada fault is assumed to pass through the proposed quarry area. The Rinconada fault is a right lateral strike-slip fault of late Quaternary age. Hart (1985) indicates that the fault lacks obvious characteristics that would suggest Holocene activity.

The project would result in approximately 82 acres of site disturbance and would result in the removal of aggregate materials in each phase as summarized in Table 1 of the Project Description. Mining and grading/leveling activities would result in manufactured slopes with "benches" (ie, terraces) at the top as generally envisioned by Figure 9.

Mining activities on the project site will be subject to the seismic risk standards of the CBC and the County's surface mining and grading standards provided in the LUO, and other applicable standards to ensure the effects of a potential seismic event would be minimized through compliance with current engineering practices and techniques. Implementation of the project in compliance with relevant construction codes would ensure that people or structures will not be exposed to significant increased risks associated with seismic ground shaking; therefore, impacts would be *less than significant.*

(a-ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?

Groundshaking refers to the motion that occurs in response to local and regional earthquakes. Seismic groundshaking is influenced by the proximity of the site to an earthquake fault, the intensity of the seismic event, and the underlying soil composition.

The most detailed mapping and characterization of regional faults capable of generating sufficient ground motion within the region has been conducted for Pacific Gas and Electric as a part of the Long Term Seismic Studies for Diablo Nuclear Power Plant. These studies identify the Hosgri-San Simeon fault zone (5 mile distance) and the San Andreas fault zone (50 mile distance), both strike-slip type faults, as the primary sources of ground shaking for the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant. The Hosgri-San Simeon fault is projected to have a maximum credible earthquake of M 8.3 but the more characteristic earthquakes would range from 6 to 7.3 (PGE, 2015).

According to the engineering geology investigation (GeoSolutions, Inc. in February, 2019), because no new structures are planned, seismic parameters were not determined for the site. There is an assumed moderate to high potential for ridgetop shattering at the property due to the location of portions of the quarry along ridges, however as no structures are currently proposed, affects would be low to moderate.

As discussed under item (a-i), above, mining activities on the project site will be subject to the seismic risk standards of the CBC and other applicable standards to ensure the effects of a potential seismic event would be minimized through compliance with current engineering practices and techniques. Implementation of the project in compliance with relevant construction codes would not expose people or structures to significant increased risks associated with seismic ground shaking; therefore, impacts would be *less than significant.*

(a-iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

Based on the Safety Element Liquefaction Hazards Map, the project site is located in an area with a low potential for liquefaction. According to the engineering geology investigation, the liquefaction potential at the quarry is considered low due to the presence of nearsurface, Granitic Basement Rocks.

In addition, the project would be required to comply with CBC seismic requirements to address the site's potential for seismic-related ground failure including liquefaction; therefore, the potential impacts would be *less than significant.*

(a-iv) Landslides?

The project would result in approximately 82 acres of site disturbance and would result in the removal of aggregate materials in each phase as summarized in Table 1 of the Project Description. During mining and grading/leveling activities would result in manufactured slopes with "benches" (ie, terraces) at the top as generally envisioned by Figure 9.

According to the engineering geology investigation (GeoSolutions, Inc. in February, 2019), there are no immediate indications of landslides observed at the Site. The potential for a large slope instability to occur is low because:

- The performance of existing slopes has resulted in stable conditions over the past surface mining activities.
- Fracture analysis and numerical slope stability analyses were performed on proposed quarry profiles as part of the engineering geology investigation and determined to meet relative geologic safety and performance standards.

Therefore, the potential impacts would be *less than significant.* In addition, the project will be conditioned to comply with CBC building requirements.

(b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

Surface mining operations have the potential to result in erosion. As discussed in the setting, the project has been operating in accordance with conditions of approval that require compliance with relevant provisions of the County's erosion control and drainage requirements.

Section 22.51.120 of the LUO requires any project that would change the runoff volume or velocity leaving any point of the site, result in an impervious surface of more than 20,000 square feet, or involve hillside development on slopes steeper than 10 percent to prepare and implement a sedimentation and erosion control plan. LUO Section 22.51.120 includes requirements for specific erosion control materials and states that Best Management Practices (BMPs) shall be employed to control sedimentation and erosion. These mandatory BMPs are set forth in LUO Section 22.52.150 B. and C. and may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Minimizing the use of impervious surfaces (e.g., installing pervious driveways and walkways);

- Directing runoff from roofs and drives to vegetative strips before it leaves the site;
- Managing runoff on the site (e.g., percolation basins); and other Low Impact Design (LID) techniques.
- The installation of vegetated roadside drainage swales shall be encouraged and, if used, calculated into BMP requirements.
- The combined set of BMPs shall be designed to treat and infiltrate stormwater runoff up to and including the 85th percentile storm event.
- The BMPs shall include measures to minimize post-development loadings of total suspended solids.

Compliance with these mandatory BMPs, along with relevant provisions of the LUO, Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan and conditions of approval,will ensure water quality is protected from potential impacts associated with the construction and occupancy of the project. The plans will be reviewed by the County Building and Public Works Departments to ensure compliance.

In addition, the project may be subject to Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) requirements for preparation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) (LUO Section 22.52.130), which may include the preparation of a Storm Water Control Plan to further minimize on-site erosion.

As stated in the setting, the project application materials include detailed mining plans for each phase (Figures 6, 7 and 8) that includes drainage collection, storage and conveyance infrastructure to ensure runoff does not cause erosion or adversely impact the quality of downstream surface or groundwater bodies.

Upon implementation of the recommended BMPs and conditions of approval, impacts related to soil erosion would be *less than significant*.

(c) *Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?*

(d) *The project would result in approximately 82 acres of site disturbance and would result in the removal of aggregate materials in each phase as summarized in Table 1 of the Project Description. During mining and grading/leveling activities would result in manufactured slopes with "benches" (ie, terraces) at the top as generally envisioned by Figure 9.*

As discussed in the engineering geology report, the site is located in the vicinity of the San Luis Range of the Coast Range Geomorphic Province of California. The Coast Ranges lie between the Pacific Ocean and the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley and trend northwesterly along the California Coast for approximately 600 miles between Santa Maria and the Oregon border.

The quarry is currently a functioning materials operation supplying construction materials, i.e. sand and gravel, crushed rock, and rock boulders. Large open, cut slopes are currently being quarried. Existing cut slopes are configured approximately 1:1 (horizontal:vertical) and are up to 50 feet high with benches cut approximately 12 feet to 25 feet wide or more. Final cut slopes are proposed to be 1: 1 and 1.5: 1 with 50-foot high slopes with either 12.5-foot or 25-foot wide benches. The area of disturbance is approximately 82 acres with access roads throughout the quarry. The area in general consists of rolling hills with drainages that flow to the Salinas River located to the west.

The area of disturbance for Phases III, IV, and V is underlain entirely by weathered to fresh, fractured to massive granitic rock. No landslides, either circular or block failures were observed on natural slopes. Locally, the site is located within Granitic Basement Rock units. Hart, 1976 mapped the specific site as within Upper Cretaceous age (99 to 65 million years before present { mybp}) Granitic Rocks (Kgr). Dibblee, 2004 mapped the specific site as within Cretaceous age (144 to 65 million year before present { mybp}) Granitic Basement Rocks (gr). Durham, 1974 states that the "granitic rocks of the southern Salinas Valley are of Cretaceous, probably Late Cretaceous age". The surface exploration at the project encountered units of Granitic Basement Rocks.

As discussed above under item a-iv, based on the Safety Element Landslide Hazards Map, the project site is located in an area with a low landslide risk.

Based on the Safety Element and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) data, the project is not located in an area of historical or current land subsidence (USGS 2019) and is located in an area with low potential for liquefaction risk. Due to the distance to the topography of the project site, lateral spreading is not likely to occur on-site.

As discussed in the project description, the applicant is requesting that condition No. 37 of the Development Plan/Reclamation Plan be modified to reduce the width of the graded benches associated with temporary cut slopes from 15 feet to 12.5 feet (an 18 percent reduction). The slope stability analysis provided in the engineering geology investigation (GeoSolutions, Inc. in February, 2019), assumes the benches will be 12.5 feet in width with 50 foot vertical faces. Fracture analysis and numerical slope stability analysis was performed on proposed quarry profiles and is presented in the engineering geology investigation. Based upon the existing field conditions, slope stability analysis, stability of existing cut slopes, existing natural slopes, and character of the granitic material at the site, the anticipated 1: 1 (horizontal:vertical) temporary cut slopes into granite material at the quarry appear globally stable. The analysis concludes that manufactured slopes associated with mining activities for Phases 3, 4 and 5 as proposed with 12.5 foot benches would result in stable slopes. However, the study recommends ongoing monitoring and the implementation of corrective measures (adaptive management) as identified in mitigation measure GEO-2.

The project will be conditioned to comply with the CBC standards designed to significantly reduce potential risks associated with unstable earth conditions. With implementation of mitigation measures GEO-1 and GEO-2, impacts related to on- or off-site landslides, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse would be *less than significant with mitigation.*

(e) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?

According to the NRCS, soils underlying the area of have a low shrink-swell potential. The project will be required to comply with applicable CBC standards designed to reduce potential risks associated with expansive soils. Therefore, ,potential impacts associated with expansive soil would be *less than significant.*

(f) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?

As discussed in the Project Description, the project will not alter the Baseline Conditions with respect to wastewater collection, treatment or disposal. Therefore, the project will have *no impact* associated soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks.

(g) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

The underlying geologic material is considered to have low paleontological sensitivity (County of Monterey 2014, SWCA Environmental Consultants 2019). Potential impacts to paleontological resources would be *less than significant.*

Conclusion

The project site is not subject to significant geologic hazards such as landslides and shallow groundwater. Based on the preceding analysis, compliance with the relevant provisions of the CBC will reduce impacts associated with geology and geologic hazards to *less than significant*.

Mitigation

GEO-1 **Monitoring of geologic conditions.** The applicant shall retain a qualified engineering geologist to perform ongoing monitoring of surface mining activities as required by SMARA and the County Land Use Ordinance.

GEO-2 **Adaptive management**. Plans submitted for grading permit approval for surface mining activities associated with Phases 3, 4 and 5 shall incorporate the findings and recommendations of the engineering geologic investigation for the project site prepared by GeoSolutions, Inc. in February, 2019, including the following adaptive management strategies:

1. Following exposure of cut rock slopes for Phases III to V, an engineering geologist shall review the rock slopes for inherent instabilities due to weak rock or obvious intersecting fractures that may cause localized wedge failures. If unstable conditions are observed within anticipated temporary cut rock slopes for Phases III, IV, and V, mitigation is recommended for the specific location which may include special drainage considerations, trimming, scaling, re-sloping, removal, catchments, ditches, or other methods for remediation.
2. Surface water drainage from upslope drainages shall be controlled and not concentrated on open slopes. Erosion and severe rill and gully erosion is possible from uncontrolled drainage, especially on weak, highly fractured, or soft rock (faulted areas). Surface drainage shall be controlled to prevent concentrated water-flow on soft-rock slopes. Surface drainage gradients are recommended to prevent ponding and promote drainage of surface water away from natural or man-made slopes.
3. The drainage improvements for cut slopes presented in the Reclamation Plan shall be implemented as depicted.
4. Benches shall be maintained periodically to remove collected debris until vegetation is established per the reclamation plan.
5. An engineering geologist shall periodically monitor geologic conditions during bench/cut-slope excavations. It is understood that this would be an on-going process of monitoring and that reclamation may occur over a period of several years or decades.
6. Excavation and mining activities are recommended to be in accordance with appropriate codes and ordinances of the County of San Luis Obispo, mining safety and health administration and other administering agencies. In addition, unusual subsurface conditions encountered during grading such as springs or fill material are recommended to be brought to the attention of the Engineering Geologist.

7. Cut faces within the quarry that are coincident with mapped traces of faulting (as depicted on Plates IA, lB, and 1 C of the engineering geology report) at the site shall be reviewed periodically. Faulting at the site has created highly sheared weak-rock which may require consideration for stabilization or reinforcement when final slopes are cut. Stabilization measures may include: special drainage consideration, trimming, scaling, re-sloping, catchments, ditches, or other methods for remediation.

Sources

Provided in Exhibit A.

VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
(a)	Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(b)	Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Setting

Greenhouse gasses (GHGs) are any gases that absorb infrared radiation in the atmosphere. The primary GHGs that are emitted into the atmosphere as a result of human activities are carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), nitrous oxide (N_2O), and fluorinated gases. These are most commonly emitted through the burning of fossil fuels (oil, natural gas, and coal), agricultural practices, decay of organic waste in landfills, and a variety of other chemical reactions and industrial processes (e.g., the manufacturing of cement). Carbon dioxide (CO_2) is the most abundant GHG and is estimated to represent approximately 80–90% of the principal GHGs that are currently affecting the earth's climate. According to the California Air Resources Board (CARB), transportation (vehicle exhaust) and electricity generation are the main sources of GHGs in the state.

In October 2008, the CARB published the *Climate Change Proposed Scoping Plan*, which is the state's plan to achieve GHG reductions in California required by Assembly Bill (AB) 32. The Scoping Plan included CARB-recommended GHG reductions for each emissions sector of the state's GHG inventory. The largest proposed GHG reduction recommendations were associated with improving emissions standards for light-duty vehicles, implementing the Low Carbon Fuel Standard program, implementation of energy efficiency measures in buildings and appliances, the widespread development of combined heat and power systems, and developing a renewable portfolio standard for electricity production.

Senate Bill (SB) 32 and Executive Order (EO) S-3-05 extended the state's GHG reduction goals and require CARB to regulate sources of GHGs to meet the following goals:

- Reduce GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020;
- Reduce GHG emissions to 40% below 1990 levels by 2030;
- Reduce GHG emissions to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050.

The initial Scoping Plan was approved by CARB on December 11, 2008, and is updated every 5 years. The first update of the Scoping Plan was approved by the CARB on May 22, 2014, which looked past 2020 to set mid-term goals (2030–2035) toward reaching the 2050 goals. The most recent update released by CARB is the 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan, which was released in November 2017. The 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan incorporates strategies for achieving the 2030 GHG-reduction target established in SB 32 and EO S-3-05.

When assessing the significance of potential impacts for CEQA compliance, an individual project's GHG emissions will generally not result in direct significant impacts because the climate change issue is global in

nature. However, an individual project could be found to contribute to a potentially significant cumulative impact. Projects that have GHG emissions above the noted thresholds may be considered cumulatively considerable and require mitigation. Accordingly, in March 2012, the SLOAPCD approved thresholds for GHG impacts which were incorporated into their 2012 CEQA Air Quality Handbook. The Handbook recommended applying a 1,150 $MTCO_2e$ per year Bright Line Threshold for commercial and residential projects and included a list of general land uses and estimated sizes or capacities of uses expected to exceed this threshold. According to the SLOAPCD, this threshold was based on a 'gap analysis' and was used for CEQA compliance evaluations to demonstrate consistency with the state's GHG emission reduction goals associated with AB32 and the 2008 Climate Change Scoping Plan which have a target year of 2020. However, in 2015, the California Supreme Court issued an opinion in the case of *Center for Biological Diversity vs California Department of Fish and Wildlife* ("Newhall Ranch") that determined that AB 32 based thresholds derived from a gap analysis are invalid for projects with a planning horizon beyond 2020. Since the bright-line and service population GHG thresholds in the Handbook are AB 32 based, and project horizons are now beyond 2020, the SLOAPCD no longer recommends the use of these thresholds in CEQA evaluations.

In 2023, the SLOAPCD released an update to these thresholds with their *2023 Administrative Update Version to APCD Board Adopted April 2012 Version*. These updated thresholds were developed by creating updated GHG emissions inventories for 2005 and 2018 for the incorporated cities and unincorporated areas in SLO county to consider whether jurisdictions were on track with the AB 32 GHG reduction target. Then, target GHG emissions for SLO county in 2020, 2030, and 2045 were calculated to be consistent with reduction targets specified in AB 32, SB 32, and AB 1279. Thresholds for the years in between those evaluated were linearly interpolated, and annual GHG efficiency thresholds were adjusted to factor in GHG reductions needed for new development using information from the City of SLO's 2020 qualified Climate Action Plan's Appendix C – CEQA GHG Emissions Thresholds and Guidance. A project's initial operating year should be used to determine which of the updated GHG Bright Line Thresholds for new residential, commercial, and mixed-use development is applicable to the project. For projects with an initial operating year of 2030 or earlier, GHG emissions at or below the applicable threshold for that year are contributing to the state's SB 32 GHG reduction target. For projects with an initial operational year after 2030, GHG emissions at or below the applicable threshold for that year are contributing to the state's AB 1279 target of reaching carbon neutrality by 2045. Table 11 shows the GHG Bright-Line Thresholds for projects with an initial operating year between 2023 and 2030.

Table 11 -- San Luis Obispo County Bright-Line CEQA GHG Thresholds Between 2023 and 2030 for Residential, Commercial, and Mix-use Development Projects

Year	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
GHG Bright-Line Thresholds (MT/Yr)	980	930	880	830	780	740	690	650

If the lead agency determines that a proposed project's operational phase GHG emissions are below the applicable threshold, then the project's GHG impacts would be deemed less than significant and consistent with state and local GHG reduction goals.

EnergyWise Plan

The County Energy Wise Plan (EWP) identifies changes that could occur in the County as a result of climate

change, provides an inventory of GHG emissions in the County, and establishes a GHG emissions forecast and reduction targets for the County. This plan identifies strategies to reduce the county's GHG emissions by 15% below the baseline year of 2006 by the year 2020. This goal is consistent with Assembly Bill 32. The inventory denotes municipal and community-wide emissions caused by a range of activities in 2006, including transportation, waste, agriculture, energy, and aircraft-related activities. The EWP includes an Implementation Program that provides a strategy for action with specific measures and steps to achieve the identified GHG reduction targets including, but not limited to, the following:

- Encourage new development to exceed minimum Cal Green requirements;
- Require a minimum of 75% of nonhazardous construction and demolition debris generated on site to be recycled or salvaged;
- Continue to implement strategic growth strategies that direct the county's future growth into existing communities and to provide complete services to meet local needs;
- Continue to increase the amount of affordable housing in the County, allowing lower-income families to live closer to jobs and activity centers, and providing residents with greater access to transit and alternative modes;
- Reduce potable water use by 20% in all newly constructed buildings by using the performance method provided in the California Green Building Code;
- Require use of energy-efficient equipment in all new development;
- Minimize the use of dark materials on roofs by requiring roofs to achieve a minimum solar reflectivity index of 10 for high-slope roofs and 68 for low-slope roofs; and
- Use light-colored aggregate in new road construction and repaving projects adjacent to existing cities.

In 2016 the County published the EnergyWise Plan 2016 Update, which describes changes and modifications to the EnergyWise plan. These modifications include a summary of the progress made toward implementing measures in the 2011 EWP, overall trends in energy use and emissions since the baseline year of the inventory (2006), and the addition of implementation measures intended to provide a greater understanding of the County's emissions status.

Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan

The specific plan does not provide policies or standards relating to greenhouse gas emissions.

Conditions of Development Plan Approval/Previous Environmental Review

As discussed in the Baseline Conditions, the previously certified EIRs do not address greenhouse gas emissions.

The conditions of approval of the Development Plan do not directly address greenhouse gas emissions except to require that the operator comply with requirements of the Air Pollution Control District.

Technical Study of Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Impacts

The application materials include an Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Impacts Assessment of Phases 3, 4 and 5 prepared by Ambient Air Quality and Noise Consultants in January 2018. The study is incorporated by reference and available for review in its entirety at the Department of Planning and Building, 976 Osos Street, San Luis Obispo. The following analysis provides a summary of the findings and conclusions of that study.

Discussion

(a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

The Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Impact Assessment (Ambient Air Quality and Noise Consultants, January 2018) states that the proposed project would not result short-term construction activities unless the alternative plant/stockpile location is implemented by the Applicant.

Construction Related Emissions

Emissions associated with construction of the relocated mineral processing plant and removal of the existing plant were calculated using the CalEEMod, version 2016.3.2, computer program. Construction of the new plant and removal of the existing plant would occur over an estimated six-month period and would involve the intermittent use of a crane, aerial lifts, and forklifts. Additional construction information, such as worker vehicle and haul truck trips, were based on default parameters contained in the model.

Estimated increases in GHG emissions associated with installation of the new plant are summarized in Table 12. Based on the modeling conducted, construction-related GHG emissions would total approximately 71 MTCO2*e*. Amortized GHG emissions, when averaged over an assumed 50-year project life, would total approximately 1.4 MTCO2*e*/year. However, the project is expected to extend the project life by an estimated 57 years and 50 years represents a worse-case estimate. Therefore, this impact would be considered *less than significant*.

There would also be a small amount of GHG emissions from waste generated during construction; however, this amount is speculative.

Table 12 – Construction Related GHG Emissions

Project Component	Annual CO_2 Emissions (MTCO2e/year)
Construction of New Plant and Removal of Existing Plant	71
Total Amortized Construction Emissions	1.4

Source: Ambient Air Quality and Noise Consultants, January 2018, Appendix A

Notes:

1. Amortized emissions are quantified based on an estimated 50-year project life. However, the project is expected to extend the project life by an estimated 57 years. So 50 years represents a worse-case estimate.

Operational GHG Emissions

Baseline GHG emissions were estimated by the GHG technical study (Ambient Air Quality and Noise Consultants, January 2018, Appendix A) and are summarized below in Table 13.

Table 13 – Operational GHG Emissions

Project Component	Annual CO_2 Emissions (MTCO2e/year)
Off-Road Equipment & Material Haul Trucks[1]	1,190

Work Trucks (On-Site & Off-Site)[2]	93
Off-Site Material Hauling[3]	969
Off-Site Worker Commute[4]	36
Energy Use[5]	158
Total:	2,446

Sources: Ambient Air Quality and Noise Consultants, January 2018, Appendix A

Notes:

1. Includes the use of 1 excavator, 1 motor grader, 2 dozers, 4 front-end loaders, 1 forklifts, 2 material haul trucks, dump truck, and 2 water trucks. Engine horsepower ratings and hours of use for off-road equipment and material haul trucks provided by the project applicant. Includes distance of on-site (unpaved) travel for water trucks and dump truck of 1,264 miles/year.
2. Includes the use of 4 work trucks. Based on a travel distance of 23,266 miles/year.
3. Assumes 359 haul truck trips/day, 13 miles/trip, 254 operational days/year.
4. Assumes 24 worker commute trips/day, 18 miles/trip, 254 operational days/year.
5. Based on existing annual energy use of 541,238 kWh/year.
6. Refer to Appendix A of the technical study for emissions modeling assumptions and methodologies

As discussed in the regulatory setting, the County has adopted a greenhouse gas reduction plan (the EnergyWise plan) that is designed to reduce emissions of GHGs by 15 percent to meet the requirements of AB 32. However, specific requirements for mining projects to reduce emissions of GHGs have not been adopted and so were not included in the Plan and the pathways identified in the EnergyWise plan to reduce GHG emissions are not relevant to a mining project. Although the quarry expansion would not conflict with the County's greenhouse gas reduction plan per se, the SLOAPCD GHG thresholds discussed above do not provide a meaningful benchmark for determining the significance of the project's GHG impacts. However, the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAMD) has adopted a quantitative significance threshold of 10,000 MT of CO2e for stationary industrial projects. As shown in Table 13, annual CO2 emissions for the project are estimated to be about 2,446 MTCO2e per year which is well below this threshold.

It should noted however, that the proposed project would not result in any operational increase in GHG emissions beyond Baseline Conditions, such as the installation of any additional stationary sources of emissions, off-road equipment, changes in processing rates, hours of operation, or additional vehicle trips. In addition, on-site stationary sources are in compliance with SLOAPCD permit requirements for the control of operational emissions. As a result, increased GHG emissions attributable to the proposed project would be limited to construction of the alternative plant and removal of the existing plant. This impact would be considered *less than significant.*

Reclamation Activities

Reclamation of the expansion areas would involve fewer pieces of off-road equipment and activities than during excavation and would not involve the trucking of quarry materials. Reclamation activities are ongoing as finish slopes are completed in the approved mining areas. Consequently, GHG

emissions emitted during the final reclamation phase of the Proposed Project would be less than that predicted for existing operational activities. As a result, this impact is considered *less than significant*.

Potential impacts associated with GHG emissions would be *less than significant and less than cumulatively considerable*.

(b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

Energy inefficiency contributes to higher GHG emissions which in turn may conflict with the following state and local plans for energy efficiency.

2011 EnergyWise Plan (EWP). As discussed above, the County of San Luis Obispo EnergyWise plan (EWP), adopted in 2011, serves as the County's GHG reduction strategy. The GHG-reducing policy provisions contained in the EWP were prepared for the purpose of complying with the requirements of AB 32 and achieving the goals of the AB 32 Scoping Plan, which have a horizon year of 2020. The policy provisions are divided into community-wide measures and measures aimed at reducing GHG emissions associated with County operations. The GHG reduction measures contained in the EWP are generally programmatic and intended to be implemented at the community level which is not applicable to surface mining operations.

San Luis Obispo County 2023 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS). The 2023 RTP, which was adopted by the SLOCOG Board in June 2023, provides a collective vision for the region's future balancing transportation and housing needs with social, economic, and environmental goals. The Plan identified and tested growth scenarios to accommodate the coming 42,000 new people, 18,000 new homes, and 18,000 new jobs. The plan helps guide future planning efforts and policy decisions that affect transportation, including its relationship with housing and land use that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions in our region. The 2023 RTP provides recommendations to help cities and the County of San Luis Obispo make important decisions about transportation, housing, and land-use. The 2023 RTP provides forward looking recommendations out to 2045 because many local government decisions will influence the region's long-term growth and development over the coming decades.

The RTP includes the region's Sustainable Communities Strategy and outlines how the region will meet or exceed its GHG reduction targets by creating more compact, walkable, bike-friendly, transit-oriented communities, preserving important habitat and agricultural areas, and promoting a variety of transportation demand management and system management tools and techniques to maximize the efficiency of the transportation network. The RTP and SCS provide guidance for the development and management of transportation systems county-wide to help achieve, among other objectives, GHG reduction goals. The RTP/SCS recommend strategies for community planning such as encouraging mixed-use, infill development that facilitate the use of modes of travel other than motor vehicles which are not generally applicable to a surface mining operation.

The project does not include the development of an industrial use that would be open to the public. Therefore, land use planning strategies such as mixed-use development would generally not be applicable. The project would not significantly affect the local area's jobs/housing balance beyond baseline conditions.

California Air Resources Board (CARB) 2022 Scoping Plan. Pursuant to AB 32, the California Air Resources Board (CARB or Board) prepared and adopted the initial Scoping Plan to "*identify and make recommendations on direct emissions reductions measures, alternative compliance mechanisms, market-based compliance mechanisms, and potential monetary and non-monetary incentives*" in order to achieve the 2020 goal, and to achieve "*the maximum technologically feasible and cost-effective GHG emissions reductions*" by 2020 and maintain and continue reductions beyond 2020. AB 32 requires CARB to update the Scoping Plan at least every five years.

The 2022 Climate Change Scoping Plan recommends strategies to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045 or earlier, outlining a technologically feasible, cost-effective, and equity-focused path to achieve the state's climate target. The 2022 plan, addressing recent legislation and direction from Governor Newsom, extends and expands upon earlier scoping plans with a target of reducing anthropogenic emissions to 85 percent below 1990 levels by 2045. The 2022 plan also takes the unprecedented step of adding carbon neutrality as a science-based guide and touchstone for California's climate work. The plan outlines how carbon neutrality can be achieved by taking steps to reduce GHGs to meet the anthropogenic emissions target and by expanding actions to capture and store carbon through the state's natural and working lands and using a variety of mechanical approaches.

The strategies described in the 2022 Scoping Plan are programmatic and intended to be implemented state-wide and industry-wide. They are therefore not applicable at the level of an individual project. However, as discussed in Section XVII, Transportation, the project is not expected to generate an increase in construction-related or operational traffic trips or Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) above baseline conditions which is consistent with Scoping Plan strategies for reducing vehicle miles traveled.

Overall, the project would have a *less than significant impact* relating to consistency with adopted plans and policies aimed at reducing GHG emissions.

Conclusion

GHG emissions would be *less than significant and less than cumulatively considerable* and consistent with plans adopted to reduce GHG emissions.

Mitigation

None are required.

Sources

Provided in Exhibit A.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
(a)	Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(b)	Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☒	☐	☐
(c)	Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(d)	Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(e)	For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(f)	Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(g)	Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Setting

The Hazardous Waste and Substances Site List (Cortese List) is a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to California Government Code (CGC) Section 65962.5 used by the state, local agencies, and developers to comply with CEQA requirements related to the disclosure of information about the location of hazardous materials release sites. The project is not located in an area of known hazardous material contamination and is not on a site listed on the Cortese List (State Water Resources Control Board [SWRCB] 2021; California Department of Toxic Substance Control [DTSC] 2021).

The County has adopted general emergency plans for multiple potential natural disasters, including the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, County Emergency Operations Plan, Earthquake Plan, Dam and Levee Failure Plan, Hazardous Materials Response Plan, County Recovery Plan, and the Tsunami Response Plan.

The California Health and Safety Code provides regulations pertaining to the abatement of fire-related hazards and requires that local jurisdictions enforce the CBC, which provides standards for fire resistive building and roofing materials, and other fire-related construction methods. The Safety Element of the County of San Luis Obispo General Plan provides a Fire Hazard Zones Map that indicates unincorporated areas in the county within moderate, high, and very high fire hazard severity zones. The project is located within the State Responsibility Area. Based on the Safety Element map of response times, it would take approximately less 15 minutes to respond to a call regarding fire or life safety. For more information about fire-related hazards and risk assessment, see Section XX, Wildfire.

The project site is not located within an Airport Review Area.

Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan

The specific plan does not provide policies or standards relating to hazards or hazardous materials.

Conditions of Development Plan Approval/Previous Environmental Review

As discussed in the Baseline Conditions, the EIRs prepared in 1996 and 1998 do not address greenhouse gas emissions. The conditions of approval of the Development Plan do not directly address hazards and hazardous materials except to require that the operator comply with requirements relating to activities that may adversely impact surface water quality.

Discussion

(a) *Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?*

Construction activities associated with the relocation of the processing plant as well as ongoing surface mining operations will employ grading and excavation equipment which may involve the use of oils, fuels, and solvents. In the event of a leak or spill, persons, soil, and vegetation down-slope from the site may be affected. The use, storage, and transport of hazardous materials is regulated by DTSC (22 Cal. Code of Regulations Section 66001, et seq.). The use of hazardous materials on the project site for construction and maintenance is required to be in compliance with local, state, and federal regulations. In addition, compliance with best management practices (BMPs) for the use and storage of hazardous materials would also address impacts. These BMPs may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Determining whether a product constitutes a hazardous material in accordance with federal and state regulations;

- Properly characterizing the physical properties, reactivity, fire and explosion hazards of the various materials;
- Using storage containers that are appropriate for the quantity and characteristics of the materials;
- Properly labeling of containers and maintaining a complete and up to date inventory;
- Ongoing inspection and maintenance of containers in good condition;
- Proper storage of incompatible, ignitable and/or reactive wastes;

In addition, mining activities may include the use of industrial explosives. The use of explosives must be conducted in accordance with the provisions of Title 8 of the California Code of Regulations relating to the protection of workers and the public from fire, shock and accidental detonation. These regulations address the use, storage and transport of explosives and will continue to be enforced by the Fire Department. Under the SMARA, all surface mining operations a required to be inspected at least once per calendar year to ensure ongoing compliance.

The project will be conditioned to comply with all applicable fire protection standards as determined by CAL FIRE, including, but not limited to, preparation of a fire safety plan. Compliance with the Uniform Fire Code and the recommendations of CalFIRE as set forth in their referral response of June 6, 2025 (Kevin McLean) will ensure that potential impacts associated with hazards to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials would be *less than significant.*

(b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?

Oils, gasoline, lubricants, fuels, and other potentially hazardous substances would be used and temporarily stored onsite during mining and construction activities A spill or leak of these materials under accident conditions during construction activities could create a potentially significant hazard to the surrounding environment including Rocky Canyon Creek.

In addition, the excavation of aggregate may expose subsurface material containing metals or other substances that could be hazardous to surface water or groundwater bodies. Mitigation measures HAZ-1 and HAZ-2 have been recommended to reduce potential impacts associated with upset or accident conditions during project operations. The Specific Plan includes policies and standards aimed at the protection of surface water quality. See also mitigation measure BIO-12.

Through required compliance with these standards and mitigation measures, potential operational hazards associated with the project would be effectively minimized. Therefore, potential impacts associated with hazards to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset or accident conditions would be *less than significant with mitigation.*

(c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?

The closest school facility is located approximately 2.2 miles to the southwest within the City of Atascadero. Therefore, the project site is not located within 0.25 mile of an existing or proposed school; therefore, *no impacts* would occur.

(d) *Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?*

Based on the California DTSC's Envirostor and SWRCB's GeoTracker, the project site is not listed on, nor is it located in close proximity to, a site listed on the Cortese List, which is a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to CGC Section 65962.5; therefore, *no impacts* would occur.

(e) *For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?*

The nearest airstrip in proximity to the project site is the Paso Robles Airport located approximately 13 miles to the north. The project site is not located within an Airport Review designation or adjacent to a private airstrip. The project site is not located within or adjacent to an airport land use plan or within 2 miles of a public airport or private airstrip; therefore, *no impacts would occur.*

(f) *Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?*

The project would not impair implementation or physically interfere with County hazard mitigation or emergency plans beyond baseline conditions; therefore, impacts would be *less than significant.*

(g) *Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?*

The project is east of the City of Atascadero and is about 6 miles from the CalFire/County Fire Station 43 in Creston and about 5 miles northwest of station 40 in Parkhill. The project will be conditioned to implement building and site improvements in accordance with the Fire Code, as determined by CalFire/County Fire (referral response from Kevin McClean, CalFire, June 6, 2025). Therefore, potential impacts associated with exposure of people or structures to significant risk involving wildland fires would be *less than significant.*

Conclusion

The project may include the use of potentially hazardous materials during construction. Mitigation measures have been identified below to reduce potential impacts associated with routine transport, use, and disposal of these materials, as well as potential hazards associated with upset and accident conditions and wildland fire risk. Upon implementation of measures HAZ-1 and HAZ-2, potential impacts associated with hazards and hazardous materials would be *less than significant with mitigation.*

Mitigation

HAZ-1 **Equipment Maintenance and Refueling.** During all construction and operational activities, the cleaning, refueling, and maintenance of equipment and vehicles shall occur only within designated staging areas. The staging areas shall conform to all Best Management Practices applicable to attaining zero discharge of stormwater runoff. At a minimum, all equipment and vehicles shall be checked and maintained on a daily basis to ensure proper operation and to avoid potential leaks or spills.

HAZ-2 **Spill Response Protocol.** During all construction and operational activities, all project-related spills of hazardous materials shall be cleaned up immediately. Appropriate spill prevention and cleanup materials shall be onsite at all times during construction.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Sources

Provided in Exhibit A.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
(a)	Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	☐	☒	☐	☐
(b)	Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(c)	Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:				
	(i) Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;	☐	☐	☒	☐
	(ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site;	☐	☐	☒	☐
	(iii) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or	☐	☐	☒	☐
	(iv) Impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(d)	In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(e)	Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Setting

The quarry occupies portions of three contiguous parcels with a total area of about 286.5 acres located at the northerly terminus of Rocky Canyon Road about one mile southeast of the City of Atascadero. Topography of the site consists of relatively steep hillsides with moderate to dense assemblages of oak woodlands and chaparral; quarried areas of the site are characterized by steep manufactured slopes some of which have been replanted in accordance with the approved restoration plan. Three jurisdictional drainages occur within the project area, including two USGS blue line drainages and one additional ephemeral drainage. The two USGS blue line drainages are Rocky Canyon Creek and an unnamed drainage, referred to herein as East Creek. Rocky Canyon Creek flows southwest out of the foothills of the Santa Lucia Range to the Salinas River. The creek supports sparse to moderately dense riparian vegetation in the vicinity of the project site.

The RWQCB's Water Quality Control Plan for the Central Coast Basin (Basin Plan; RWQCB 2017) describes how the quality of surface water and groundwater in the Central Coast Region should be managed to provide the highest water quality reasonably possible. The Basin Plan outlines the beneficial uses of streams, lakes, and other water bodies for humans and other life. There are 24 categories of beneficial uses, including, but not limited to, municipal water supply, water contact recreation, non-water contact recreation, and cold freshwater habitat. Water quality objectives are then established to protect the beneficial uses of those water resources. The RWQCB implements the Basin Plan by issuing and enforcing waste discharge requirements to individuals, communities, or businesses whose discharges can affect water quality.

In accordance with the LUO, a project that would change the runoff volume or velocity leaving any point of the site, result in an impervious surface of more than 20,000 square feet, or involve hillside development on slopes steeper than 10 percent is required to prepare a drainage plan for review and approval by the County. A drainage plan is not required where grading is exclusively for an exempt agricultural structure, crop production, or grazing. The LUO also requires the preparation of an erosion and sedimentation control plan for all construction and grading permit projects and site disturbance activities of one-half acre or more in geologically unstable areas, on slopes steeper than 30 percent, on highly erodible soils, or within 100 feet of any watercourse.

The County Department of Public Works is responsible for ensuring that new construction sites implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) during construction, and that site plans incorporate appropriate post-construction stormwater runoff controls. Construction sites that disturb 1 acre or more must obtain coverage under the SWRCB's Construction General Permit. The Construction General Permit requires the preparation of a SWPPP to minimize on-site sedimentation and erosion. There are several types of projects that are exempt from preparing a SWPPP, including routine maintenance to existing developments, emergency construction activities, and projects exempted by the SWRCB or RWQCB. Projects that disturb less than 1 acre must implement all required elements within the site's erosion and sediment control plan as required by the LUO.

The project site is not located within a groundwater basin identified by Bulletin 118 of the Department of Water Resources. There are four wells associated with the project site; groundwater is stored in five water tanks with a combined capacity of 72,000 gallons. Water is used for dust management, the washing of aggregate materials and for restoration activities.

For planning purposes, the flood event most often used to delineate areas subject to flooding is the 100-year flood. The Safety Element of the County of San Luis Obispo General Plan establishes policies to reduce flood hazards and reduce flood damage, including, but not limited to, prohibition of development in areas of high flood hazard potential, discouragement of single-road access into remote areas that could be closed during floods, and review of plans for construction in low-lying areas.

Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan

The policies and standards of the Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan (Exhibit C) provide guidance for the protection of water quality through the phased expansion of quarry operations. Topics addressed by these policies and standards include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The requirement for a detailed mining plan for each phase that identifies drainage and erosion protection facilities and management strategies.
- Standards for setbacks from surface water bodies.
- Ongoing reclamation and revegetation monitored by a qualified biologist.

Development Plan Conditions of Approval (as Amended In 2002)/Previous Environmental Review

The conditions (Exhibit D) incorporate the mitigation measures adopted with the certified 1996 Program EIR and the 1998 Revised Program EIR and include a number of requirements to address geologic resources that include, but are not limited, the following:

- The conditions require the operator to implement drainage and erosion control Best Management Strategies as required by the LUO and that the drainage system and surface water/process water management system be subject to ongoing monitoring and inspection.
- All ditches along access roads are to lined or otherwise designed to prevent erosion.
- The operator must retain a botanist to oversee revegetation activities.

Water Supply Assessment

Water Code §10910 et seq. requires preparation of a Water Supply Assessment ("WSA") for a project that is subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is considered a project as defined in Water Code §10912. The current project meets the definition of a "project" as described in §10912 because it is:

> *"A proposed industrial, manufacturing, or processing plant, or industrial park planned to house more than I,000 persons, occupying more than 40 acres of land, or having more than 650,000 square feet off floor area."*

Accordingly, a WSA for the Quarry was prepared in March, 2025 by Geosyntec consultants. That study is incorporated by reference and is available for review in its entirety at the Department of Planning and Building, 976 Osos Street, San Luis Obispo. The following analysis provides a summary of the findings and recommendations of that study.

Discussion

(a) *Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?*

The current surface mining activities have been conducted in accordance with the standards of the Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan, the approved Development Plan and associated conditions of approval since 2002. The continuation of surface mining activities into Phases 3, 4 and 5 will involve an area of disturbance of about 82 acres within which aggregate materials will be removed in accordance with the quantities summarized in Table 1 of the Project Description. Mining activities will result in the removal of surface vegetation and soil followed by the extraction of aggregate materials and the creation of manufactured slopes consistent with the proposed mining plans for each phase.

Following the removal of aggregate products, the slopes will be planted with vegetation and treated in accordance with the approved reclamation plan.

Mining activities have the potential to result in erosion which in turn can degrade surface or groundwater quality. Potential impacts relating to a violation of water quality standards, waste discharge requirements or the substantial degradation of surface or ground water quality are considered *less than significant with mitigation* because:

- The continuation of surface mining activities into Phases 3, 4 and 5 will be conducted in accordance with the policies and standards of the Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan and the conditions of the approved Development Plan from 2002 as they may be amended by the current CUP. In addition, mined areas will be subject to replanting and restoration as set forth in the adopted reclamation plan. Reclamation efforts will continue to be monitored for compliance in accordance with the SMARA and the conditions of approval.
- A sedimentation and erosion control plan will be required to minimize the potential for soil erosion, which will be subject to the review and approval of the County Building Division in accordance with LUO Section 22.52.120. The erosion and sedimentation control plan must set forth measures to minimize potential impacts related to erosion and will include requirements for specific erosion control materials, setbacks from creeks, and siltation.
- The project proposes a disturbance area greater than 1.0 acre, and will therefore be required to prepare and implement a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) by a qualified SWPPP developer in order to demonstrate compliance with the Federal Clean Water Act which prohibits certain discharges of stormwater containing pollutants.
- The project application materials include mining plans for each phase (Figures 6, 7 and 8) that include drainage collection, storage and conveyance infrastructure to ensure runoff does not cause erosion or adversely impact the quality of downstream surface or groundwater bodies.
- The project will be conditioned to require all potentially hazardous materials to be stored, refilled, and dispensed on-site in full compliance with applicable County Department of Environmental Health standards and Mitigation Measures HAZ-1 and HAZ-2, and compliance with existing County and state water quality, sedimentation, and erosion control standards.
- Implementation of mitigation measure BIO-12.

(b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?

As discussed in the setting, the project site is not located within a groundwater basin as identified by Bulletin 118 of the Department of Water Resources. However, the project is subject to the requirements of Water Code §10910 et seq. and a WSA was prepared by Geosyntec consultants in March, 2025 which is summarized below.

The project is not connected to an existing public water supply, defined in Water Code §10910 as "*a system for the provision of piped water to the public for human consumption that has 3,000 or more service connections*," nor is a connection planned in the future. The Quarry is not located within a groundwater basin requiring a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) under the California Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA, e.g. Department of Water Resources, 2019).

Aggregate washing under current mining operations requires 2,800 gallons per day for one week (5 days) of each month, totaling 168,000 gallons per year, or 0.52 acre-feet per year (AFY). Approximately 75% of this water is recycled for reuse at the facility, resulting in a groundwater demand of 42,000 gallons per year or 0.13 AFY for aggregate washing. Water is also used for dust control. An average of approximately 20,000 gallons per day, 278 days per year is used to control dust around aggregate storage piles, loading areas, and on travel paths in the mining area. This water is delivered by a 4,000-gallon water truck. More water is generally used during the summer than during the winter. In addition, an average of approximately 500 gallons per day, 278 days per year is used within the aggregate plant at spray bars to control dust when material is transferred through plant conveyors, crushers, and other equipment. Approximately 75% of this water is recycled for reuse, resulting in a groundwater demand of 125 gallons per day. Lastly, approximately 100 gallons per day, 278 days per year is applied to trucks leaving the facility to minimize dust during travel (SWCA Environmental Consultants, 2019). Combined, this results in a groundwater demand of 5,622,550 gallons per year or 17.25 AFY for dust control. Total groundwater demand for aggregate washing and dust control is 17.4 AFY. The process water handling is shown in Figure 20.

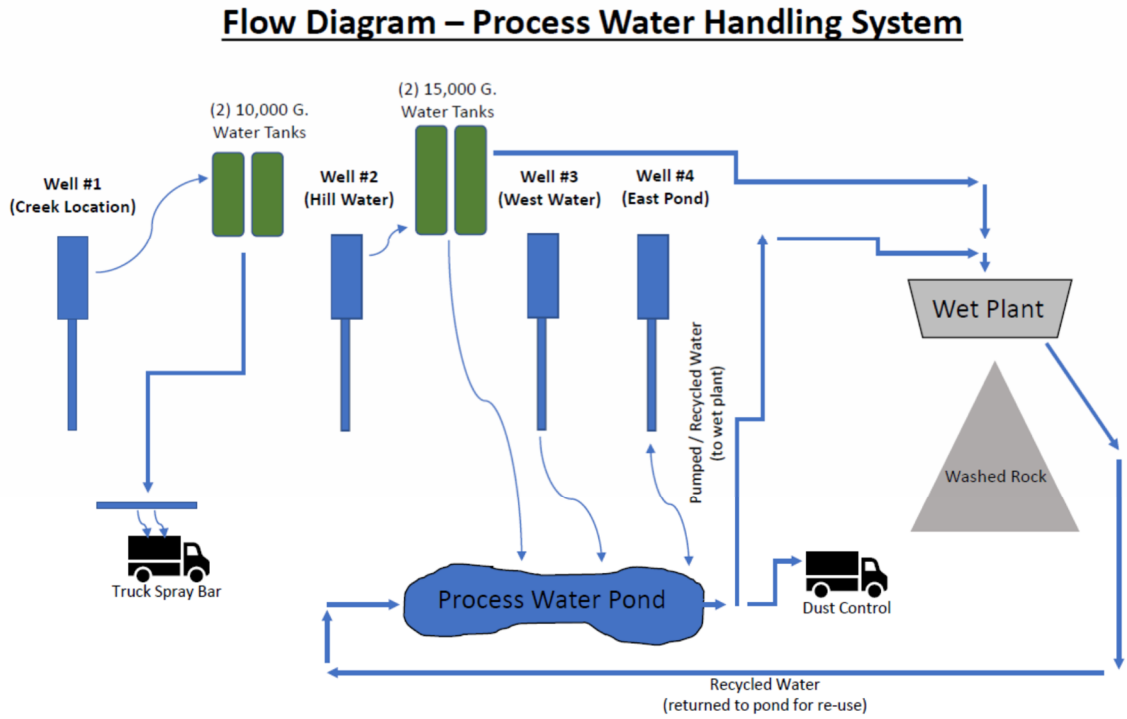


Figure 21 -- Flow Diagram of Process Water Handling

Because the mining processes, site traffic, and annual production capacity at the RCQ will not change beyond Baseline Conditions with the proposed expansion, no change in water demand relative to current operations is expected. In addition, at this time, irrigation to re-establish native vegetation on completed phases is not used during land reclamation at the RCQ (SWCA Environmental Consultants, 2019), and no need for irrigation is expected in the future based on the revegetation recommendations presented in the Rocky Canyon Revegetation and Reclamation Summary (Holland, 2014). Accordingly, reclamation of completed phases of quarry operations is not anticipated to increase water demand.

Groundwater from wells in fractured granitic bedrock has provided RCQ's water supply needs for at least 25 years. Overlying groundwater rights apply to this pumped groundwater. Fractured granitic bedrock is not listed as a source of water supply for the Salinas/Estrella or Atascadero/Templeton WPA. The reported locations of the four on-site private wells are shown on Figure 1 of the WSA. Water is stored in five on-site water tanks, which have a combined capacity of 72,000 gallons of storage, and a process water pond (CalPortland, 2020). Supply well construction and pump details are listed in Table 1 of the WSA.

The depth to groundwater in Rocky Canyon Creek Well, Dallaire Well, and Lower Well was within 10 feet of the ground surface at the time of their installation and development, and at least two of the wells were under flowing artesian conditions (Rauch Drilling Co., Inc, 1989; Filipponi and Thompson Drilling Inc., 1989; Filipponi and Thompson Drilling Inc., 2001). Rocky Canyon Creek Well, drilled to a depth of 60 feet in 1989, was under flowing artesian conditions at the time the well was completed (Rauch Drilling Co., Inc., 1989). Dallaire Well, drilled in 2001 to a depth of 120 feet, was under flowing artesian conditions both at the time of the well completion and at the initiation of a pumping test conducted in January 2004 (Filipponi and Thompson Drilling Inc., 2001).

An 8-hour well aquifer pumping test was conducted on Dallaire Well in 2004. The well sustained a pumping rate of 100 gallons per minute (gpm) throughout the duration of the test, and draw down in the well stabilized at approximately 48 feet below ground surface in the last two hours of the test (Filipponi and Thompson Drilling Inc., 2001).

Although initial yields from wells in fractured bedrock aquifers commonly are not representative of longer-term yields, which are typically lower (Robinson et al., 2004), the on-site wells have continued to meet the water demands of the RCQ for at least 25 years. The confined groundwater conditions in the RCQ wells indicate that the fracture systems in the granitic rock tapped by the wells are hydraulically connected to extensive fracture systems for which recharge is a diffuse process over a large area including higher elevations (Sophocleous, 2004). The granitic rock in this portion of the Santa Lucia Mountains is present at or near the ground surface for many square miles surrounding the Project site. Although recharge to the fractured granitic bedrock aquifer is expected to be a very small percentage of rainfall, likely less than 1 percent (Chesnaux, 2013), the confined conditions and sustained production for over twenty years including during single year and multiple year drought conditions, supports the conclusion that the current production rate from the RCQ wells is sustainable to meet water demand for continued operation of the quarry as planned.

Because RCQ wells have met water demand for at least 25 years of operation during sustained wet and dry conditions, both supply and demand are assumed to remain constant for the 25-year projections that follow for "normal," "single dry," and "multiple dry" year conditions, shown in Table 14 below.

Table 14 -- 25-Year Projection of "Normal Year," "Single Dry Year," and "Multiple Dry Year" supply, demand, and supply-source comparison (acre Feet Per Year)

	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045
Supply (groundwater)	17.4	17.4	17.4	17.4	17.4	17.4
Demand	17.4	17.4	17.4	17.4	17.4	17.4

Source: Geosyntec consultants in March, 2025

Based on historical operations, the RCQ's existing groundwater supply will continue to exceed the projected annual water demand of 5,664,550 gallons per year (17.4 AFY). If the production capacity of

the existing wells decreases, CalPortland may choose to meet the water demand of RCQ by installing additional wells on their property.

The project was referred to the Environmental Health Department for review and comment. Their response of June 5, 2025 (L. Admundson) states that they have no comments.

Therefore, the project would have a *less than significant impact* on groundwater resources.

(c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:

(c-i) Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?

As discussed above under item a., project impacts associated with the continuation of surface mining into Phases 3, 4 and 5 are expected to have a *less than significant impact* relating to drainage and erosion.

The project was referred to the Public Works Department (letters of August 5, 2019 and September 12, 2025). The project site is within a drainage review area and a drainage plan is required as set forth in LUO Section 22.52.110. The project lies outside the stormwater regulated area for municipal systems and subject to NPDES per requirements. The Public Works Department has no additional comments so long as the original conditions of the Development Plan remain in effect. Lastly, the project and proposed operation is currently enrolled in the Industrial Stormwater General Permit (IGP) for Discharges Associated with Industrial Activities (Order 2014-0057-DWQ). The applicant will need to submit a Change of Information (COI) with the State Water Resources Control Board (California Water Boards) prior to use inauguration.

(c-ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?

According to the Safety Element Flood Hazard Map, the project site is not within an area affected by the 100-year or 500-years storms.

As discussed under item a., above, the project application materials include mining plans for each phase that include preliminary grading and erosion control plans for the collection, storage, and conveyance infrastructure to ensure runoff does not adversely impact the quality of downstream surface or groundwater bodies.

The project will be subject to post-construction stormwater requirements through preparation and implementation of a SWPPP, which would identify appropriate Best Management Practices to capture and treat runoff before it leaves the site.

Based on required compliance with applicable state and County drainage and stormwater control regulations, the Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan, the conditions of approval of the development plan, as well as implementation of the Preliminary Stormwater Control Plan, project impacts associated with increased surface runoff resulting in flooding on- or off-site would be *less than significant.*

(c-iii) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?

As discussed in item c-ii, above, required compliance with applicable state and County drainage and stormwater control regulations, as well as implementation of the Preliminary Stormwater Control

Plan, project impacts associated with increased surface runoff resulting in flooding on- or off-site would be *less than significant.*

(c-iv) Impede or redirect flood flows?

Based on the Safety Element Flood Hazard Map, the project site is not located within a 100-year flood zone. Therefore, *no impacts would occur.*

(d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?

Based on the Safety Element Flood Hazard Map, the project site is not located within a 100-year flood zone (County of San Luis Obispo 2013). Based on the San Luis Obispo County Tsunami Inundation Maps, the project site is not located in an evacuation area with the potential for inundation by a tsunami (CDOC 2023). The project site is not located near a large surface water body that may produce a seiche in the event of a strong earthquake in the area. Therefore, the project site has no potential to release pollutants due to project inundation and *no impacts* would occur. See also the discussion provided in Section IX. Hazards and Hazardous Materials, as well as mitigation measures HAZ-1 and HAZ-2 and BIO-2.

(e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

As discussed in the setting, the project is required to comply with relevant permitting of the RWQCB. The project is not served by a community water system and is not subject to a Groundwater Management Plan. According to the WSA, the project has sufficient water to supply the project without adversely impacting the groundwater basin. Therefore, potential impacts associated with conflict or obstruction of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan would be *less than significant.*

Conclusion

The project will result in *less than significant impacts* associated with water supply, water quality and hydrology.

Mitigation

None are required.

Sources

See Exhibit A.

XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
(a)	Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(b)	Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Setting

The LUO was established to guide and manage the future growth in the county in accordance with the County of San Luis Obispo General Plan; regulate land use in a manner that will encourage and support orderly development and beneficial use of lands; minimize adverse effects on the public resulting from inappropriate creation, location, use, or design of buildings or land uses; and protect and enhance significant natural, historic, archeological, and scenic resources within the county. The LUO is the primary tool used by the County to carry out the goals, objectives, and policies of the General Plan.

The Land Use Element (LUE) of the County of San Luis Obispo General Plan provides policies and standards for the management of growth and development in each unincorporated community and rural areas of the county and serves as a reference point and guide for future land use planning studies throughout the county. The LUE identifies strategic growth principles to define and focus the County's proactive planning approach and balance environmental, economic, and social equity concerns. Each strategic growth principle correlates with a set of policies and implementation strategies that define how land will be used and resources protected. The LUE also defines each of the 14 land use designations and identifies standards for land uses based on the designation they are located within. The project is located in the Agriculture and Rural Lands land use categories and is subject to the Extractive Resource Area combining designation. .

The inland LUE also contains the area plans of each of the four inland planning areas: Carrizo, North County, San Luis Obispo, and South County. The area plans establish policies and programs for land use, circulation, public facilities, services, and resources that apply "areawide," in rural areas, and in unincorporated urban areas within each planning area. Part three of the LUE contains each of the 13 inland community and village plans, which contain goals, policies, programs, and related background information for the County's unincorporated inland urban and village areas.

The project site is located within the area governed by the North County Area Plan and the Estrella-El Pomar Sub-Area. The project site is also subject to the Extractive Resource Combining Designation which is used to identify and protect active or potential mineral, petroleum, and energy-extraction sites from incompatible urban or residential encroachment.

Discussion

(a) Physically divide an established community?

The project does not propose project elements or components that would physically divide the site from surrounding areas and uses. The project would continue the general level of activities associated with the baseline conditions and would not create, close, or impede any existing public or private roads, or create any other barriers to movement or accessibility within the area. Therefore, the proposed project would not physically divide an established community and *impacts would be less than significant.*

(b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

The project is consistent with policies and standards of the Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan, the conditions of approval of the 2002 Development Plan and Restoration Plan, and the following Planning Area Standard for the El Pomar-Estrella Sub-area of the North County Planning Area as set forth in Chapter 22.94 of the LUO. Chapter 22.94.040 F. states:

> *F. Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan Area. All development within the Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan Area (see Figure 94-13) shall comply with the adopted specific plan dated April 23, 1996 and amended May 2, 2002, including the objectives, policies and standards of the Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan. In the event of any conflict between the provisions of this Title and the Specific Plan, the Specific Plan shall control. Any deviation of existing or proposed development from the provisions of the Specific Plan shall occur only after appropriate amendment of the Specific Plan.*

In sum, with implementation of mitigation measures HAZ-1, HAZ-2, GEO-1 and GEO-2, and continued compliance with the conditions of approval as they may be amended, the project would not conflict with policies or regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating environmental effects and impacts would be *less than significant with mitigation.*

As discussed in Section VII. Geology and Soils, Condition No. 37 of Development Plan approval states:

37. Temporary cut slopes which are to remain in place until later removal (referred to as interim slopes) shall consist of slopes no steeper than 1: 1, with 15-foot wide benches at 50-foot vertical spacing.

The applicants have applied to revise this condition to allow the temporary benches to be 12.5 feet in width. Based on the analysis provided in the engineering geology study for the project, the resulting benches will be stable and satisfy engineering standards. Therefore, this change would not result in a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with the specific plan.

Conclusion

The project is consistent with the property's land use designation and the guidelines and policies for development within the applicable area plan, Specific Plan, conditions of approval as they may be amended, and LUO. The project, as it may be conditioned, was found to be consistent with standards and policies set forth in the County of San Luis Obispo General Plan, the North County Planning Area/El Pomar-Estrella Sub-Area, the SLOAPCD Clean Air Plan, and other land use policies for this area. The project will be conditioned to comply with standards set forth by County Fire/CAL FIRE and the County Public Works Department.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Potential impacts related to land use and planning would be *less than significant with mitigation* measures associated with biological resources, geology and soils, and hazards and hazardous materials. See also the discussion provided in Section XII. Mineral Resources.

Mitigation

Implement mitigation measures BIO-1 through BIO-16, GEO-1 and GEO-2, HAZ-1 and HAZ-2.

Sources

Provided in Exhibit A.

XII. MINERAL RESOURCES

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
(a)	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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(b)	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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Setting

The California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA) requires that the State Geologist classify land into mineral resource zones (MRZ) according to the known or inferred mineral potential of the land (California PRC Sections 2710–2796).

The three MRZs used in the SMARA classification-designation process in the San Luis Obispo-Santa Barbara Production-Consumption Region are defined below (California Geological Survey [CGS] 2015):

- **MRZ-1:** Areas where available geologic information indicates that little likelihood exists for the presence of significant mineral resources.
- **MRZ-2:** Areas where adequate information indicates that significant mineral deposits are present, or where it is judged that a high likelihood for their presence exists. This zone shall be applied to known mineral deposits or where well-developed lines of reasoning, based upon economic-geologic principles and adequate data, demonstrate that the likelihood for occurrence of significant mineral deposits is high.
- **MRZ-3:** Areas containing known or inferred aggregate resources of undetermined significance.

The LUO provides regulations for development in delineated Energy and Extractive Resource Areas (EX) and Extractive Resource Areas (EX1). The project site is subject to the the EX combining designation which is used to identify areas of the county where:

1. Mineral or petroleum extraction occurs or is proposed to occur;
2. The state geologist has designated a mineral resource area of statewide or regional significance pursuant to California PRC Sections 2710 et seq. (SMARA); and
3. Major public utility electric generation facilities exist or are proposed.

The purpose of this combining designation is to protect significant resource extraction and energy production areas identified by the County LUE from encroachment by incompatible land uses that could hinder resource extraction or energy production operations, or land uses that would be adversely affected by extraction or energy production.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Discussion

(a) 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?

Based on the California Geological Survey (CGS) Information Warehouse for Mineral Land Classification, the project site is located within an area that has been evaluated for mineral resources and contains an active surface mine (CGS 2026). The project involves the continuation of surface mining activities on a site identified as containing important mineral resources.

In addition, based on Chapter 6 of the County of San Luis Obispo General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element – Mineral Resources, the project site is located within an extractive resource area and is subject to the Extractive Resource Area combining designation. The project is expected to continue the mining of aggregate resources on the project site as outlined in Table 1. Over time, the continued mining operations will deplete the resource for public benefit as envisioned by the LUO and the SMARA. Therefore, potential impacts associated with the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state are considered *less than significant*.

(b) 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?

As discussed under item a., the project site is subject to the Extractive Resource Combining Designation and will continue to conduct surface mining in accordance with the Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan and Development Plan conditions. Therefore, potential impacts associated with 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 are considered *less than significant*.

Conclusion

Impacts to mineral resources are considered *less than significant* and no mitigation measures are necessary.

Mitigation

None are necessary.

Sources

Provided in Exhibit A.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

XIII. NOISE

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project result in:					
(a)	Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(b)	Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(c)	For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Setting

The Noise Element of the County of San Luis Obispo General Plan provides a policy framework for addressing potential noise impacts in the planning process. The purpose of the Noise Element is to minimize future noise conflicts. The Noise Element identifies the major noise sources in the county (highways and freeways, primary arterial roadways and major local streets, railroad operations, aircraft and airport operations, local industrial facilities, and other stationary sources) and includes goals, policies, and implementation programs to reduce future noise impacts. Among the most significant polices of the Noise Element are numerical noise standards that limit noise exposure within noise-sensitive land uses and performance standards for new commercial and industrial uses that might adversely impact noise-sensitive land uses.

Noise sensitive uses that have been identified by the County include the following:

- Residential development, except temporary dwellings
- Schools (preschool to secondary, college and university, and specialized education and training)
- Health care services (e.g., hospitals, clinics, etc.)
- Nursing and personal care
- Churches
- Public assembly and entertainment
- Libraries and museums
- Hotels and motels
- Bed and breakfast facilities

- Outdoor sports and recreation
- Offices

All sound levels referred to in the Noise Element are expressed in A-weighted decibels (dBA). A-weighting de-emphasizes the very low and very high frequencies of sound in a manner similar to the human ear.

The LUO establishes standards for acceptable exterior and interior noise levels and describes how noise shall be measured. Exterior noise level standards are applicable when a land use affected by noise is one of the sensitive uses listed in the Noise Element. Exterior noise levels are measured from the property line of the affected noise-sensitive land use.

Table 15 -- Maximum allowable exterior noise level standards[1]

Sound Levels	Daytime 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.	Nighttime [2]
Hourly Equivalent Sound Level (L_{eq}, dB)	50	45
Maximum level, dB	70	65

[1] When the receiving noise-sensitive land use is outdoor sports and recreation, the noise level standards are increased by 10 db.

[2] Applies only to uses that operate or are occupied during nighttime hours.

The noise standards are subject to a range of exceptions, including noise sources associated with construction, provided such activities do not take place before 7 a.m. or after 9 p.m. on weekdays, or before 8 a.m. or after 5 p.m. on Saturday or Sunday. Noise associated with agricultural land uses, traffic on public roadways, railroad line operations, and aircraft in flight are also exempt.

Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan

The specific plan sets forth the following policies and standards relating to noise impacts associated with the conduct of surface mining activities:

1. **Transition Area**
   A transition area is proposed to protect mining operations from future incompatible land uses on adjacent lands. The transition area is located between the mining area boundary and the plan area boundary shown on Figure 2-3. Within the transition area, the county shall provide notice to property owners of the mine when requests for development are submitted.

21. **Hours of Operation**
    Hours of trucking shall be limited to reduce noise impacts. Extended operating hours to meet public works project demand for other than emergency reasons can only be considered when the impacts from truck traffic noise and safety concerns are adequately resolved.

Previous Environmental Review and Conditions of Development Plan Approval

As discussed in the Baseline Conditions, the EIRs prepared 1998 and 2002 assessed potential noise impacts associated with surface mining activities at the program level for the entire mining area and at the project level for Phase 1. There were no mitigation measures for noise adopted as part of the approvals granted in 1998 or 2002.

There were no conditions of approval of the Development Plan relating to noise that are applicable for Phases 3, 4 and 5:

Technical Study of Noise and Groundborne Vibration Impacts

The application materials include Noise and Groundborne Vibrations Impact Assessment of Phases 3, 4 and 5 prepared by Ambient Air Quality and Noise Consultants in January 2018. The study is incorporated by reference and available for review in its entirety at the Department of Planning and Building, 976 Osos Street, San Luis Obispo. The following analysis provides a summary of the findings and conclusions of that study.

Discussion

(a) *Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?*

Noise-Sensitive Land Uses

For residential land uses exposed to non-transportation noise, the maximum allowable noise exposure standards vary depending on the duration of exposure and time of day. During the daytime hours of 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., average-hourly noise levels are limited to 50 dBA Leq at the property line of the receiving noise-sensitive land use. Maximum instantaneous noise levels associated with non-transportation noise sources are limited to 70 dBA Lmax and impulsive noise levels, such as blasting events, are limited to 65 dBA Lmax at the property line of noise-sensitive land uses. These daytime noise standards are reduced by 5 dBA for events occurring during the more noise-sensitive nighttime hours (10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.). These standards are also reflective of those adopted by the City of Atascadero.

The nearest noise-sensitive land uses are rural residential dwellings, which are generally located to the north and southwest of the quarry, within San Luis Obispo County. Residential land uses are also located southwest of the quarry along Via Cielo, within the City of Atascadero. Along the existing truck haul route (Figure 22), which includes portions of Rocky Canyon Road, Halcon Road, Viejo Camino, and Santa Barbara Road, noise-sensitive land uses consist predominantly of residential land uses. Non-residential noise-sensitive land uses located along the haul truck route, include Paloma Creek Park and the Atascadero Children's Center, which are located near the intersection of Halcon Road and Viejo Camino; as well as, Little Ark Preschool and Dove Creek Church, which are located along Santa Barbara Road.

Ambient Noise Levels

Short-term noise measurement surveys were conducted on July 20th and November 20th, 2017 for purposes of documenting ambient noise levels in the general vicinity of nearby residential land uses and at noise sensitive land uses located along the truck haul route. Noise measurements were conducted using a Larson Davis Laboratories, Type I, Model 820 integrating sound-level meter positioned at a height of approximately 5 feet above ground level. Measured ambient noise levels are summarized in Table 16.

Based on the measurements conducted, ambient noise levels at residential land uses located in the vicinity of the project site and along the proposed haul routes are primarily influenced by vehicle traffic on area roadways. To a lesser extent, other sources such as occasional aircraft over flights also contribute to the existing noise environment. Average-hourly daytime noise levels at noise-sensitive land uses located near the quarry and along the haul route generally range from the mid-40's to lower

60's (in dBA Leq). Intermittent noise levels (in dBA Lmax) ranged from the lower 50's to the mid-70's. Average-daily noise levels ranged from approximately 36 to 39 dBA CNEL.

Table 16 -- Summary of Measured Ambient Noise Levels

Location[1]	Monitoring Period	Noise Levels (dBA)		Primary Noise Source(s)
		Leq	Lmax	
M-1. Old Adobe Road[2]	0940-0950	44.1	56.3	Birds. Plant noise faintly/ intermittently detectable in distance
	1120-1130	43.2	53.4	
M-2. 10080 Rocky Canyon Road[2]	0820-0830	54.6	69.9	Vehicle traffic on Rocky Canyon Road
	1330-1340	56.2	72.4	
M-3. 9402 Via Cielo[2]	0805-0810	44.2	54.3	Vehicle traffic and dogs barking in distance.
	1405-1415	46.3	56.1	
M-4. Halcon Road, North of Calle Milano[3]	1355-1405	52.8	69.1	Vehicle traffic on Halcon Road
M-5. 9301 Jornada Lane at El Camino Real. The Oaks Apartments[3]	1525-1535	60.9	73.1	Vehicle traffic on El Camino Real
M-6. 11300 Viejo Camino. Bordeaux House Apartments[3]	1250-1300	56.7	68.5	Vehicle traffic on Viejo Camino
M-7. 11665 Viejo Camino. Paloma Creek Park[3]	1330-1340	56.3	73.5	Vehicle traffic on Viejo Camino
M-8. Viejo Camino South of Halcon Road[3]	1450-1500	64.5	81.4	Vehicle traffic on Viejo Camino and Halcon Road
M-9. Santa Barbara Road at Bliss Street[3]	1415-1430	63.3	73.9	Vehicle traffic on Santa Barbara Road

Notes:

1. Refer to Figure 5 of the Noise Study for noise measurement locations.
2. Ambient noise measurements were conducted on July 20, 2017 using a Larson Davis Laboratories, Type I, Model 820 integrating sound-level meter placed at a height of approximately 5 feet above ground level.
3. Ambient noise measurements were conducted on November 20, 2017 using a Larson Davis Laboratories, Type I, Model 820 integrating sound-level meter placed at a height of approximately 5 feet above ground level.

Traffic Noise

Existing Traffic Noise

Existing traffic noise levels were calculated for roadway segments located along the truck haul route using the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) roadway noise prediction model. Input variables such as daily traffic volumes, traffic distribution characteristics, vehicle speeds, ground attenuation factors, and roadway widths were based on information derived from the traffic report prepared for this project. Existing hours of haul truck operations are from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Distances to existing average-daily traffic noise contours are summarized in Table 17. As shown in Table 17, existing average-daily traffic noise levels along area roadways range from approximately 50 to 59 dBA Ldn/CNEL at 75 feet.

Table 17 -- Predicted Existing Traffic Noise Levels

Roadway Segment	Predicted Ldn/CNEL at 75 Feet from Near-Travel-Lane Centerline	Distance to Predicted Ldn/CNEL Contours (Feet)		
		60	65	70
Halcon Road, North of Calle Milano	50	WR	WR	WR
Halcon Road, South of Calle Milano	55	WR	WR	WR
Viejo Camino, North of Halcon Road	55	WR	WR	WR
Viejo Camino, South of Halcon Road	59	72	WR	WR
Santa Barbara Road, West of Viejo Camino	58	68	WR	WR
Santa Barbara Road, West of Bliss Street[2]	56	WR	WR	WR

Notes:

1. Existing traffic noise levels were calculated for roadway segments located along the truck haul route using the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) roadway noise prediction model based on traffic volumes obtained from the traffic analysis prepared for this project. Predicted traffic noise levels are based on a minimum setback distance of 75 to outdoor activity areas.
2. Predicted traffic noise level includes a minimum 5-dB reduction for shielding provided by the existing sound barrier.

Table 17 also presents predicted existing traffic noise levels at 75 feet from the centerline of the nearest travel lane, which generally represents the distance to the outdoor activity areas of the nearest residential land uses located along the haul route. As shown in Table 17, predicted existing traffic noise levels along Halcon Road and Viejo Camino, north of Halcon Road, do not exceed the City exterior noise standard of 60 dBA CNEL/Ldn at a distance of 75 feet. Along Viejo Camino, between Halcon Road and Santa Barbara, the outdoor activity areas of existing land uses are located at distances greater than 75 feet from the near-travel-lane centerline and largely shielded from the roadway by intervening structures. As a result, exterior noise levels within the outdoor activity areas of residential dwellings located along Viejo Camino would not be projected to exceed the City's exterior noise standard of 60 dBA CNEL/Ldn. Similarly, the outdoor activity areas of residential land uses located along Santa Barbara Road are located at distances greater than 75 feet from the near-travel-lane centerline or shielded by existing sound barriers or structures. As a result, exterior noise levels within the outdoor activity areas of residential dwellings located along Santa Barbara Road would, likewise, not be projected to exceed the City's or County's exterior noise standard of 60 dBA CNEL/Ldn.

Non-residential, noise-sensitive land uses located along the haul route include Paloma Creek Park, located north of Halcon Road, the Atascadero Children's Center located adjacent to and west of Viejo Camino, and the Little Ark Preschool and Dove Creek Church, located north of Santa Barbara Road, between El Camino Real and Viejo Camino. Predicted existing traffic noise levels at Paloma Creek Park do not exceed the City's exterior noise standard of 70 dBA CNEL/Leq. Based on the predicted noise levels noted in Table 17 and assuming an average exterior-to-interior noise reduction of 25 dBA, predicted existing interior noise levels at the Atascadero Children's Center, Little Ark Preschool, and Dove Creek Church, would not be predicted to exceed the City's interior noise standard of 45 dBA CNEL/Leq.

Future Traffic Noise

Future traffic noise levels were calculated using the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) roadway noise prediction model (FHWA-RD-77-108) based on California vehicle reference noise levels and data obtained from the traffic analysis prepared for this project. Additional input data included day/night percentages of autos, medium and heavy trucks, vehicle speeds, ground attenuation factors, and roadway widths. The project's contribution to traffic noise levels along area roadways was determined by comparing the predicted noise levels with and without project-generated traffic.

Predicted existing and future cumulative traffic noise levels are presented in Table 18.

Table 18 -- Future Cumulative Traffic Noise Levels

Roadway Segment	Predicted Traffic Noise Level (dBA CNEL/Ldn) at 75 feet from Near-Travel-Lane Centerline	
	Existing Conditions	Future Conditions
Halcon Road, North of Calle Milano	50	52
Halcon Road, South of Calle Milano	55	56
Viejo Camino, North of Halcon Road	55	56
Viejo Camino, Halcon Road to Santa Barbara Road	59	61
Santa Barbara Road, West of Viejo Camino	58	60
Santa Barbara Road, West of Bliss Street	57	58

Source: Ambient Air Quality and Noise Consultants in January 2018

Notes:

1. Traffic noise levels were calculated for roadway segments located along the truck haul route using the FHWA roadway noise prediction model based on traffic volumes obtained from the traffic analysis prepared for this project. Predicted traffic noise levels are based on a setback distance of 75 to outdoor activity areas.
2. Predicted traffic noise level includes a minimum 5-dB reduction for shielding provide by the existing sound barrier.

As shown in Table 18, predicted existing and future cumulative traffic noise levels along Halcon Road and Viejo Camino, north of Halcon Road, are not projected to exceed the City exterior noise standard of 60 dBA CNEL/Ldn. Along Viejo Camino, between Halcon Road and Santa Barbara, the outdoor activity areas of existing land uses are located at distances greater than 75 feet from the near-travel-lane centerline and largely shielded from the roadway by intervening structures. As a result, exterior noise levels within the outdoor activity areas of residential dwellings located along Viejo Camino would not be projected to exceed the City's exterior noise standard of 60 dBA CNEL/Ldn under existing or future cumulative conditions. Similarly, the outdoor activity areas of residential land uses located along Santa Barbara Road are located at distances greater than 75 feet from the near-travel-lane centerline or shielded by existing sound barriers or structures. As a result, exterior traffic noise levels within the outdoor activity areas of residential dwellings located along Santa Barbara Road would, likewise, not be projected to exceed the City's exterior noise standard of 60 dBA CNEL/Ldn under existing or future cumulative conditions.

Because the proposed project would not result in a change in processing rates, no change in haul truck volumes along existing roadways would occur. In addition, as noted above, predicted existing and future cumulative traffic noise levels at nearby land uses would not exceed applicable noise standards. For these reasons, this impact is considered *less than significant*.

Noise Associated With Material Excavation & Processing

Existing Noise Levels Associated With Excavation and Processing

Existing noise levels associated with onsite quarry operations were calculated using the *SoundPlan* computer program, taking into account source-specific operational data, source and receiver elevations, and intervening terrain, and are presented in Tables 19 and 20 under the column labeled Existing Conditions. Reference noise levels contained in the model for major noise-generating sources, including the crusher, processing plant, off-road equipment, and material loading activities, were based on noise measurement data obtained at the quarry and existing environmental documentation. Onsite haul truck operations were included assuming an average of 20 haul truck trips per hour. Noise modeling for stationary equipment was based on existing equipment locations.

Table 19 -- Predicted *Average-Hourly* Material Excavation & Processing Noise Levels at Nearby Residential Land Uses *Existing Plant & Stockpile Location*

Receiver[1]	Existing Conditions	Expansion Phases						Exceeds Standard/ Threshold of Significance?[2]
		Phase 3		Phase 4		Phase 5		
		Noise Level (dBA Leq)	Change Compared to Baseline	Noise Level (dBA Leq)	Change Compared to Baseline	Noise Level (dBA Leq)	Change Compared to Baseline	
1	41	36	-3	37	-4	36	-5	No
2	44	42	-2	41	-3	40	-4	No
3	36	35	-1	35	-1	35	-1	No
4	35	36	1	36	1	36	1	No
5	38	38	0	38	0	38	0	No
6	40	39	0	40	0	39	0	No
7	38	38	0	38	0	38	0	No

Source: Ambient Air Quality and Noise Consultants in January 2018

Notes:

1. Receiver locations are provided in Figure 6 of the nose study.
2. Based on the daytime noise standard of 50 dBA Leq and 70 dBA Lmax). Significant increases defined as an increase of 5 dBA, or greater.

Table 20 -- Predicted *Maximum Instantaneous* Material Excavation & Processing Noise Levels at Nearby Residential Land Uses *Existing Plant & Stockpile Location*

Receiver[1]	Existing Conditions	Expansion Phases						Exceeds Standard/ Threshold of Significance?[2]
		Phase 3		Phase 4		Phase 5		
		Noise Level (dBA Leq)	Change Compared to Baseline	Noise Level (dBA Leq)	Change Compared to Baseline	Noise Level (dBA Leq)	Change Compared to Baseline	
1	46	43	-3	42	-4	41	-5	No
2	49	47	-2	46	-3	45	-4	No
3	41	40	-1	40	-1	40	-1	No
4	40	41	1	41	1	41	1	No
5	43	43	0	43	0	43	0	No
6	45	45	0	45	0	45	0	No
7	43	43	0	43	0	43	0	No

Source: Ambient Air Quality and Noise Consultants in January 2018

Notes:

1. Receiver locations are provided in Figure 6 of the study.
2. Based on the daytime noise standard of 50 dBA Leq and 70 dBA Lmax. Significant increases defined as an increase of 5 dBA, or greater

Future Noise Levels Associated With Excavation and Processing

Implementation of the proposed project would not result in the creation of new land uses, nor would the project result in the installation of new non-transportation noise sources. However, expansion into the Phase 3, 4, and 5 areas would result in the relocation of off-road equipment used for quarrying, blasting, and haul truck operations. Predicted changes in average-hourly and maximum instantaneous operational noise levels, in comparison to existing conditions, are summarized for each phase in Tables 19 and 20, respectively. As depicted, operational noise levels at nearby residential land uses are projected to range from approximately 35 to 42 dBA Leq and from 40 to 47 dBA Lmax. Predicted noise levels at residential land uses located north of the quarry (Receivers 1, 2, and 3) are projected to decrease as activities move further into the proposed expansion area. Predicted increases in noise levels at other residential land uses generally located southwest of the quarry (Receivers 4 through 7) would be negligible (i.e., 1 dB, or less).

Excavation activities occurring within the proposed Phase 3, 4, and 5 expansion areas were located at the highest bench elevations, which would have the highest potential for increased line-of-sight and noise exposure at nearby residential land uses. As a result, noise levels occurring in the lower benches of the proposed expansion areas would likely result in slightly lower noise levels than predicted in this analysis.

Alternative crusher, plant, and stockpile locations were also modeled. The alternative plant locations were centrally located near the northern and southern boundaries of the alternative plant and stockpile area for Phase 4 operational conditions. In addition, two alternative crusher locations, located near the northern and southern boundaries of the alternative plant and stockpile area, were included in the modeling for both Phase 3 and Phase 4 operational conditions.

Predicted average-hourly and maximum instantaneous operational noise levels with relocation of the crusher, plant, and stockpile operations are summarized for each phase in Table 21 and Table 22, respectively. Alternative plant, stockpile, and crusher locations are depicted in Figure 3 of the noise study. Based on the modeling conducted, relocation of the crusher during Phase 3 of the proposed expansion would result in a negligible change (i.e., 1 dB, or less) in overall operational noise levels at nearby land uses. Relocation of the crusher, plant, and stockpile operations during Phase 4 of the proposed expansion would, likewise, result in a negligible change (i.e., 8 dB, or less) in overall operational noise levels at nearby land uses. Predicted operational noise levels at nearby noise-sensitive land uses would not exceed the County's daytime noise standard of 50 dBA Leq or 70 dBA Lmax.

Table 21 -- Predicted *Average-Hourly* Material Excavation & Processing Noise Levels at Nearby Residential Land Uses *Alternative Plant & Stockpile Location*

Receiver[1]	Existing Conditions	Proposed Expansion Phase with Alternative Plant & Stockpile Locations				Exceeds Standard/ Threshold of Significance?[2]
		Phase 3 with Alternative Crusher Locations		Phase 4 with Alternative Crusher, Plant & Stockpile Locations		
		Noise Level (dBA Leq)	Change Compared to Baseline	Noise Level (dBA Leq)	Change Compared to Baseline	
1	41	39	-2	40	-1	No
2	44	41	-3	42	-2	No
3	36	33	-3	33	-3	No
4	35	36	1	38	3	No
5	38	38	0	40	2	No
6	40	40	0	32	-8	No
7	38	38	0	38	0	No

Source: Ambient Air Quality and Noise Consultants in January 2018

Notes:

1. Receiver locations are provided in Figure 6 of the study.
2. Reflects the highest modeled noise levels for the alternative crusher and plant/stockpile locations evaluated.
3. Based on the daytime noise standard of 50 dBA Leq and 70 dBA Lmax. Significant increases defined as an increase of 5 dBA, or greater.

Table 22 -- Predicted *Maximum Instantaneous* Material Excavation & Processing Noise Levels at Nearby Residential Land Uses *Alternative Plant & Stockpile Location*

Receiver[1]	Existing Conditions	Proposed Expansion Phase with Alternative Plant & Stockpile Locations				Exceeds Standard/ Threshold of Significance?[2]
		Phase 3 with Alternative Crusher Locations		Phase 4 with Alternative Crusher, Plant & Stockpile Locations		
		Noise Level (dBA Leq)	Change Compared to Baseline	Noise Level (dBA Leq)	Change Compared to Baseline	
1	46	44	-2	45	-1	No
2	49	46	-3	47	-2	No
3	41	38	-3	38	-3	No
4	40	41	1	43	3	No
5	43	43	0	45	2	No
6	45	45	0	37	-8	No
7	43	43	0	43	0	No

Source: Ambient Air Quality and Noise Consultants in January 2018

Notes:

1. Receiver locations are provided in Figure 6 of the study.
2. Reflects the highest modeled noise levels for the alternative crusher and plant/stockpile locations evaluated.
3. Based on the daytime noise standard of 50 dBA Leq and 70 dBA Lmax. Significant increases defined as an increase of 5 dBA, or greater.

Noise Associated With Blasting Events

Blasting may be required in areas where mechanical equipment cannot break up the bedrock. Noise generated by blasting varies depending on various factors, including the amount of charge-material used, the number and depth of the charge holes, and various other factors.

Noise and groundborne vibration levels associated with blasting activities were based on monitoring data obtained at the Rocky Canyon Quarry on July 13, 2017. This blast was conducted at the top of the mining area, which would represent a worst-case scenario situation, since less topographic features can block sound. The monitoring site was located at a distance of approximately 660 feet and within line of sight of the blast area. The monitored blast event involved a total of 157 holes with a total charge weight of 39,129 pounds (lbs) and a maximum charge weight of 405 lbs/hole. This blast event represented the maximum charge weight typically used at the quarry. Resultant noise and vibration levels were evaluated in comparison to Caltrans-recommended vibration criteria for structural damage and human annoyance associated with transient noise events. Airblast levels were evaluated in comparison to the USBM-recommended safe threshold for residential structures of 134 dB (unweighted). The airblast measured during this event was 122 dB (.004 psi) at 660 feet.

For airblasts, the USBM generally recommends a maximum safe overpressure of 134 dB (0.014 psi) at residential structures. These levels are generally considered to be the minimum levels for protection of human annoyance, as well as cosmetic damage (USBM 1980a, 1980b). The measured airblast level of 122 dB for the monitored blast event at the quarry, as discussed above, did not exceed the USBM recommended level of 134 dB. Given that this event represented the maximum charge weight typically used at the quarry and that the nearest offsite structures would be located in excess of approximately

1,700 feet from the proposed expansion areas and largely shielded by intervening terrain, predicted airblast levels at the nearest offsite structures would not be anticipated to exceed applicable thresholds. In addition, it is important to also note that blasting at the quarry would be performed by a blast professional and carefully controlled and monitored to ensure compliance with applicable standards and to minimize potential adverse impacts to nearby residents and structures. For these reasons, this impact is considered less than significant.

Noise Associated With Reclamation Activities

Reclamation of the expansion areas would involve fewer noise generating equipment and activities than during excavation and would not involve the trucking of quarry materials. Reclamation activities are ongoing as finish slopes are completed in the approved mining areas. Consequently, the potential noise impacts of the activities and traffic associated with the final reclamation phase of the Proposed Project would be less than that predicted for the operational phases. As previously discussed, operational activities within the proposed expansion areas would not result in noise levels that would exceed applicable noise standards at nearby residential land uses. In addition, continued compliance with the Rocky Canyon Specific Plan, which includes a transition area around the mining area in order to regulate land uses on adjacent properties to ensure land use compatibility, would minimize potential exposure of nearby residential land uses to onsite noise levels. For these reasons, this impact is considered less than significant.

Noise impacts associated with the project are considered *less than significant* because:

- Based on the preceding analysis, the project would not result in the generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project that would exceed standards established by the City of Atascadero or the County.
- Implementation of the proposed project, including the alternative plant and stockpile location, would not result in significant increases in ambient noise levels (i.e., 5 dBA, or greater) nor would predicted noise levels exceed applicable noise standards at nearby noise-sensitive land uses.
- Continued compliance with the Rocky Canyon Specific Plan, which includes a transition area around the mining area in order to regulate land uses on adjacent properties to ensure land use compatibility, would minimize potential exposure of nearby sensitive land uses to onsite noise levels.
- Predicted existing and future cumulative traffic noise levels at nearby land uses along the haul routes would not exceed applicable noise standards.
- When compared to existing conditions, implementation of the proposed project would result in material excavation activities being located at greater distance from the Rocky Canyon Trail, which would decrease short-term exposure of trail users to onsite noise levels.
- In the event the alternative plant/stockpile location is implemented, short-term exposure to trail users would be reduced because primary crushing and screening activities would be located at a greater distance from the Rocky Canyon Trail.
- Predicted airblast levels from blasting events at the nearest offsite structures would not be anticipated to exceed applicable thresholds.

(b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Existing Groundborne Vibration Levels

The existing vibration environment at nearby land uses, similar to that of the noise environment, is dominated by vehicle traffic on area roadways. Groundborne vibration levels are largely associated with heavy truck passbys. Groundborne vibration levels associated with heavy truck passbys can vary depending various factors, including vehicle type, weight, and pavement conditions. However, heavy trucks traveling on roadways typically do not result in vibration levels that are perceptible beyond approximately 25 feet from the travel lane (Caltrans 2013).

Groundborne vibration levels associated with off-road equipment were assessed based on representative equipment vibration levels derived from existing environmental documentation and distances to nearby existing structures. Groundborne vibration levels were evaluated in comparison to Caltrans-recommended vibration criteria for structural damage and human annoyance associated with continuous/frequent noise events (Table 23).

According to the noise impact assessment, vibration would be generated within the proposed expansion areas during both the excavation and reclamation phases. Groundborne vibration levels associated with excavation and reclamation activities would be primarily associated with the use of off-road equipment. Groundborne vibration levels would also be generated during blasting operations. Groundborne vibration levels and potential impacts associated with these activities are discussed, as follows:

Off-Road Equipment

Groundborne vibration levels typically associated with off-road equipment are summarized in Table 23. As depicted, off-road equipment vibration levels range from less than 0.01 in/sec ppv to roughly 0. 089 in/sec ppv at 25 feet. The highest vibration levels would typically be associated with bulldozer operations within the excavation areas, which would generate levels of approximately 0.089 in/sec ppv at 25 feet.

Groundborne vibration levels associated with onsite off-road equipment operations would not exceed the corresponding minimum thresholds for structural damage or human annoyance (i.e., 0.2 and 0.1 in/sec ppv, respectively.) Because ground vibration levels decrease with increased distance from the source, predicted off-road equipment vibration levels at off-site land uses would be substantially less and, likewise, would not exceed corresponding thresholds for structural damage risk or human annoyance. Furthermore, in comparison to existing conditions, implementation of the proposed project would result in material excavation activities being located at greater distance from the Rocky Canyon Trail, which would decrease short-term exposure of trail users to onsite vibration levels. In the event the alternative plant/stockpile location was implemented by the Applicant, primary crushing and screening activities and associated off-road equipment use would be located at a greater distance from the nearest offsite structures, which would result in decreased groundborne vibration levels at these nearest structures. For these reasons, this impact would be considered less than significant.

Table 23 -- Off-Road Equipment Vibration Levels

Equipment Type	Groundborne Vibration Level (in/sec, ppv) at 25 feet
Large Bulldozer	0.089
Loaded Haul Truck	0.076
Drill	0.089
Small Bulldozer	0.003

Source: Caltrans, 2013

Blasting Operations

A blast event at the quarry was monitored on July 13, 2017. The monitored blast event involved a total of 157 holes with a total charge weight of 39,129 pounds (lbs) and a maximum charge weight of 405 lbs/hole. This blast event represented the maximum charge weight typically used for individual blast events at the quarry. Based on the monitoring conducted, the blast generated a maximum vibration level of 0.26 in/sec ppv at approximately 660 feet from the blast. Based on this vibration level, the predicted maximum vibration level at the nearest receiver (Receiver 3), which is located approximately 1,800 feet north of the Phase 3 excavation area, would be 0.1 in/sec ppv. This value is well below the commonly applied architectural damage risk threshold of 0.5 in/sec for transient sources and, likewise, would not exceed the minimum threshold of 0.25 in/sec ppv for human annoyance. Groundborne vibration levels associated with blasting in Phases 4 and 5 areas would be at increased distance from the nearest residences. Because ground vibration levels decrease with increased distance, predicted vibration levels associated with blasting events in Phase 4 and 5 areas would be less than 0.1 in/sec ppv at the nearest residence and, likewise, would not exceed corresponding thresholds for structural damage risk or human annoyance. In addition, blasting at the quarry would be performed by a blast professional and carefully controlled and monitored to ensure compliance with applicable standards and to minimize potential adverse impacts to nearby residents and structures. For these reasons, this impact would be considered *less than significant*.

Reclamation

Blasting operations would not take place during the reclamation phase. Reclamation activities would, however, require the use of off-road equipment. As discussed above, groundborne vibration levels associated with off-road equipment operating within the proposed expansion areas would not exceed corresponding minimum thresholds for structural damage or human annoyance (i.e., 0.2 and 0.1 in/sec ppv, respectively.) As a result, this impact would be considered less than significant.

Therefore, impacts related to exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels would be *less than significant.*

(c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

The nearest airstrip in proximity to the project site is the Paso Robles Airport located approximately 13 miles to the northeast. The project site is not located within an Airport Review designation or adjacent to a private airstrip. The project site is not located within or adjacent to an airport land use plan or within 2 miles of a public airport or private airstrip; therefore, *no impact would occur*.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Conclusion

The preceding analysis concludes that noise impacts associated with the project, including the potential relocation of the processing plant, would remain below thresholds adopted by the City of Atascadero and the County. No other potentially significant impacts were identified, and no mitigation measures are necessary.

Mitigation

None are required.

Sources

Provided in Exhibit A.

XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
(a)	Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(b)	Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Setting

The Housing Element of the County of San Luis Obispo General Plan recognizes the difficulty for residents to find suitable and affordable housing within San Luis Obispo County. The Housing Element includes an analysis of vacant and underutilized land located in urban areas that is suitable for residential development and considers zoning provisions and development standards to encourage development of these areas. Consistent with state housing element laws, these areas are categorized into potential sites for very low- and low-income households, moderate-income households, and above moderate-income households.

In its efforts to provide for affordable housing, the County currently administers the Home Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program and the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, which provide limited financing to projects relating to affordable housing throughout the county.

The project site is currently occupied by an ongoing surface mining operation.

Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan

The specific plan does not include any policies or standards relating to population impacts associated with the quarry.

Previous Environmental Review and Conditions of Development Plan Approval

As discussed in the Baseline Conditions, none of the EIRs prepared in 1996, 1998 and 2002 assessed population growth. There are no conditions of approval of the Development Plan relating to population growth that are applicable for Phases 3, 4 and 5.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Discussion

(a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?

The project proposes the continuation of surface mining activities as described in the Baseline Conditions. The project would continue to employ about 26 people and not require new or additional housing as a result of the proposed project. The project would not generate new employment opportunities that would encourage population growth in the area. The project does not include the extension or establishment of new roads, utilities, or other infrastructure to the site that would induce development and population growth in new areas. Therefore, the project would not directly or indirectly induce substantial growth and there would be no impacts to population above baseline conditions.

(b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

The project would not displace existing housing or necessitate the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. Therefore, impacts would be *no impact.*

Conclusion

No impacts to population and housing would occur and no mitigation measures are necessary.

Mitigation

None necessary.

Sources

Provided in Exhibit A.

XV. PUBLIC SERVICES

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
(a)	Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
	Fire protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
	Police protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
	Schools?	☐	☐	☒	☐
	Parks?	☐	☐	☒	☐
	Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Setting

Fire protection services for the unincorporated area where the project is located are provided by CalFire/County Fire. The project is east of the City of Atascadero and is about 6 miles from the CalFire/County Fire Station 43 in Creston and about 5 miles northwest of station 40 in Parkhill. Emergency personnel would be able to reach the site within less than 15 minutes of receiving a call.

Police protection and emergency services in the unincorporated portions of the county are provided by the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Office. The Sheriff's Office Patrol Division responds to calls for service, conducts proactive law enforcement activities, and performs initial investigations of crimes. Patrol personnel are deployed from three stations throughout the county, the Coast Station in Los Osos, the North County Station in Templeton, and the South Station in Oceano. The project would be served by the County Sheriff's Office, and the nearest sheriff station is located in Templeton approximately 5 miles to the north.

San Luis Obispo County has a total of 12 school districts that currently enroll approximately 34,000 students in over 75 schools. The project site is located within the Atascadero Unified School District.

Within the County's unincorporated areas, there are currently 23 parks, three golf courses, four trails/staging areas, and eight Special Areas that include natural areas, coastal access, and historic facilities currently operated and maintained by the County.

Public facilities fees, Quimby fees, transient occupancy taxes, and developer conditions are several ways the County currently funds public services. A public facility fee program (i.e., development impact fee program) has been adopted to address impacts related to public facilities (county) and schools (CGC Section 65995 et seq.). The fee amounts are assessed annually by the County based on the type of proposed development and the development's proportional impact and are collected at the time of building permit issuance. Public facility fees are used as needed to finance the construction of and/or improvements to public facilities required to the serve new development, including fire protection, law enforcement, schools, parks, and roads.

Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan

The specific plan does not include any policies or standards relating to public services.

Previous Environmental Review and Conditions of Development Plan Approval

As discussed in the Baseline Conditions, none of the EIRs prepared in 1996, 1998 and 2002 assessed public services. There are no conditions of approval of the Development Plan relating to public services that are applicable for Phases 3, 4 and 5.

Discussion

(a) *Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:*

Fire protection?

The project will be designed to comply with all applicable fire safety rules and regulations, including the California Fire Code and California PRC, which require access roads to accommodate emergency vehicle access, vegetation clearing or trimming around all existing and proposed structures, and potential installation of a water storage tank for fire protection. The project will be conditioned to implement all requirements identified by CalFire/County Fire Department as described in their referral response (June 6, 2025, Kevin McClean). No new structures are proposed; therefore, the project would not create a significant new demand for fire services. Therefore, impacts would be *less than significant*. Additional information regarding wildfire hazard impacts is discussed in Section XX, Wildfire. Additional information regarding fire related hazard impacts is discussed in Section IX, Hazards and Hazardous Materials.

Police protection?

No new activities or construction are proposed above Baseline Conditions. Therefore, impacts related to police services would be *less than significant.*

Schools?

As discussed in Section XIV, Population/Housing, the project would not induce any population growth and would not result in the need for additional school services or facilities. Therefore, impacts would be *less than significant*.

Parks?

As discussed in Section XIV, Population and Housing, the project would not induce any increase in population growth beyond Baseline Conditions and would not result in the need for additional parks or recreational services or facilities to serve new populations. The Specific Plan includes policies that

encourage safe access to the Rocky Canyon bike/hiking/equestrian trail. Therefore, potential impacts would be *less than significant.*

Other public facilities?

There would be *no impacts* related to other public facilities.

Conclusion

The project does not propose development that would substantially increase demands on public services and would not induce population growth that would substantially increase demands on public services. Therefore, potential impacts related to public services would be less than significant and no mitigation measures are necessary.

Mitigation

None are necessary.

Sources

Provided in Exhibit A.

XVI. RECREATION

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
(a)	Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(b)	Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Setting

The Parks and Recreation Element (Recreation Element) of the County of San Luis Obispo General Plan establishes goals, policies, and implementation measures for the management, renovation, and expansion of existing parks and recreation facilities and the development of new parks and recreation facilities in order to meet existing and projected needs and to assure an equitable distribution of parks throughout the county. The nearest public park to the project site is Paloma Park located about 3 miles to the west which is owned and operated by the City of Atascadero.

Public facilities fees, Quimby fees, and developer conditions are several ways the County currently funds public parks and recreational facilities. Public facility fees are collected upon construction of new residential units and currently provide funding for new community-serving recreation facilities. Quimby Fees are collected when new residential lots are created and can be used to expand, acquire, rehabilitate, or develop community-serving parks. Finally, a discretionary permit issued by the County may condition a project to provide land, amenities, or facilities consistent with the Recreation Element.

The County Bikeways Plan identifies and prioritizes bikeway facilities throughout the unincorporated area of the county, including bikeways, parking, connections with public transportation, educational programs, and funding. The Bikeways Plan is updated every 5 years and was last updated in 2016. The plan identifies goals, policies, and procedures geared towards realizing significant bicycle use as a key component of the transportation options for San Luis Obispo County residents. The plan also includes descriptions of bikeway design and improvement standards, an inventory of the current bicycle circulation network, and a list of current and future bikeway projects within the county. Rocky Canyon contains a mountain bike/hiking trail that is accessible to the public through the quarry site.

Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan

The specific plan sets forth policies and standards aimed at preserving safe access to existing and future recreational facilities for hikers, bicyclists and equestrians to the Rocky Canton trail.

Conditions of Development Plan Approval

As discussed in the Baseline Conditions, the EIRs prepared in 1996, 1998 and 2002. did not assess impacts to recreational facilities. The following condition of approval of the Development Plan is applicable for Phases 3, 4 and 5:

Access Control

20. The operator shall maintain the signs that were approved by the County Engineer and Planning Director, to indicate to the public: 1) the location of a safe route for walking, bicycling and equestrian passage along Rocky Canyon Quarry, and 2) safety precautions, such as watching for moving equipment.

Discussion

(a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?

The project will result in the continuation of surface mining in accordance with the approved Specific Plan and Development Plan. As discussed above, these approvals require the operator to maintain public access through the quarry for bicyclists, hikers and equestrians. These requirements will continue with the next three phases of operation. The project would not result in substantial growth within the area and would not substantially increase demand on any proximate existing public neighborhood or regional park or other recreational facilities. Therefore, project impacts to relating to a increase in the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated existing parks and recreational facilities would be *less than significant.*

(b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

The project does not include the construction of new recreational facilities and would not result in a substantial increase in demand or use of parks and recreational facilities. Implementation of the project would not require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities; therefore, impacts would be *less than significant.*

Conclusion

The project would not result in the significant increase in use, construction, or expansion of parks or recreational facilities. Therefore, potential impacts related to recreation would be less than significant and no mitigation measures are necessary.

Mitigation

None are necessary.

Sources

Provided in Exhibit A.

XVII. TRANSPORTATION

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
(a)	Conflict with a program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(b)	Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(c)	Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(d)	Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Setting

The County Department of Public Works maintains updated traffic count data for all County-maintained roadways. In addition, Traffic Circulation Studies have been conducted within several community areas using traffic models to reasonably simulate current traffic flow patterns and forecast future travel demands and traffic flow patterns. These community Traffic Circulation Studies include the South County Circulation Study, Los Osos Circulation Study, Templeton Circulation Study, San Miguel Circulation Study, Avila Circulation Study, and North Coast Circulation Study. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) maintains annual traffic data on state highways and interchanges within the county.

The County has established Level of Service (LOS) "C" or better for rural roadways. the quarry occupies portions of three contiguous parcels with a total area of about 286.5 acres located at the northerly terminus of Rocky Canyon Road about one mile southeast of the City of Atascadero. The project site is not located within an adopted Road Impact Fee area.

In 2013 SB 743 was signed into law with the intent to "more appropriately balance the needs of congestion management with statewide goals related to infill development, promotion of public health through active transportation, and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions" and required the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) to identify new metrics for identifying and mitigating transportation impacts as determined by the CEQA process. As a result, in December 2018, the California Natural Resources Agency certified and adopted updates to the State CEQA Guidelines. The revisions included new requirements related to the implementation of SB 743 and identified VMT per capita, VMT per employee, and net VMT as new metrics for transportation analysis under CEQA (as detailed in Section 15064.3[b]). The County of San Luis Obispo has developed a Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Program (Transportation Impact Analysis Guidelines;

Rincon, October 2020 & VMT Thresholds Study; GHD, March 2021). The program provides operating thresholds and includes a screening tool for evaluating VMT impacts.

The County's Framework for Planning (Inland), includes the Land Use and Circulation Elements of the County of San Luis Obispo General Plan. The Framework establishes goals and strategies to meet pedestrian circulation needs by providing usable and attractive sidewalks, pathways, and trails to establish maximum access and connectivity between land use designations.

The 2023 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is the region's long-range (2023-2045) plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS). The RTP provides a collective vision for the region's future balancing transportation and housing needs with social, economic, and environmental goals. The Plan identified and tested growth scenarios to accommodate the coming 42,000 new people, 18,000 new homes, and 18,000 new jobs. The plan helps guide future planning efforts and policy decisions that affect transportation, including its relationship with housing and land use that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions in our region.

Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan, Development Plan Conditions of Approval (as Amended In 2002)/Previous Environmental Review

The policies and standards of the Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan (Exhibit C) and the conditions of approval for the development plan (Exhibit D) provide policies and standards for on-site and off-site circulation and traffic management for the quarry which address the following:

- The use of designated truck routes.
- The payment of mitigation fees to the County and the City of Atascadero to help offset the impact of truck traffic on surrounding roadways.
- On-site and off-site road maintenance responsibilities.
- Site access controls.
- Operational signage.

Traffic Impact Study

The 2019 project application materials include a traffic impact analysis prepared by Central Coast Transportation Consulting February, 2019. This study is incorporated by reference and available for review in its entirety at the Department of Planning and Building located at 976 Osos Street, San Luis Obispo.

Discussion

(a) *Conflict with a program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?*

As discussed in the Baseline Conditions, the quarry currently generates 359 truck trips per day, or 826 passenger car equivalent trips per day. Trucks are authorized to operate between the hours of 7:00AM and 5:00 PM. In accordance with the 2002 conditions of approval for the Development Plan (discussed below), upon completion of the improvements specified in an agreement between the applicant and the City of Atascadero in 2018, truck routes (Figure 22) to and from the site are currently as follows:

- Rocky Canyon Road to Halcon Road to Viejo Camino to Santa Barbara Road to Highway 101. The opposite route would be used to gain access to the quarry.
- When the river crossing is **not** passable, trucks may use Rocky Canyon Road north of Halcon Road.

Daily employee trips are 24 trips per day.

The project does not propose the substantial temporary or long-term alteration of any proximate transportation facilities. The project has been operating in compliance with the policies and standards relating to traffic and truck operations set forth in the Specific Plan and conditions of approval of the Development plan since 2002. The continuation of surface mining activities into Phases 3, 4 and 5 will not generate traffic above volumes described in the Baseline Conditions.

The project does not propose uses that would interfere or conflict with applicable policies related to circulation, transit, roadway, bicycle, or pedestrian systems or facilities. The project would be consistent with the County Framework for Planning (Inland) and consistent with the projected level of growth and development identified in the 2023 RTP.

The traffic impact analysis compares project related trips with forecasted future cumulative traffic affecting roadways serving the project and vicinity. The study concludes that the level of service for all affected intersections would remain unchanged with the continued operation of the quarry into Phases 3, 4 and 5.

As described above, the conditions of approval of the Development Plan require truck traffic to take an alternate route to Highway 101 (shown on Figure 22) that travels north on Rocky Canyon Road to SR 41 and does not cross the Salinas River when the crossing is flooded. According to the traffic study, traffic operations at the intersection of SR 41 and Rocky Canyon Road with and without the project would continue to operate at an acceptable level of service when the alternative route is used.

Therefore, potential impacts would be *less than significant*.

The project was referred to the Public Works Department for review and comment. Their referral responses (letters of August 5, 2019 and September 12, 2025) state that the project site is not located within a Road Improvement Fee area. The Public Works Department has no additional comments so long as the original conditions of the Development Plan remain in effect.

The project was also referred to the City of Atascadero for review and comment. Their response of June 1, 2026 from Nicholas D. DeBar, PE, Director of Public Works states the following:

> *The City and CalPortland have agreed to enter into a formal agreement detailing road maintenance schedules and responsibilities, pavement repairs, and intersection improvements associated with the haul route on City roads. The City and CalPortland believe the framework of this agreement will satisfactorily alleviate the concerns previously expressed by the City to the County. While the City and CalPortland finalize the terms of the agreement, the City requests the County to move forward with processing CalPortland's pending permit application. We also request that the County incorporates a permit condition for this agreement to be fully executed prior to the permit effective start date (i.e., issuance of the Notice to Proceed), it being understood that, subject to the above (i) the City has no objection to the permit review and approval process moving forward in ordinary course, and (ii) the City will use its good faith, best efforts to expedite timely execution of the agreement with CalPortland. Implementation of the measures identified in the agreement do not represent new impacts or mitigation measures resulting from the proposed project, rather the proposed agreement will ensure existing permit conditions are satisfied moving forward.*

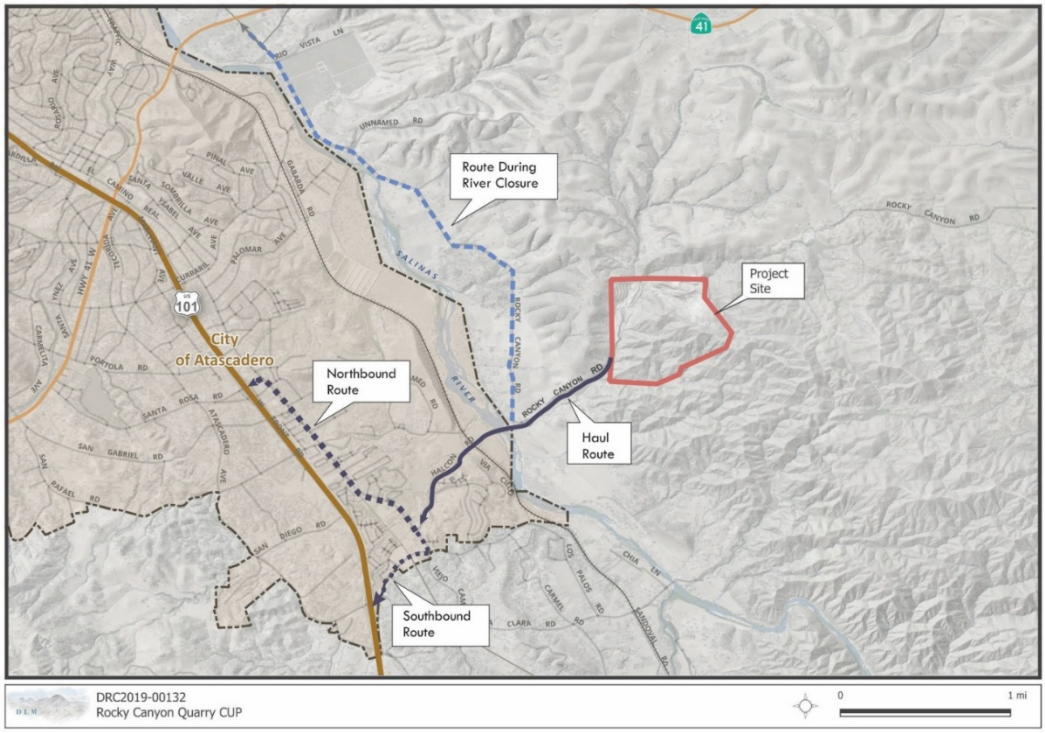


Figure 22 – Designated Haul Routes

Therefore, project impacts associated with a conflict with a program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities are considered *less than significant*.

(b) Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?

Section 15064.3 of the CEQA Guidelines requires that a CEQA compliance document include an assessment of whether a project would generate potentially significant levels of VMT. To assist in these efforts, the County of San Luis Obispo has developed new Transportation Impact Analysis Guidelines (TIAG) (March 2021) that include thresholds of significance for VMT as well as screening criteria and methodologies for performing VMT analysis.

The TIAG is accompanied by a VMT screening model that compares the current (baseline) per capita VMT in a particular VMT impact zone with future per capita VMT inclusive of the project. As a result, the VMT analysis of a given project is also considered to be a cumulative impact analysis.

The County has adopted criteria to evaluate the potential VMT impacts that a project may create. Within these criteria, there is a screening process to determine if a project is sufficiently small as not to create any VMT impacts. However, since the project will not generate any trips above the baseline conditions, it is considered to have VMT impacts that are *less than significant* and less *than cumulatively considerable*.

(c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

A project referral package was sent to the Public Works Department; in their response letters of August 5, 2019 and September. 2025, the Public Works Department did not raise any concerns

regarding traffic safety. Nonetheless, the traffic study prepared for the project provides an analysis of collisions along roadways serving the project site. Collision records were obtained from the most recent 3 years of collision information using the Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS), and collision rates were calculated using the average daily traffic on the segments of Rocky Canyon Road between Halcon Road and SR 41 and between Halcon Road and the project site. Collision rates were also calculated for the intersection of Rocky Canyon Road/SR 41 using daily entering volumes.

No collisions were reported along the segment of Rocky Canyon Road from Halcon Road to project site, thus the collision rate is zero. The segment from Halcon Road to SR 41 and the Rocky Canyon Road/SR 41 intersection have collision rates higher than the County road and Caltrans State average collision rates, respectively. One collision resulted in severe injuries, one resulted in other visible injuries, one resulted in complaint of pain, and three resulted in property damage only. Four of the six were broadside collisions. None of the collisions involved a heavy vehicle. The traffic study recommends installation of yield signage at the intersection of Rocky Canyon Road/Halcon Road to more clearly define right of way.

Therefore, project impacts related to traffic hazards are considered *less than significant*.

(d) Result in inadequate emergency access?

The project will be conditioned to maintain all roadways and access improvements consistent with County standards. The project is not expected to result in road closures. Project implementation would not affect long-term access through the project area and sufficient alternative access exists to accommodate regional trips. Therefore, the project would not adversely affect existing emergency access and impacts would be *less than significant*.

Conclusion

The project would not generate truck or passenger car trips above baseline conditions nor would it result in an increase in vehicle miles traveled. Project impacts are considered less than significant.

Mitigation

None are required.

Sources

Provided in Exhibit A.

XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
(a)	Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:				
	(i) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or	☐	☐	☐	☒
	(ii) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	☐	☐	☒	☐

Setting

Assembly Bill 52 (AB52) was signed into law in 2014 and added tribal cultural resources to the categories of resources that must be evaluated under CEQA. Tribal cultural resources are defined as either of the following:

1. Sites, features, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe that are either of the following:
    a. Included or determined to be eligible for inclusion in the CRHR; or
    b. Included in a local register of historical resources as defined in subdivision (k) of California PRC Section 5020.1.
2. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth California PRC Section 5024.1(c).

In applying these criteria for the purposes of this paragraph, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American Tribe.

Recognizing that tribes have specific expertise with regard to their tribal history and practices, AB 52 requires lead agencies to provide notice to tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of a proposed project if they have requested notice of projects proposed within that area. If the tribe requests consultation within 30 days upon receipt of the notice, the lead agency must consult with the tribe regarding the potential for adverse impacts on tribal cultural resources as a result of a project. Consultation may include discussing the type of environmental review necessary, the presence and/or significance of tribal cultural resources, the level of significance of a project's impacts on the tribal cultural resources, and available project alternatives and mitigation measures recommended by the tribe to avoid or lessen potential impacts on tribal cultural resources.

Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan

The specific plan does not include any policies or standards relating to tribal consultation and the protection of tribal resources.

Previous Environmental Review and Conditions of Development Plan Approval

As discussed in the Baseline Conditions, none of the EIRs prepared in 1996, 1998 and 2002 assessed impacts to tribal resources. There are no conditions of approval of the Development Plan relating to tribal resources that are applicable for Phases 3, 4 and 5.

Discussion

(a) *Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:*

(a-i) *Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k)?*

As discussed in section V. Cultural Resources, according to the Phase 1 cultural resources survey conducted by SWCA in January 2018, the project site does not contain any known tribal cultural resources that have been listed or have been found eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in PRC Section 5020.1.

Potential impacts associated with the inadvertent discovery of tribal cultural resources would be subject to LUO requirements for Archaeologically Sensitive Areas. In the event resources are encountered during mining operations, auch activities shall cease, and the County Planning and Building Department shall be notified of the discovery so that the extent and location of discovered materials may be recorded by a qualified archaeologist, and the disposition of artifacts may be accomplished in accordance with state and federal law. Therefore, there would be *no impact* related to a substantial adverse change in the significance of tribal cultural resources.

(a-ii) *A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.*

In accordance with AB 52, outreach to the Salinan Tribe of Monterey and San Luis Obispo Counties, tiṭʸu tiṭʸu yak tiłhini Northern Chumash, and Northern Chumash Tribal Council was undertaken on July 11, 2019. The County received no substantive responses.

As part of the Phase 1 archaeological survey, SWCA contacted the California Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) by email on October 24, 2017, requesting a review of the Sacred Lands File. The NAHC responded on October 25, 2017, indicating that the search of the Sacred Lands File was negative for the presence of Native American cultural resources within the immediate project area.

Compliance with existing regulations (LUO 22.10.040) would reduce potential impacts to *less than significant*.

Conclusion

Cultural resources are not expected to occur within or adjacent to the project site. In the event unanticipated sensitive resources are discovered during project activities, adherence with applicable LUO standards and State Health and Safety Code procedures would reduce potential impacts to less than significant; therefore, potential impacts to tribal cultural resources would be *less than significant.*

Mitigation

None are required.

Sources

Provided in Exhibit A.

XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
(a)	Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(b)	Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(c)	Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(d)	Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(e)	Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Setting

The County Department of Public Works provides water and wastewater services for specific County Service Areas (CSAs) that are managed through issuance of water/wastewater "will serve" letters. The Department of Public Works currently maintains CSAs for the communities of Nipomo, Oak Shores, Cayucos, Avila Beach, Shandon, the San Luis Obispo County Club, and Santa Margarita. Other unincorporated areas in the county rely on on-site wells and individual wastewater systems. Regulatory standards and design criteria for on-site wastewater treatment systems are provided by the Water Quality Control Policy for Siting, Design, Operation, and Maintenance of Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (California OWTS Policy).

The Department of Public Works is responsible for ensuring that new construction sites implement BMPs during construction, and that site plans incorporate appropriate post-construction stormwater runoff

controls. Construction sites that disturb 1 acre or more must obtain coverage under the SWRCB's Construction General Permit. PG&E is the primary electricity provider and both PG&E and SoCalGas provide natural gas services for urban and rural communities within the county. The project would be served by on-site wells and a septic system. The project's energy needs would be provided by PG&E.

There are three landfills in San Luis Obispo County: Cold Canyon Landfill, located near the city of San Luis Obispo; Chicago Grade Landfill, located near the community of Templeton; and Paso Robles Landfill, located east of the city of Paso Robles. The project's solid waste needs would be served by the Chicago Grade landfill.

Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan

The specific plan does not include any policies or standards relating to utilities and service systems.

Previous Environmental Review and Conditions of Development Plan Approval

As discussed in the Baseline Conditions, none of the EIRs prepared in 1996, 1998 and 2002 assessed impacts to utilities and service systems. There are no conditions of approval of the Development Plan relating to utilities and service systems that are applicable for Phases 3, 4 and 5.

Discussion

(a) *Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?*

Water Supply

The project site is not located within a groundwater basin as identified by Bulletin 118 of the Department of Water Resources. Based on the WSA provided for the project, and as discussed in Section X. Hydrology and Water Quality, groundwater supplies are expected to meet project demand over the life of the quarry.

Therefore, impacts would be *less than significant*.

Wastewater

The project site is served by a septic leach field and portable restrooms. Wastewater demand is not expected to grow beyond Baseline Conditions.

Therefore, impacts would be *less than significant*.

(b) *Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?*

As discussed above under item a), above, based on the WSA provided for the project, and as discussed in Section X. Hydrology and Water Quality, groundwater supplies are expected to meet project demand over the life the quarry.

Therefore, as conditioned, impacts related to water supplies would be *less than significant.*

(c) *Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?*

The project site is served by a septic leach field and portable restrooms. Wastewater demand is not expected to grow beyond Baseline Conditions. Therefore, there would be *no impact* associated with the capacity of a wastewater service provider.

(d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?

The nearest landfill to the site is the Chicago Grade Landfill located approximately 5 miles to the north. The landfill has a remaining capacity of approximately 8.8 million cubic yards. The incremental amount of waste generated by the project that is not recycled/reused would be within the service capacity of the landfill. Surface mining activities would result in the generation of minimal solid waste materials and would remain at Baseline Conditions and no significant long-term increase in solid waste would occur. Local landfills have adequate permit capacity to serve the project and the project does not propose to generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals. Therefore, potential impacts would be *less than significant*.

(e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

The project would not result in a substantial increase in waste generation during project construction or operation. Construction waste disposal would comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste. Therefore, potential impacts would be *less than significant.*

Conclusion

The project would not result in significant increased demands on wastewater or stormwater infrastructure and facilities. No substantial increase in solid waste generation would occur. Therefore, potential impacts to utilities and service systems would be *less than significant.*

Mitigation

None are required.

Sources

Provided in Exhibit A.

XX. WILDFIRE

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:					
(a)	Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(b)	Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(c)	Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(d)	Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Setting

In central California, the fire season usually extends from roughly May through October; however, recent events indicate that wildfire behavior, frequency, and duration of the fire season are changing in California. Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) are defined by CALFIRE based on the presence of fire-prone vegetation, climate, topography, assets at risk (e.g., high population centers), and a fire protection agency's ability to provide service to the area (CAL FIRE 2007). FHSZs throughout the county have been designated as "Very High," "High," or "Moderate." In San Luis Obispo County, most of the area that has been designated as a "Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone" is located in the Santa Lucia Mountains, which extend parallel to the coast along the entire length of San Luis Obispo County. The project would be located within the service area of CalFire/SLO County Fire Department and it would take about 15 minutes to respond to a call regarding fire or life safety.

The County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) addresses several overall policy and coordination functions related to emergency management. The EOP includes the following components:

- Identifies the departments and agencies designated to perform response and recovery activities and specifies tasks they must accomplish;

- Outlines the integration of assistance that is available to local jurisdictions during disaster situations that generate emergency response and recovery needs beyond what the local jurisdiction can satisfy;
- Specifies the direction, control, and communications procedures and systems that will be relied upon to alert, notify, recall, and dispatch emergency response personnel; alert the public; protect residents and property; and request aid/support from other jurisdictions and/or the federal government;
- Identifies key continuity of government operations; and
- Describes the overall logistical support process for planned operations.

Topography influences wildland fire to such an extent that slope conditions can often become a critical wildland fire factor. Conditions such as speed and direction of dominant wind patterns, the length and steepness of slopes, direction of exposure, and/or overall ruggedness of terrain influence the potential intensity and behavior of wildland fires and/or the rates at which they may spread (Barros et al. 2013).

The Safety Element establishes goals, policies, and programs to reduce the threat to life, structures, and the environment caused by fire. Policy S-13 states that new development should be carefully located, with special attention given to fuel management in higher fire risk areas, and that new development in fire hazard areas should be configured to minimize the potential for added danger. Implementation strategies for this policy include identifying high risk areas, developing and implementing mitigation efforts to reduce the threat of fire, requiring fire resistant material be used for building construction in fire hazard areas, and encouraging applicants applying for subdivisions in fire hazard areas to cluster development to allow for a wildfire protection zone.

The California Fire Code provides minimum standards for many aspects of fire prevention and suppression activities. These standards include provisions for emergency vehicle access, water supply, fire protection systems, and the use of fire resistant building materials.

The County EOP outlines the emergency measures that are essential for protecting public health and safety. These measures include, but are not limited to, public alert and notifications, emergency public information, and protective actions. The EOP also addresses policy and coordination related to emergency management.

Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan

The specific plan does not include any policies or standards relating to wildfire risk and public safety. However, ongoing reclamation efforts will result in the revegetation of manufactured slopes which over the life of the quarry will provide some measure of fuel for wildfires:

Previous Environmental Review and Conditions of Development Plan Approval

As discussed in the Baseline Conditions, none of the EIRs prepared in 1996, 1998 and 2002 assessed wildfire risk. There are no conditions of approval of the Development Plan relating to wildfire risk that are applicable for Phases 3, 4 and 5.

Discussion

(a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

The project is not expected to require temporary road closures. However, any road closures would be required to be designed to accommodate emergency vehicle access. The project would not impair implementation or physically interfere with County hazard mitigation or emergency plans beyond Baseline Conditions. Implementation of the proposed project would not have a permanent impact on any adopted emergency response plans or emergency evacuation plans.

Based on the County's Land Use View tool and Dam and Levee Failure Plan, the project site is not located within an area that would be inundated in the event of a dam failure or tsunami. The project would not impair implementation or physically interfere with County hazard mitigation or emergency plans; therefore, *no impacts* related to emergency plans would occur.

Therefore, the project would not substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. Potential impacts would be *less than significant.*

(b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?

The area of disturbance for Phases 3, 4 and 5 is located on moderate to steep sloping terrain in an area surrounded by hills covered with moderately dense stands of oak trees and chaparral. Winds in the area vary from 6-8 miles per hour and primarily come from the north and west. As described in Section 6, Geology and Soils, the potential for landslides affecting the site is low, and the project is not proposing disturbance in areas of steep slopes that would be conducive to the formation of debris flows off site.

The site is located within the service area of CalFire/SLO County Fire and, based on the County's fire response time map, it would take about 15 minutes to respond to a call regarding fire or life safety. The project would be designed to comply with all fire safety rules and regulations, including the California Fire Code and Public Resources Code, which includes improvements to the site to accommodate emergency vehicle access and vegetation clearing or trimming. The project will be conditioned to comply with all applicable fire protection standards as determined by CalFire/SLO County Fire as set forth in their referral response of June 6, 2025 (Kevin McLean) and the applicant will be required to comply with the requirements of the plan for the life of the project. Compliance with the Uniform Fire Code and the recommendations of the CalFire as set forth in their referral response will ensure that potential impacts associated with slope, prevailing winds, and other factors will be *less than significant*.

Therefore, potential impacts would be *less than significant.*

(c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?

Mining activities will be required to comply with all fire safety rules and regulations, including the California Fire Code and Public Resources Code, which includes the provision of access roads/driveway to accommodate emergency vehicle access and vegetation clearing or trimming to maintain a buffer with surrounding fuel sources. Compliance with relevant fire protection regulations as determined by CalFire/County Fire would reduce fire risk. Therefore, potential impacts would be *less than significant.*

(d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?

Based on the design of the project and the characteristics of the surrounding terrain, the project will not include design elements that would expose people or structures to significant risks such as downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes. Therefore, impacts would be *less than significant*.

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Conclusion

As conditioned, the project would not expose people or structures to new or exacerbated wildfire risks and would not require the development of new or expanded infrastructure or maintenance to reduce wildfire risks. Therefore, potential impacts associated with wildfire would be less than significant and no mitigation measures are necessary.

Mitigation

None are required.

Sources

Provided in Exhibit A.

XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
(a)	Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☐	☒	☐	☐
(b)	Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	☐	☒	☐	☐
(c)	Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion

(a) *Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?*

As discussed in each of the preceding topical sections, upon implementation of identified mitigation measures, the proposed project would not result in significant impacts to biological resources and would not substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory. Therefore, impacts would be *less than significant with mitigation incorporated.*

(b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?

The State CEQA Guidelines define cumulative impacts as "two or more individual effects that, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts." Section 15355 of the State CEQA Guidelines further states that individual effects can be various changes related to a single project or the change involved in a number of other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. The State CEQA Guidelines state that the discussion of cumulative impacts should reflect the severity of the impacts as well as the likelihood of their occurrence. However, the discussion need not be as detailed as the discussion of environmental impacts attributable to the project alone. Furthermore, the discussion should remain practical and reasonable in considering other projects and related cumulatively considerable impacts.

Aesthetics

The analysis provided in Section I., Aesthetics, concludes that the continuation of surface mining into Phase 3, 4 and 5 will result in a visual landscape that is consistent with the type, scale, character and location of the baseline conditions of surrounding properties and areas visible from public vantages. Project impacts, when combined with additional development and activities likely to occur on surrounding properties within the viewshed are considered *less than cumulatively considerable*.

Agriculture and Forestry Resources

The analysis provided in Section II, Agriculture and Forestry Resources, indicates that the project would not result in the permanent conversion of important farmland. In addition, no potential impacts to forest land or timberland would occur. The project would not result in a conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or with the existing Williamson Act contract. Therefore, when considered with the potential impacts of other reasonably foreseeable development, the contribution of the project's potential impacts to agriculture and forestry resources is considered *less than cumulatively considerable*.

Air Quality

The 2002 Subsequent FEIR concluded that the cumulative emission of reactive organic gases and oxides of nitrogen (ROG+Nox) would be significant and unavoidable (Class I) through buildout in accordance with the Specific Plan. Accordingly, findings of overriding consideration were made for air quality impacts that concluded that the benefits of the project outweighed the significant unavoidable impacts. The analysis provided in Section III, Air Quality, concludes that the project's potential operational emissions would not exceed baseline conditions or exceed SLOAPCD quarterly thresholds of significance for either construction related or operational emissions and would not adversely impact sensitive receptors on the surrounding parcels.

Therefore, project construction, operational, and cumulative impacts would be *less than cumulatively considerable with mitigation*.

Biological Resources

The analysis provided in Section IV, Biological Resources, concludes that the project would have a less-than-significant impact upon implementation of the identified avoidance and mitigation measures for resident and migrator nesting birds. With continued implementation of the required

reclamation/revegetation plans as well as measures BIO-1 through BIO-16, potential impacts to biological resources would be less than significant.

Based on the mitigation measures identified to reduce potential project impacts, when considered with the potential impacts of other reasonably foreseeable development in the area, project impacts associated with biological resources would be *less than cumulatively considerable with mitigation*.

Cultural Resources

The analysis provided in Section V. Cultural Resources concludes that the continuation of surface mining into Phases 3, 4 and 5 would not result in significant impacts to cultural resources and project related impacts are considered *less than significant*.

Therefore, when considered with the potential impacts of other reasonably foreseeable development in the area, project impacts associated with cultural resources would be *less than cumulatively considerable*.

Energy

The analysis provided in Section VI. Energy concludes that the energy use would remain at baseline conditions with the expansion of surface mining into Phases 3, 4 and 5. Therefore the project does not have the potential to result in potentially cumulatively considerable environmental impacts associated with the wasteful, inefficient and unnecessary use of energy. Therefore, the project's environmental impacts associated with energy use would be *less than cumulatively considerable*.

Geology and Soils

As discussed in Section VII. Geology and Soils, the project is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Fault Hazard Zone and would be required to comply with the CBC and other applicable standards to ensure the effects of ground instability or a potential seismic event would be minimized through compliance with current engineering practices and techniques as required by mitigation measure GEO-1 and GEO-2. Therefore, project related impacts to soils and geologic resources is considered *less than cumulatively considerable with mitigation*. Based on the underlying geologic formation, the project's potential impacts to previously unknown paleontological resources would be *less than significant* and *less than cumulatively considerable.*

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

As discussed in Section VI, Energy, the project, is estimated to continue to generate approximately 2,446 MTCO2e per year which is a continuation of baseline conditions. No increase in baseline GHG emissions is assumed to have a less than significant adverse impact that is not cumulatively considerable and consistent with the GHG reduction objectives of AB32 and SB32.

Therefore, cumulative impacts associated with GHG emissions would be *less than cumulatively considerable*.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

As discussed in Section IX. Hazards and Hazardous Materials, the continuation of surface mining activities into Phases 3,4 and 5 may include the continued use of hazardous materials that could result in potential hazards through routine transport, use, and disposal as well as under upset or accident conditions. Mitigation measures HAZ-1 and HAZ-2 have been identified to reduce potential impacts by restricting the location of equipment maintenance, refueling and other potentially hazardous activities, and identifying the appropriate response protocol for immediate cleanup of any spills.

Project impacts associated with hazards and hazardous materials would be *less than cumulatively considerable with mitigation.*

Hydrology and Water Quality

As discussed in Section X. Hydrology and Water Quality, the project is not expected to require the construction of additional water supply infrastructure that would result in a significant impact on the environment. According to the WSA, water demand will continue to be satisfied by existing wells at baseline conditions.

With regard to stormwater runoff, as discussed in Section X. Hydrology and Water Quality, the project will be conditioned to ensure that the surface runoff from manufactured slopes associated with mining activities will continue to satisfy NPDES standards and will not adversely impact downstream properties or improvements.

Therefore, project impacts are considered *less than cumulatively considerable*.

Noise

As discussed in Section XIII, Noise, project related noise associated with construction activities and ongoing mining activities would be less than significant.

Therefore, when considered with the potential impacts of other reasonably foreseeable development, the contribution of the subject project to potential noise impacts is considered *less than cumulatively considerable*.

Population and Housing

The most recent projection of regional growth for San Luis Obispo County is the 2050 Regional Growth Forecast (RGF) for San Luis Obispo County, prepared and adopted by SLOCOG in 2017. Using the Medium Scenario, the total county population, housing, and employment for both incorporated and unincorporated areas is projected to increase at an average annual rate of 0.50% per year. Between 2015 and 2050, the County's population is projected to increase by 44,000, or about 1,260 residents per year. Within the unincorporated area, the population is expected to increase by about 19,500 residents, or about 557 per year. Employment is expected to increase by about 6,441, or about 184 per year.

The project is expected to continue to employ 26 permanent employees which is a continuation of the baseline conditions. When considered with the potential impacts of other reasonably foreseeable development in the unincorporated county, the contribution of the subject project to impacts related to housing and population is considered *less than cumulatively considerable*.

Public Services

The project's reliance on public services will continue at baseline conditions with the expansion of mining activities to Phases 3, 4 and 5. Therefore, when considered with the potential impacts of other reasonably foreseeable projects, the contribution of the subject project to potential public services impacts would be less than cumulatively considerable.

Transportation

Local Traffic Impacts. The project is estimated to generate about 850 passenger car equivalent daily trips per day and would is a continuation of baseline conditions that would not adversely impact the level of service or VMT of surrounding streets and intersections. As discussed in Section XVII, Transportation, the project would not result in a conflict with a plan or policy addressing the

circulation system, or increase hazards due to a geometric design feature. Therefore, the project's potential traffic impacts would be *less than cumulatively considerable*.

Lastly, each new development project in the area will be required to mitigate project-specific impacts to the transportation network. Such mitigation may include, but is not limited to, the installation of roadway and intersection improvements necessary to serve the project and the payment of applicable road improvement fees. Therefore, when considered with the potential impacts of other reasonably foreseeable development, the contribution of the subject project to local roadway impacts would be *less than cumulatively considerable*.

Fire protection access requirements will be enforced as conditions of approval.

Vehicle Miles Traveled. Project trip generation and VMT will remain at baseline conditions with the expansion of surface mining activities into Phases 3, 4 and 5. Therefore project impacts to VMT are considered *less than significant* and *less than cumulatively considerable*.

Other Impact Issue Areas

Based on the project's less-than-significant impacts and the discretionary review of all surrounding reasonably foreseeable future development, the project's potential impacts associated with the following issue areas would be *less than cumulatively considerable*:

- Land Use Planning;
- Mineral Resources;
- Recreation;
- Tribal Cultural Resources;
- Utilities and Service Systems; and
- Wildfire.

(c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

Environmental impacts that may have an adverse effect on human beings, either directly or indirectly, are analyzed in each environmental resource section above. In addition, implementation of mitigation measures HAZ-1 and HAZ-2, and identified in in the resource sections above would reduce potential adverse effects on human beings to less than significant; therefore, impacts would be *less than significant with mitigation.*

Conclusion

Potential impacts would be less than significant upon implementation of mitigation measures identified in the resource sections above.

Sources

Provided in Exhibit A.

Exhibit A - Initial Study References and Agency Contacts

The County Planning Department has contacted various agencies for their comments on the proposed project. With respect to the subject application, the following have been contacted (marked with an ☒) and when a response was made, it is either attached or in the application file:

Contacted	Agency	Response
☒	County Public Works Department	**In File****
☒	County Environmental Health Services	**In File****
☒	County Agricultural Commissioner's Office	**In File****
☐	County Airport Manager	**Not Applicable**
☐	Airport Land Use Commission	**Not Applicable**
☒	Air Pollution Control District	**None**
☐	County Sheriff's Department	**None**
☒	Regional Water Quality Control Board	**None**
☐	CA Coastal Commission	**Not Applicable**
☒	CA Department of Fish and Wildlife	**None**
☐	CA Department of Forestry (Cal Fire)	**Not Applicable**
☐	CA Department of Transportation	**Not Applicable**
☐	Community Services District	**Not Applicable**
☒	Other SMAC	**In File****
☒	Other AB 52 Tribes	**None**

** "No comment" or "No concerns"-type responses are usually not attached

The following checked ("☒") reference materials have been used in the environmental review for the proposed project and are hereby incorporated by reference into the Initial Study. The following information is available at the County Department of Planning and Building.

☒ Project File for the Subject Application

County Documents

☐ Coastal Plan Policies
☒ Framework for Planning (Coastal/Inland)
☒ General Plan (Inland/Coastal), includes all maps/elements; more pertinent elements:
- ☒ Agriculture Element
- ☒ Conservation & Open Space Element
- ☐ Economic Element
- ☒ Housing Element
- ☒ Noise Element
- ☒ Parks & Recreation Element/Project List
- ☒ Safety Element

☒ Land Use Ordinance (Inland/Coastal)
☒ Building and Construction Ordinance
☒ Public Facilities Fee Ordinance
☐ Real Property Division Ordinance
☐ Affordable Housing Fund
☐ Airport Land Use Plan
☒ Energy Wise Plan
☒ North County Area Plan/El Pomar-Estrella SA
☐ Templeton Design Plan
☒ Specific Plan
☐ Annual Resource Summary Report
☐ Circulation Study

Other Documents

☒ Clean Air Plan/APCD Handbook
☒ Regional Transportation Plan
☒ Uniform Fire Code
☒ Water Quality Control Plan (Central Coast Basin – Region 3)
☐ Archaeological Resources Map
☐ Area of Critical Concerns Map
☐ Special Biological Importance Map
☒ CA Natural Species Diversity Database
☒ Fire Hazard Severity Map
☒ Flood Hazard Maps
☒ Natural Resources Conservation Service Soil Survey for SLO County
☒ GIS mapping layers (e.g., habitat, streams, contours, etc.)
☐ Other

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

The project application materials are incorporated by reference in their entirety and available for review at the Department of Planning and Building, 976 Osos Street, Suite 200, San Luis Obispo. In addition, the following project specific information and/or reference materials have been considered as a part of the Initial Study:

Project-Specific Studies and Supporting Materials

Project application materials

Ambient Air Quality and Noise Consultants, January 2018, Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Impact Assessment

Ambient Air Quality and Noise Consultants, January 2018, Noise and Groundborne Vibration Impact Assessment for the Rocky Canyon Quarry Expansion

Central Coast Transportation Consulting, February 2019, Rocky Canyon Quarry Transportation Impact Study

Geosyntec Consultants, March, 2025, Rocky Canyon Quarry Water Supply Assessment

GeoSolutions, Inc., February, 2019, Engineering Geology Investigation for the Rocky Canyon Quarry Phases 3, 4 and 5

Morro Group, 1996, Rocky Canyon Quarry Program Environmental Impact Report

Morro Group, 1998, Rocky Canyon Quarry Revised Program Environmental Impact Report

Morro Group, 2002, Rocky Canyon Quarry Subsequent Environmental Impact Report

SWCA Environmental Consultants, August 2025, Updated Biological Resources Summary Report for the Rocky Canyon Quarry Expansion Project

SWCA Environmental Consultants, February 2018, Rocky Canyon Quarry (Phases 3, 4 and 5) Expansion and Reclamation Plan Amendment Visual Impact Assessment

SWCA Environmental Consultants, January 2018, Phase 1 Archaeological Survey for the Rocky Canyon Quarry Expansion

San Luis Obispo County, May 2002, Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan

Terra Verde. December 2018, Biological Resource Assessment Rocky Canyon Quarry Expansion

VL Holland, July 2014, Rocky Canyon Quarry Revegetation and Restoration

Agency And Tribal Review

Agriculture Department referral response of July 7, 2026, Ian Landreth

Air Pollution Control District, e-mail of July 23, 2025

Building Division, e-mail of July 21, 2025 from Jayne Ramos

Department of Public Works, September 5, 2025 referral response letter

Environmental Health – July 23, 2024 and June 27, 2025 referral response letters

Karen R. White, Xolo Tribe, e-mail response of November 19, 2025, December 2, 2025, and December 10, 2025

Kip Morais, Ag Preserve Administrator referral response of August 17, 2026

Patti Dunton, Administrator, Salinan Tribe, e-mail response of November 14, 2025

Other County References

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California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). 2019. California Scenic Highways Mapping Tool. Available at: < https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?useExisting=1&layers=f0259b1ad0fe4093a5604c9b838a486a>.

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California Geological Survey (CGS). 2015. CGS Information Warehouse: Mineral Land Classification. Available at <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/informationwarehouse/index.html?map=mlc>

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County of San Luis Obispo, 2021, Transportation Impact Analysis Guidelines and VMT Sketch Planning Tool

Diblee, Thomas W., Jr. 2004. Geologic Map of the Creston & Shedd Canyon Quadrangles, San Luis Obispo County, California. National Geologic Map Database. Available at: <https://ngmdb.usgs.gov/Prodesc/proddesc_71748.htm>.

Department of Planning and Building website: https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Planning-Building/Department-Services/Agriculture,-Water,-and-Energy/Water-Programs/Programs-and-Services/PRGWB-Area-of-Severe-Decline.aspx

Occupational Health and Safety Administration Technical Manual, Section III, Chapter 5 part II.B.6.

Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E). 2019. Delivering Low-Emission Energy. Available at: <https://www.pge.com/en_US/about-pge/environment/what-we-are-doing/clean-energy-solutions/clean-energy-solutions.page>.

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United States Geological Survey (USGS). 2019. Areas of Land Subsidence in California. Available at: https://ca.water.usgs.gov/land_subsidence/california-subsidence-areas.html

University of California, Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources Landscape Water Requirement Calculator, 2022

Exhibit B - Mitigation Summary Table

Per Public Resources Code Section 21081.6, the following measures also constitute the mitigation monitoring and/or reporting program that would reduce potentially significant impacts to less than significant levels. These measures would become conditions of approval (COAs) should the project be approved. The Lead Agency (County) or other Responsible Agencies, as specified in the following measures, are responsible for verifying compliance with these COAs.

Biological Resources

BIO-1 **Environmental Awareness Training Program.** An environmental awareness training program shall be developed for the Rocky Canyon Quarry Expansion Project by a qualified biologist familiar with the sensitive resources on site. The environmental training program shall be presented to all construction personnel **prior to the start of project activities**. The environmental training program shall include an overview of special status species and sensitive resources with potential to occur on the project site, habitat requirements, and their protection status with emphasis on the Rocky Canyon Creek riparian corridor. In addition, the training will discuss the avoidance and minimization measures that shall be implemented to avoid significant impacts to biological resources, biological information regarding natural communities of the project site, wildlife species likely to be encountered, and revegetation/reclamation efforts and requirements. A training signature page will be completed by all personnel who have received the training and the log will be available for annual Surface Mining and Reclamation Act inspection.

BIO-2 **Operations and Site Maintenance.** The following general measures are recommended to minimize impacts during active construction:

- The use of heavy equipment and vehicles shall be limited to the proposed project limits and defined staging areas/access points. The boundaries of each work area shall be clearly defined and marked with high visibility fencing or similar method to avoid disturbance of adjacent habitat areas. No work shall occur outside these designated limits.

- Secondary containment such as drip pans shall be used to prevent equipment leaks and spills of potential contaminants from impacting soils or surface waters.

- Washing of concrete, paint, or equipment, and refueling and maintenance of equipment shall occur only in designated areas. Appropriate containment methods shall be employed in designated staging areas. Additionally, spill kits shall be available at staging areas and personnel shall be trained in proper use of the kits to minimize impacts associated with inadvertent spills.

- Construction equipment shall be inspected and maintained by the operator regularly to ensure that equipment is in good working order and no fuel or lubricant leaks are present.

BIO-3 **Mitigation of Impacts to La Panza Mariposa Lily.** La Panza mariposa lily has been detected within the expansion area and is also likely to occur in the surrounding chamise chaparral habitat. To protect suitable habitat for this species outside of the expansion area, high visibility fencing or other clear delineation fencing shall be installed and maintained at project disturbance limits, as described in BIO Measure 2, above. In addition, it is likely that La Panza mariposa lily is present in the adjacent undisturbed chaparral habitat located within the perimeter lands on the property. As such, the following measures shall be implemented to offset impacts to La Panza mariposa lily:

4. To the maximum extent feasible, impacts to La Panza lily shall be avoided and minimized. Any mapped individuals and/or populations located within 50 feet of the proposed mining areas are to be avoided and protected and shall be clearly fenced or flagged **prior to ground disturbance** to avoid inadvertent impacts.

5. The topsoil associated with all suitable habitat for La Panza mariposa that will be impacted shall be salvaged in accordance with the criteria set forth in BIO-4 **prior to initial ground disturbing activities** and stored separately according to specifications provided in the approved *Reclamation Plan* and any subsequent amendments.

6. **Prior to the onset of ground disturbing activities associated with Phase 3**, a mitigation plan for La Panza mariposa lily shall be prepared and submitted for approval to the County. The mitigation plan shall include the following details, at a minimum

    e. The objective of the plan and who is responsible for implementation.

    f. A description of anticipated impacts, proposed mitigation ratios, and where proposed mitigation will be implemented.

    g. The plan shall include the establishment of a permanent conservation easement of approximately 11.5 acres of suitable habitat for La Panza mariposa lily located outside of the 10-phase mining area as shown on Figure 20 of the 2025 BRA. Preservation and protection of this habitat will also serve to protect suitable habitat for special-status wildlife and help preserve wildlife corridors and habitat connectivity. It is expected that the preserved habitat supports similar biotic diversity of special-status and common species as the proposed expansion area.

    h. A description of the proposed planting and restoration methods and how they will be implemented. As appropriate, these measures will include:

        5. A detailed description of topsoil salvage procedures and long-term soil stockpile storage methods and the removal of non-native species;

        6. Methods and timing of any proposed seed collection and storage;

        7. Locations and methods for restoration, replanting, and/or reseeding (e.g., decompaction, recontouring, scarification, mulching, hand broadcasting, hydroseeding, and weed control); and

        8. Short- and/or long-term monitoring protocols and/or performance standards by which success of mitigation can be measured.

BIO-4 Special-status Plants. The applicant will ensure the proper collection, storage, and preservation of topsoil for reclamation purposes as described in the *Reclamation Plan* (Holland, 2014) and all subsequent plan amendments. Preservation of the existing seed bank will not only assist in reclamation efforts including the re-establishment of a genetically similar chaparral community but will be essential to preserving and re-establishing herbaceous species on site. Topsoil salvage shall, at a minimum, follow the procedures outlined below:

- The top six to twelve inches of soil shall be salvaged according to specifications provided in the approved *Reclamation Plan* and any subsequent amendments. If not addressed in the *Reclamation Plan* or subsequent amendments, a topsoil salvage protocol shall be developed outlining salvage techniques, proper storage methods, acceptable cover material, and expiration for use and/or farming methods to ensure a viable native seed bank. The Topsoil Salvage Protocol shall be submitted for approval to the County **prior to the onset of construction**.

BIO-5 **Protecting Monterey Dusky-footed Woodrat and other Woodrat Species. Prior to vegetation clearing in oak woodland and scrub communities**, a biologist shall clearly identify the locations of woodrat houses. Woodrat houses outside of the expansion area shall be flagged for avoidance and provided a 10-foot no disturbance buffer area. The location of woodrat houses within the expansion area that cannot be avoided will be identified with construction personnel. A biological monitor shall be present during initial vegetation removal and initial earth disturbance to monitor the mechanical dismantling of woodrat houses. Due to potential health hazards associated with disturbing woodrat houses, hand removal is not recommended. Dismantling will be completed by an operator by gently disturbing the top of the nests with a piece of equipment (e.g., excavator with thumb or similar equipment that can accomplish the task) and allowing woodrats to evacuate unharmed prior to completely dismantling the nest. As necessary, the biological monitor will temporarily halt work within the immediate vicinity of any observed woodrats to allow the species to evacuate the immediate area of impact.

BIO-6 **Blainville's Horned Lizard and Northern California Legless Lizard. Within 48-hours of initial site disturbance in suitable habitat areas**, a qualified biologist shall conduct a pre-activity survey immediately prior to initial habitat disturbance (e.g., initial clearing, grubbing, vegetation removal) to detect special-status and or other wildlife species with emphasis on the presence/absence of Blainville's horned lizard and Northern California legless lizard. Surveys will be conducted by gently disturbing scrub understory and upper layers of oak tree duff. If either species is discovered, a qualified biologist will hand capture the animals for relocation to suitable habitat areas located outside the area of impact. Construction monitoring shall also be conducted by a qualified biologist during all initial ground disturbing and vegetation removal activities (e.g., grading, grubbing, vegetation trimming, vegetation removal including tree removal, etc.). If either species is discovered during the monitoring, the species will be hand captured and relocated to suitable habitat outside the area of impact. Common wildlife encountered during pre-activity surveys or initial clearing shall also be allowed opportunity to leave the area on their own volition. As necessary, a qualified biologist may also relocate common wildlife species to suitable habitat areas located outside of the area of impact.

BIO-7 **Pre-activity Survey for Special-status Avian and Nesting Birds. Vegetation clearing shall be avoided between February 1 and September 15**. If vegetation clearing cannot be avoided during the nesting season, a qualified biologist shall conduct a survey for nesting birds of the vegetation clearing areas and a 250-foot buffer within one week prior to initiation of disturbance. If active nests (i.e., nest containing eggs or chicks) are detected, they shall be avoided until the nest is no longer active and the young are no longer reliant on the nest for parental care. A non-disturbance buffer of 50 feet will be placed around non-listed, passerine species and a 250-foot buffer will be implemented for raptor species. Non-disturbance buffer distances can be modified as determined by a qualified biologist when there is a compelling biological or ecological reason to do so, such as when the project work area would be concealed from a nest site by intervening habitat features and/or existing topography. Buffer reductions would vary by species and the disturbance context surrounding the nest site. The qualified biologist shall monitor all active nest sites during initial site disturbance to

ensure work outside the established buffer does not jeopardize the nest success. If disturbance is noted, the biologist shall work with facility management to increase buffer distances, as needed to avoid nest disruption. The appropriate resource protection agency shall be contacted if nests of state listed, federally listed, or fully protected species are detected. No new site disturbance (i.e. vegetation clearing) will be initiated without further guidance from resource protection agencies if nests of state listed, federally listed, or fully protected species are detected.

BIO-8 **Pre-activity Survey for Golden Eagle. If removal of vegetation or ground disturbance occurs between January 1 and September 15**, pre-construction golden eagle nest surveys will be conducted covering the impacted area(s) where vegetation will be removed and a surrounding 0.5-mile area within one week of clearing activities. If nesting golden eagles are found during pre-construction surveys, an exclusion buffer of 0.25 mile will be established around each active nest and maintained until the nest is inactive. Buffers may be reduced in size if a qualified biologist determines that a reduced buffer will not result in adverse impacts and there is concurrence from CDFW and USFWS to proceed. Surveys shall be repeated annually if additional clearing activities are proposed within 0.25 mile of potentially suitable habitat (e.g., foothill woodland).

BIO-9 **Non-sensitive Habitats.** The *Reclamation Plan* (Holland, 2014) was developed to restore reclaimed slopes to pre-project conditions and mitigate for unavoidable temporary impacts to non-sensitive habitats that may provide suitable habitat for special-status species. The *Reclamation Plan* (Holland, 2014) and any other subsequent amendments will be utilized to continue efforts to restore reclaimed slopes to pre-project conditions per the CUP conditions and in accordance with the *Specific Plan* (County Planning and Building, 2002). As such, the approved *Reclamation Plan* (Holland, 2014) and any subsequent plan amendments shall be implemented.

BIO-10 **Native Tree Protection.** Approximately 371 oak trees and 8 pine trees, constituting approximately 12.3 acres of oak woodland habitat are present within the survey area and may be affected by project activities. A majority of these trees are located within the primary expansion area. However, those trees located along the margins may be indirectly impacted as a result of overland travel and/or equipment staging within their critical root zone. To avoid and/or minimize indirect impacts to those trees located along the margins and those located within 25 feet of the proposed project limits, a Native Tree Protection Plan shall be developed and submitted to the County for review and approval **prior to the start of each phase**. The Native Tree Protection Plan shall include at a minimum, the following guidelines:

- All mature trees within 25 feet of ground disturbance shall be marked for protection and their critical root zone (i.e., the distance from the trunk to the dripline of the tree) shall be fenced prior to any grading. The critical root zone of a tree shall be determined in consultation with an approved biologist/botanist/arborist. If work activities are expected to occur within the critical root zone of a tree, the limits of grading shall be marked in the field for fence placement.
- Temporary fencing shall be installed at the limits of the dripline or the limits of grading with high-visibility fencing (e.g., construction fencing or t-posts and yellow rope).
- Placement of tree protective fencing shall be verified by a qualified biologist/botanist/arborist.
- Grading, trenching, compaction of soil or placement of fill shall be avoided within these fenced areas.

- Tree removal shall be monitored by a qualified biologist/botanist/arborist and as-built impacts documented for mitigation purposes.

- Trimming of branches shall be minimized, especially for larger lower branches, and the amount done in one season shall be limited to no more than 10 percent of the canopy to reduce stress/shock.

BIO-11 Oak Woodland. Though a majority of impacts are expected to be offset with implementation of the *Reclamation Plan* (Holland, 2014) and any subsequent amendments, additional mitigation for long-term impacts to oak woodland are being proposed. Mitigation for unavoidable impacts to oak woodland will follow provisions outlined in the CEQA Oak Protection Act, as well as guidance set forth by the State of California PRC 21083.4, and local County Ordinance No. 3346. Specifically, up to 50 percent of required mitigation can be achieved through on-site planting efforts (i.e., reclamation). If planting is not feasible, or to meet the remaining required mitigation after planting efforts, either a conservation easement or an in-lieu fee may be utilized.

The County typically requires a 4:1 and 2:1 mitigation ratio for direct and indirect impacts to oaks, respectively. As such, if it is assumed that 371 oaks will be directly impacted and 50 percent of mitigation oak trees are planted on site, a total of 742 oaks may be planted as a part of reclamation efforts. Per the County Ordinance, an oak woodland management plan may be required for removal of oak woodland habitat in excess of three acres, but not to exceed five percent of the site's total oak woodland canopy. The existing *Reclamation Plan* (Holland, 2014) and any subsequent amendments shall be used for re-establishing oak woodland on site and is intended to satisfy conditions in lieu of an oak woodland management plan.

If permanent conservation is utilized for mitigation, through either conservation easement or fee-simple ownership by a qualified conservation organization, the mitigation ratio would include a minimum 1:1 ratio for acreage of total oak woodland impacts and would require coordination with a willing third party (e.g., land trust). If in-lieu fees are utilized for any portion of mitigation, contributions may be made to an oak woodland conservation fund currently managed by a qualified conservation organization. The current in-lieu fee amount is approximately $970 per tree removed or $485 per tree impacted and is applied on a 1:1 basis for all impacted trees. It should be noted that the fee is determined on a case-by-case basis by the County and is subject to change upon the County's discretion.

Based on the above options, impacts to individual oak trees and oak woodland could be mitigated through the following options to be approved by the County **prior to the start of excavation of each phase**:

- On-site mitigation planting of up to 50 percent of the impacted trees at a 4:1 mitigation ratio (i.e., up to 742 oak trees). Due to the existing foothill woodland community composition on site, mitigation plantings may include establishment of native associate species including foothill pine and toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*). However, these associate species may not constitute more than 10 percent of the overall planting efforts. Mitigation plantings shall be implemented in accordance with the *Reclamation Plan (*Holland, 2014) and any subsequent plan amendments.

- Establishment of a permanent conservation easement over an area supporting at least 12.3 acres of foothill woodland/oak woodland habitat. If on-site planting is utilized for a portion of proposed mitigation, a revised acreage shall be calculated to meet mitigation requirements.

- Payment of an in-lieu fee of up to $359,870 to an oak woodland conservation fund, qualified conservation organization, or similar County-approved oak tree mitigation bank. Fees may be paid in up to three increments based on phased impacts to oak trees. The table below provides a summary of the proposed fee payment schedule:

Mining Phase	Number of Trees Removed	In-lieu Fee Balance*
3	93	$90,210
4	158	$153,260
5	120	$116,400
3 to 5	371	$359,870

* To be paid to an oak woodland conservation fund or similar County-approved conservation organization or oak tree mitigation bank prior to the commencement of any individual Phase.

It should be noted that the fees above assume 100 percent of trees removed will be mitigated through in-lieu fees and that the fee per removed tree is $970. The table does not include costs for impacted trees (i.e., impacts to the critical root zone and/or trimming of more than 10 percent of a trees canopy), which would be added to the total cost at $485 per tree. As-built impacts would be calculated to determine the final in-lieu fee payment. Actual tree costs may be subject to change on a case-by-case basis by the County, which may affect the total balance due. Similarly, if on-site planting is utilized for a portion of proposed mitigation, a revised fee amount/payment schedule shall be calculated to meet mitigation requirements.

BIO-12 Protecting Aquatic Resources and Water Quality. The following general measures are recommended to minimize impacts to jurisdictional drainages on site including associated aquatic resources and water quality:

- The Rocky Canyon Creek riparian corridor and minimum 50-foot buffer area shall be clearly shown on all final Phase 2 through 5 plan sets and clearly marked in the field prior to initiation of mining operations. This shall include interpretative signage indicating that the creek corridor is a sensitive resource area. Creek corridor delineation and interpretive signage shall be inspected periodically during all mining operations to ensure the limits remain clearly marked and are being avoided.

- All mining operations will be limited to areas located outside the 100-year floodplain of the East Creek and the South Ravine. The 100-year floodplain limits shall be shown on all final Phase 2 through 5 plan sets and shall be clearly marked in the field prior to initiation of mining operations. Areas shall be inspected periodically during all mining operations to ensure the limits remain clearly marked and are being avoided.

- All temporarily disturbed areas (e.g., access routes, staging areas, and stockpile areas) will be located at a minimum of 50 feet from any water feature (i.e., the ephemeral drainages, creek corridor, and depressional wetland pond feature, etc.). This distance should be increased wherever feasible.

- All detention basins shall be designed and operated to ensure discharges to waters meet local, state, and federal water quality standards consistent with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Industrial General Permit requirements for Rocky Canyon Quarry. Surface flows shall be directed away from disturbed areas to the extent feasible to avoid mobilizing

sediment in run off. Best management practices shall be utilized to minimize off-site silt and sediment deposition.

BIO-13 Maintaining Dispersal Corridors for Wildlife. The proposed project shall be phased to minimize impacts to wildlife movement throughout the area. Proposed project phasing will maintain corridors between Rocky Canyon Creek, ephemeral drainages, and adjacent open space habitat areas not affected by the proposed expansion activities.

BIO-14 Landscaping and Screening. All landscaping and/or screening shall use locally-sourced native species either collected from on site or grown in a local nursery.

BIO-15 Lighting. Exterior lighting will be positioned to avoid illumination of open space areas, drainages, and the Rocky Canyon Creek riparian corridor. No permanent night lighting will be installed, except for security and maintenance needs of the constructed facility. Temporary construction lighting will be kept to the minimum amount necessary and shall be directed toward active work areas and away from open spaces and/or drainages.

BIO-16 Preconstruction Surveys and Avoidance for Crotch's Bumble Bee. **Prior to the start of project activities**, and if work is planned to occur during the flight period of April 1 to September 1, a qualified biologist shall survey for Crotch's bumble bee within the work area 2 weeks prior to the start of initial ground disturbance. If a Crotch's bumble bee nest is observed, no work shall occur within 25 feet of the nest until it is no longer active. If an exclusion buffer is not feasible, the applicant shall contact the County of San Luis Obispo (County) for further guidance. If Crotch's bumble bee is found during the active spring and summer period, or presence is unknown (e.g., if a survey during the active period was not completed) and work is planned between October and March, potential overwintering habitat shall be avoided by a minimum of 50 feet. If potential overwintering habitat cannot be avoided, the County shall be contacted. The County shall coordinate with appropriate resource agencies for guidance to implement project activities and avoid take or proceed with an Incidental Take Permit. The results of the surveys shall be provided to the County prior to initial project activities.

Because bumble bees move nest sites each year, surveys shall be conducted each year prior to ground disturbance within undisturbed habitat in the project site.

Geology and Soils

GEO-1 Monitoring of geologic conditions. The applicant shall retain a qualified engineering geologist to perform ongoing monitoring of surface mining activities as required by SMARA and the County Land Use Ordinance.

GEO-2 Adaptive management. **Plans submitted for grading permit approval for surface mining activities associated with Phases 3, 4 and 5** shall incorporate the findings and recommendations of the engineering geologic investigation for the project site prepared by GeoSolutions, Inc. in February, 2019, including the following adaptive management strategies:

1. Following exposure of cut rock slopes for Phases III to V, an engineering geologist shall review the rock slopes for inherent instabilities due to weak rock or obvious intersecting fractures that may cause localized wedge failures. If unstable conditions are observed within anticipated temporary cut rock slopes for Phases III, IV, and V, mitigation is recommended for the specific location which may include special drainage considerations, trimming, scaling, re-sloping, removal, catchments, ditches, or other methods for remediation.

2. Surface water drainage from upslope drainages shall be controlled and not concentrated on open slopes. Erosion and severe rill and gully erosion is possible from uncontrolled drainage, especially on weak, highly fractured, or soft rock (faulted areas). Surface drainage shall be controlled to prevent concentrated water-flow on soft-rock slopes. Surface drainage gradients are recommended to prevent ponding and promote drainage of surface water away from natural or man-made slopes.
3. The drainage improvements for cut slopes presented in the Reclamation Plan shall be implemented as depicted.
4. Benches shall be maintained periodically to remove collected debris until vegetation is established per the reclamation plan.
5. An engineering geologist shall periodically monitor geologic conditions during bench/cut-slope excavations. It is understood that this would be an on-going process of monitoring and that reclamation may occur over a period of several years or decades.
6. Excavation and mining activities are recommended to be in accordance with appropriate codes and ordinances of the County of San Luis Obispo, mining safety and health administration and other administering agencies. In addition, unusual subsurface conditions encountered during grading such as springs or fill material are recommended to be brought to the attention of the Engineering Geologist.
7. Cut faces within the quarry that are coincident with mapped traces of faulting (as depicted on Plates IA, lB, and 1 C of the engineering geology report) at the site shall be reviewed periodically. Faulting at the site has created highly sheared weak-rock which may require consideration for stabilization or reinforcement when final slopes are cut. Stabilization measures may include: special drainage consideration, trimming, scaling, re-sloping, catchments, ditches, or other methods for remediation.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

HAZ-1 **Equipment Maintenance and Refueling. During all construction and operational activities**, the cleaning, refueling, and maintenance of equipment and vehicles shall occur only within designated staging areas. The staging areas shall conform to all Best Management Practices applicable to attaining zero discharge of stormwater runoff. At a minimum, all equipment and vehicles shall be checked and maintained on a daily basis to ensure proper operation and to avoid potential leaks or spills.

HAZ-2 **Spill Response Protocol. During all construction and operational activities**, all project-related spills of hazardous materials shall be cleaned up immediately. Appropriate spill prevention and cleanup materials shall be onsite at all times during construction.

Exhibit C – Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan Policies and Standards As Amended in 2002

MINING AREA LAND USE

POLICIES

2. Mining Area Land Uses
Allow only those land uses on the site that are consistent with mining.

STANDARD

1.1 **Limitations on Use - Mining Area**
For properties within the Specific Plan area where mining is approved, uses identified in Table 0, Part I of the Land Use Element as "A" or "S" uses that may be allowed include: Mining, caretaker residence, concrete products, paving materials, pipeline and transmission lines.

TRANSITION AREA

POLICY

3. Transition Area
A transition area is proposed to protect mining operations from future incompatible land uses on adjacent lands. The transition area is located between the mining area boundary and the plan area boundary shown on Figure 2-3. Within the transition area, the county shall provide notice to property owners of the mine when requests for development are submitted.

STANDARDS

2.1 **Limitations on Use -Transition Area**
Within the transition zone all land uses allowable by Table "O" are permitted but those uses that are identified in the Noise Element as sensitive receptors are required to comply with Policy 3.3.4 of that element.

2.2 **Permit Requirement.**
Minor Use Permit is required for all residential uses, and bed and breakfast facilities.

2.3 **Finding**
Within the Transition zone, discretionary approvals shall require a finding for approval that the proposed use is compatible with current or future mineral extraction operations within the adjacent mining area. The proposed use will not adversely affect the continuing mining operation or expansion of the mining operation.

2.4 **Conditions**
During the consideration of any discretionary approval of uses that are potentially incompatible with an adjoining mineral extraction operation, conditions may be placed which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Relocation and/or reorientation of a proposed use on the site.
- Special construction techniques such as acoustical insulation, limitation of window area.
- Fencing, screening, berming, and landscaping.

The use restrictions may be removed once mining and reclamation operations are complete.

POLICIES

4. Off-site Route Criteria
An acceptable off-site haul route should be utilized which can meet the following criteria:

- Provide for adequate sight-distances Minimize road gradients
- Minimize intersection safety hazards Minimize turning movements for trucks

- When any new improvements are proposed for a haul road, the road must be adequately designed and constructed to minimize maintenance costs.

ON-SITE ROADS

POLICY

5. On-site Roads
Access to working areas, mining equipment, finished benches and the processing plant will be provided by a combination of existing and proposed unpaved roads. The provision of access roads shall be governed by the following standards:

STANDARDS

5.1 Access roads shall be placed within areas that are being mined or proposed to be mined in the future to allow equipment to reach working areas.

5.2 On-site roads shall provide equipment access to the finished slope benches for maintenance purposes.

5.3 Prior to establishing new access roads or extending existing roads the quarry operator shall provide plans indicating the location and size of any roads outside of any area to be mined to the SMARA inspector for approval. Such plans may require a separate grading permit.

PUBLIC ACCESS

POLICY

6. Public Access Through Quarry
Provide appropriate, continuing and safe public access through the quarry.

STANDARDS

6.1 Equestrians, pedestrians and bicycle access by the public is to continue to be allowed through the quarry on Rocky Canyon Road except as provided in standard

6.2 To avoid safety issues the quarry operator and property owner may offer to dedicate, to the county, a trail easement that borders the property rather than continuing to allow passage through the processing area. The trail would allow equestrian, pedestrian and bicycle access through the quarry property. The alternate route must be agreed upon by the quarry operator, land owner(s) and the Department of General Services. The quarry operator would be responsible for construction and maintenance of the alternate trail route during the operation of the mine.

POLICY

7. Mine Access
Provide for access to the mining area by authorized vehicles and equipment but prevent access by other vehicles to the mining areas and lands lying outside of the project site that could be accessed by those roads.

8. Access to Adjacent Lands

Provide for the possibility of future pedestrian, equestrian and bicycle access to the lands beyond the quarry when and where it is appropriate. Any access must be agreed upon by the quarry operator, land owner(s) and the Department of General Services.

VISUAL

POLICIES

9. Berm as Visual Barrier
Where excavation faces the view corridor, a berm shall be retained along the foreground edge of the working shelf as necessary to conceal the operating equipment and working face from off-site view. The use of berms as visual screens is illustrated in Figure 6-2.

10. Ridges as Visual Barrier
Ridges shall be used whenever possible to conceal off-site views of excavation activities. Ridges shall be left in place while mining proceeds in the areas behind them for as long as practicable.

11. Curvelinear Shaping
Curvelinear shapes shall be incorporated into the final land form in order to avoid a mechanical/straight edged appearance or other methods employed to reduce the visibility of the mine off site. Figure 6-1, is a guide for interpretation of curvelinear shapes that shall be incorporated into the final landform.

STANDARDS

11.1 Where the original ridge meets the new ridgeline rounding of the original ridge tops shall be required to avoid sharp "man-made" angles or "flat tops" that will silhouette against the sky.

11.2 To avoid linear rows of vegetation along each bench which accent the unnatural land form of the quarry terraces, vegetation shall be planted in a manner which represents the undisturbed vegetation of the surrounding hillsides.

POLICY

12. Visual Screening
Prior to commencement of Phase 2 mining activities of the Specific Plan, the applicant shall demonstrate that the revegetation measures have been successful in screening mining activities from view of the five key viewing areas indicated in Figure V-25 in the EIR. Phase 2 may not commence until the Department of Planning and Building has determined that the screening will be adequate, either by vegetation or other means. The reclamation of exposed slopes shall be measured by meeting the requirements of the State Mining and Geology Board Reclamation Regulations, Article 9, Section 3705, Performance Standards for Revegetation and the standards contained in the approved revegetation plan.

MINING IMPLEMENTATION

POLICIES

13. Material Standards
Working areas should be large enough to provide the variety of material and flexibility required to meet specification standards.

14. **Location of Excavation**
Excavation may continue simultaneously at several different locations within each phase area throughout the life of the project.

15. Mining to Occur Behind Visual Barriers
Mining activities and working areas that have not yet been revegetated should be hidden from view to the maximum extent feasible -- preferably behind ridges or berms. (See Section VI. - VISUAL).

16. Size of Working Areas
Working areas shall be limited to the minimum size necessary as excavation progresses through the site, considering reasonable operating requirements.

17. Hours of Operation
Hours of trucking shall be limited to reduce noise impacts. Extended operating hours to meet public works project demand for other than emergency reasons can only be considered when the impacts from truck traffic noise and safety concerns are adequately resolved.

18. Reclamation Plan to Control
The area of excavation, ultimate configuration, and maximum rate of production shall be specified in the mining and reclamation plan.

19. Risk
The method of operation shall reduce risk to an acceptable level of all hazards to public health and safety, including: unstable slopes, dangerous equipment, toxic substances, and disease vectors.

20. Archaeological
If potential archaeological finds are discovered during excavation, work in the area shall halt and the find evaluated by a qualified Archaeologist. Procedures for managing historic and pre-historic archaeological resources, as described in CEQA guidelines Appendix K, should be followed. These procedures are shown in Appendix E of this document.

21. Topsoil Stockpiling
Stockpiling of topsoil shall be minimized and, where stockpiling is necessary, the topsoil shall be protected from erosion and stockpiled in such a manner as to protect its viability to support vegetation.

22. Drainage
Suitable drainage and storm water detention facilities shall be maintained during the mining operation. (See Section VII - INFRASTRUCTURE)

23. Other Agency Permits
The quarry operator shall obtain appropriate permits and comply with applicable requirements of the Regional Water Quality Control Board (R WQCB), California Department of Fish & Game (CDF&G), and Air Pollution Control District (APCD).

MINING PLAN

POLICY

24. Mining Plan
To implement the policies and standards of this plan prepare a detailed mining plan for each phase that provides for:

a. Mine in a sequence that minimizes exposure of the working area to public view from off-site.
b. Provide access to a variety of aggregate grades at all times within each phase area.
c. Mine in a sequence that maximizes utilization of gravity in moving material.
d. Limit on-site haul distances as much as possible thus deducting air pollution.
e. Establish permanent habitat areas as soon as possible by revegetating as soon as practical.
f. Allow for flexibility in the sequence of excavation to respond to fluctuations in market demand and other unanticipated factors.

STANDARDS

A detailed mining plan that establishes a sequence of excavation shall be prepared as part of each phase of mining as a part of each phase's reclamation plan and should address the following issues:

24.1 The areas t o be mined in each phase.
24.2 The interim and finished slopes and benches at the end of each phase.
24.3 The manner i n which slopes and benches are integrated into overlapping phases.
24.4 The various locations for a portable primary crusher and conveyor.
24.5 The elevations of benches and shelves.
24.6 The locations of interim and ultimate access roads.
24.7 The ridge tops and the elevations along the ridges for comparison with the grades within each area of excavation.

RECLAMATION PLAN

POLICIES

25. Timing of Reclamation
Reclamation shall be performed as soon as practical in each phase.

26. Requirements
All reclamation plans and activities shall comply with reclamation standards adopted by the State Mining and Geology Board and any applicable County requirements.

27. On-going Reclamation
Mining activities shall be planned so that reclamation is an on-going activity thus shortening the duration of habitat loss.

28. Final Slope Stability
Final cut slopes shall be designed to be stable under both static and dynamic (seismic) conditions.

RECLAMATION STANDARDS

27.1 The processing plant and all equipment shall be removed at the termination of mining on the site.
27.1 Reclamation shall be performed as soon as excavation and final, full height slopes in a mined area are completed.
27.2 Interim slopes and benches shall all be eliminated by final excavation.
28.1 Any changes to the slopes proposed in Figures 7-3 and 7-4 and 7-6 through 7-15, in the first or subsequent phases require that an engineering geologist, acceptable to the Department of Planning and Building, shall prepare revised maps and a report verifying that the change is geologically stable. The maps and report shall be submitted to the Department of Planning and Building for county approval. If such changes occur during mining then all work is to cease in the affected area until approval is given.

POLICIES

29. Drainage
Permanent drainage and storm water detention improvements shall be provided upon completion.

30. Benches and Mine Roads
Stable cut slopes and benches shall be provided after mining is complete. All slopes, and access roads not needed for contiguous mining or maintenance of slopes shall be revegetated as soon as excavation moves down slope.

31. Level Areas
Level areas shall be created but sloped sufficiently to allow drainage.

WILDLIFE HABITAT

POLICY

32. Wildlife Habitat
Wildlife habitat shall be restored to a condition that is suitable for most current wildlife species residing in the Plan area as soon as mining has been terminated for each phase.

STANDARDS

32.1 Disturbed areas shall be revegetated as soon as mining in those areas is complete, except for access roads and benches. Revegetation should be an ongoing, integral part of the reclamation operation.

32.2 All disturbed lands, except benches and access roads, shall be revegetated as wildlife habitat, of equivalent value to that which currently exists. Benches and access road will be allowed to revegetate naturally where possible.

REVEGETATION

POLICY

33. Revegetation Plan
The plan for reestablishing the natural ecosystem that was prepared shall be amended for each phase of mining to allow for incorporating new and better techniques of revegetation.

STANDARDS

33.1 Along with the mining and reclamation plan, a revegetation plan shall be prepared that addresses the following issues:
a. Site preparation / placement of topsoil
b. Soil amendment (if required)
c. Proposed plant materials
d. Use of native, indigenous plants
e. Hydroseed mix
f. Planting procedures
g. Irrigation (if required)
h. Maintenance, monitoring and management of revegetation.
i. Performance standards for revegetation as indicated in California Code of Regulation 3705.

33.2 The revegetation plan for each phase shall also assess the effectiveness of the mitigation measures to date.

RIPARIAN VEGETATION

POLICY

34. Riparian Vegetation
Protect and enhance the riparian vegetation and habitat along Rocky Canyon Creek, Adobe Creek and the bermed pond and spring.

STANDARD

34.1 A 50 foot buffer zone, measured from the center of the creek shall be established and maintained along each side of Rocky Canyon Creek to protect the riparian area. The existing bermed pond and the spring shall be included within the buffer zone to retain the habitat for the southwestern pond turtle. No mining operations shall be permitted within this 100' buffer zone.

MAINTENANCE OF REVEGETATION & RIPARIAN AREAS

POLICY

35. Provide for continuing maintenance and improvement of the revegetated and nparian areas.

STANDARDS

35.1 A preactivity survey shall be conducted prior to each phase of mining to assess potential impacts to sensitive biological resources or any other sensitive resources discovered subsequent to those identified in the PEIR. The assessment shall include an evaluation of mitigation measure effectiveness. If impacts to biological resources are identified which are not discussed in the PEIR, the Environmental Coordinator shall be notified and subsequent environmental review shall be required at the quarry operator's expense.

35.2 Prior to mining in each phase, the applicant shall conduct preactivity surveys. A survey shall be conducted between June 15 and July 15 for the straight-awned spineflower, a species of special concern. If any species of special concern are encountered, the applicant shall submit a mitigation plan for approval by the Environmental Coordinator. If avoidance of these species is not feasible, a replacement plan shall be prepared for the Environmental Coordinator.

DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS & MAINTENANCE

POLICIES

36. Drainage Improvements

Install drainage improvements that reduce sedimentation and erosion.

a. Reduce the amount of water collected in rock fractures, which, by adding weight, could stimulate failure of finished slopes.
b. Reduce surface erosion and slippage of applied soil.
c. Control discharge of surface water from the site.

37. Maintenance

Provide for current and long-term maintenance of the drainage system.

STANDARDS

36.1 Erosion control methods shall be designed to handle runoff from not less than the 20 year/ 1 hour intensity storm event.

36.2 All drainage, diversion structures, waterways and erosion control shall be consistent with the requirements in California Code of Regulation Section 3706.

37.1 During quarry operations, maintenance of the drainage system shall be the responsibility of the operator.

37.2 After quarry operations are completed, maintenance of the final drainage system will be the responsibility of the land owner. Prior to commencement of Phase 1, the applicant shall supply a written agreement or other legal conveyance acceptable to county counsel which includes "successors in interest" such that this condition goes with the sale of the property.

Exhibit D – Development Plan Conditions of Approval Adopted in 2002

Approved Use

1. This approval authorizes Development Plan and Reclamation Plan approval to allow operation of a surface mine for hard rock and granite. This approval is for the first two phases of the ten phases proposed by the applicant. The annual total yield of material mined from the authorized Phase 1 excavation area shall not exceed 435,000 cubic yards per year. The annual total yield of material mined from the authorized Phase 2 excavation area shall not exceed 535,000 cubic yards per year. Also authorized are ancillary equipment including a rock crusher(s), screening plant(s), earth moving equipment, office, scale(s), improvements to site consistent with the conditions of approval and the adopted site plan.

   The increased production rates and hours of operation allowed bv this permit mav not take affect orior to approval of the Rockv Canvon Specific Plan Amendments (G990018S) by the Board of Supervisors.

2. This approval is granted for a maximum period of seventeen years or a total volume mined of 9,115,000 cubic yards, whichever occurs first (This total is cumulative and includes the approximately 1,000,000 cubic yards that has already been mined since the 1996 approval of permit D920155M.). Continuance of the proposed use beyond that date or volume shall require a new Development Plan approval. In the first month of the sixteenth year or before removal of 8,580,000 cubic yards of material from the ground the quarry operator shall notify the county of their intent to request continuance of the operation and shall file a new Development Plan application.

3. If mining is not to continue past the approval permit then the operator is to commence reclamation as provided by these conditions and the reclamation plan prior to the cessation of mining activity and complete reclamation by February 7, 2018.

Specific Plan Standards and Policies

4. The quarry operator shall comply with the standards and policies contained in the Rocky Canyon Specific Plan dated April 16, 1996 and as subsequently amended.

Action by Board of Supervisors

5. The conditions of this permit mav be amended as a result of action bv the Board of Supervisors on their consideration of the Rocky Canyon Specific Plan. The increased production limits and hours of operation shall not become effective until approval of the changes to Specific Plan G990018S have been approved by the Board of Supervisors and become effective.

Notice to Proceed

6. Prior to commencement of any mining operations on Phase 2, the applicant shall receive a "Notice to Proceed" from the Department of Planning and Building. This notice shall authorize mining operations on Phase 2 once all conditions affecting its issuance have been met.

Operation of Quarry

7. From March 16 to November 14, operation of the project is limited to the hours between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m., Monday through Saturday. From November 15 to March 15, hours are limited to 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Trucking hours are limited to 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Operation of the mine, including hauling, shall be prohibited on Sunday, except under emergency conditions that constitute a risk to public health, safety and welfare, as determined by the state or local governments and as approved by the Planning Director. Such exception will specify hours of operation and duration of any change of operating hours.

8. The operator is to provide to the Department of Planning and Building a quarterly statement of the quantity of material mined each month. The SMARA inspector may request statements provided monthly.

Truck Routes

9. Upon completion of the improvements specified in the November 18, 2001 agreement between the applicant and the City of Atascadero, truck routes to and from the site shall be as follows:

a. Rocky Canyon Road to Halcon Road to Viejo Camino to Santa Barbara Road to Highway 101. The opposite route would be used to gain access to the quarry.

b. When the river crossing is **not** passable, trucks may use Rocky Canyon Road north of Halcon Road.

10. The quarry operator is to provide a map to all truck drivers, before loading at the quarry, indicating the approved haul routes to be used and also sign a statement that they have been provided the route map and will use that route when coming or going to the quarry. Any driver refusing to sign the statement is not to be loaded. The signed statement is to be approved by the Planning Director and may contain additional requirements of the truck drivers to promote safe courteous operation of the trucks.

11. If the Salinas River crossing on Halcon Road becomes unsafe to use, the mine operator is to repair the crossing at the earliest possible date.

Off-Site Roads

12. Quarry operator shall continue to pay compensation to the county for the increase in road use on Rocky Canyon Road and road maintenance requirements generated by the project per Section 22.08.192 of the Land Use Ordinance. The quarry operator is to submit a letter annually to the Department of Planning and Building indicating the number of times the route subject to such fees was used during that year. The operation shall also pay any compensation to the City of Atascadero for road maintenance that may be required by city ordinance.

13. Quarry operator will continue to agree to pay the prorata share for future road improvements and for their contribution to traffic on the existing route per mitigation measure 24 b. on page IX-13 of the original PEIR.

14. Prior to routing all Union Asphalt traffic onto Santa Barbara Road, the applicant shall improve the Viejo Camino/Santa Barbara Road intersection to serve the turning requirements of large trucks. This will require improvement of the curb return radius in the northwest corner of the intersection as well as additional widening of Viejo Camino and Santa Barbara Road on the southbound and eastbound approaches to the intersection.

15. When traffic warrants, as determined by the City of Atascadero, the applicant shall contribute a fair share toward improving the Santa Barbara Road/El Camino Real intersection. This will require relocation of the west leg of Santa Barbara Road to line up with Viejo Camino and level out a waiting area behind the stop sign.

16. During the operation of the quarry, the operator will continue to maintain Rocky Canyon Road between the easterly end of the mined area and its intersection with Halcon Road in accordance with San Luis Obispo County Standard Improvement Specifications and Drawings for an all weather gravel road standard A-7(c).

17. The operator shall post instructions at the quarry requesting that trucks queue on Rocky Canyon Road Canyon Road west of the Salinas River to wait and not to park or idle at or near Paloma Creek.

18. Prior to final approval of the "Dove Creek Commercial Center" project, or any high intensity project at the parcel on the northeast corner of Highway 101 and Santa Barbara Road, the operator shall contribute a fair share toward the following improvements:

    a. Widen Morro Road to a four lane arterial between Highway 101 and El Camino Real;

    b. Widen Santa Barbara Road between El Camino Real and the northbound interchange ramps to a four lane divided arterial and provide left turn channelization on Santa Barbara Road at the Highway 101 bridge structure;

    c. Widen the eastbound Morro Road approach to El Camino Real to provide a new through/right turn lane;

    d. Provide a free-flow right turn lane on the northbound Highway 101 offramp approach to Santa Barbara Road and provide a right turn lane on the westbound Santa Barbara approach to the northbound on-ramp.

19. Prior to routing all Union Asphalt-related truck traffic to the Santa Barbara/Highway 101 interchange, the applicant shall:

a. Install a four-way stop intersection at El Camino Real and Santa Barbara Road;

b. Install flashing warning lights to intersection approaches on El Camino Real;

c. Install rumble strips on El Camino Real; and

d. Install appropriate advanced warning signage.

Access Control

20. The operator shall maintain the signs that were approved by the County Engineer and Planning Director, to indicate to the public: 1) the location of a safe route for walking, bicycling and equestrian passage along Rocky Canyon Quarry, and 2) safety precautions, such as watching for moving equipment.

On Site Roads

21. The operator is to continue to close and lock the gate on Rocky Canyon Road when the mine is not being operated to prevent vehicular access.

22. The operator is to provide and maintain signs on mine access roads along Rocky Canyon Road indicating that they are private roads and that access is not permitted. If unauthorized access is occurring, the **SMARA** inspector can order that a locking gate and/or other improvements are required to restrict such access.

23. Issues relating to access both along Rocky Canyon Road and roads leading from it may be reviewed and can result in changes to or exceptions to the above two conditions. Issues and changes can include:

    a. Vehicular access along Rocky Canyon Road.

    b. Use of mining roads by other than authorized personnel provided first that safety, feasibility of routes and hours of operation are considered.

    c. The continuation of locking the gate on Rocky Canyon Road and the hours it is to be closed.

    d. Possible acceptance of an easement for hiking, equestrian and bicycle use to lands adjacent to the quarry, if the land owner wishes to grant such an easement. The above changes can occur provided the Planning Director first approves such modifications. Prior to approval the Planning Director shall confer with the County Engineer, the Department of General Services and other agencies as he deems appropriate.

Air Quality

24. The operator shall comply with requirements of the Air Pollution Control District.

Drainage System Maintenance

25. During quarry operations, maintenance of the drainage system shall be the responsibility of the operator.

26. After quarry operations are completed, maintenance of the final drainage system will be the responsibility of the land owner. Prior to issuance of the "Notice to Proceed" the applicant shall supply a written agreement or other legal conveyance acceptable to County Counsel which includes "successors in interest" such that this condition goes with the sale of the property.

27. Debris shall be cleared out. of ditches at least once yearly, prior to the rainy season.

28. The applicant shall verify to the SMARA inspector that the detention ponds have adequate capacity prior to each rainy season.

29. To prevent disruption of the drainage system, the quarry operator shall replace soil in eroded areas, restart revegetation and clean out and repair the drainage system as soon as it is possible and safe.

Lining of Ditches

30. All ditches to be constructed along access roads shall be lined to prevent erosion unless a Certified Engineering Geologist or Registered Civil Engineer inspects the ditch and determines that the ditch, or specific portions of the ditch, do not need to be lined to avoid erosion under conditions of volume and velocity of flow as specified in the drainage plans. If a ditch requires lining, the specifications shall be prepared by a Registered Civil Engineer or Certified Engineering Geologist and reviewed and approved by the County Engineering Department.

31. The quarry operator shall show proof of retainer of a qualified botanist approved by the County Environmental Coordinator to oversee the revegetation of the mined areas. The SMARA inspector shall be provided proof of retainer of the botanist at every annual inspection, and shall be given an annual report or letter from the botanist regarding the revegetation program progress.

Visual

32. The end "round offs" shown in Figure 6-1 in the Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan shall be made of topsoil similar to the adjacent undisturbed soil and planted with vegetation that matches the adjacent undisturbed vegetation so that there are no abrupt vegetation changes where the ridge terminates. Also large shrubs, digger pines or oak trees as appropriate shall be planted in the locations shown in Figure 6-1 in the Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan.

33. Final slope gradients shall blend with surrounding land forms. The terraces shall be bermed where they terminate with the natural ridges to maintain landforms rather than the terraced effects that would be created if finished with sharp edges contacting the natural terrain (see Figure 6-1 in the Rocky Canyon Quarry Specific Plan).

34. "Blue Rock" Appearance. If in isolated instances where the finished slopes are visible to the public from Highway 101, and only if revegetation efforts are not possible or unsuccessful, the applicant may either: 1) treat the finished slopes with chemical agents to speed up the weathering process, or 2) coat the "blue rock" with semi-permanent, non-toxic dyes. This is considered a short-term visual mitigation on small areas of the mine and it is not to be used in lieu of revegetation of the finished slopes. If either of these processes are to be used, the quarry operator shall notify in writing the county SMARA inspector for approval of the location of the finished slopes, the size of the area to be treated and the process to be used. The intent of the treatment is to allow areas that can not be revegetated effectively to appear as a natural rock out cropping.

Reclamation

35. Excavated areas shall ultimately be left with final slopes in compliance with the Rocky Canyon Specific Plan.

36. The existing cut slope created as a part of the prior reclamation plan M860181: 1 was not required to be revegetated and is not to be considered a part of the requirement above. The existing slope will be removed as a part of future mining and a final 2 to 1 slope created and revegetated. However, in the event that mining is not to continue past the first phase then these existing slopes -are to be reclaimed in accordance in the reclamation plan M860181 :1 37.

37. Temporary cut slopes which are to remain in place until later removal (referred to as interim slopes) shall consist of slopes no steeper than 1: 1, with 15-foot wide benches at 50-foot vertical spacing.

38. Excavation and all site disturbance shall be set back a minimum of 25 feet from adjacent properties. If adjacent property is also mined during this approval then the reclamation plan may be revised and shall consider the interface between the two properties and may propose to eliminate the 25 foot setback and connect the slopes. This is intended to provide an appropriate transition between two separately mined areas. Such revisions to eliminate these portions of the setback must be approved by the Department of Planning and Building.

39. The quarry operator is to complete installation of revegetation prior to or during the next rainy season where the 50-foot vertical interval between benches and the final slope have been created.

Revegetation

40. The operator shall submit to the Department of Planning and Building a final revegetation plan that implements the objectives, policies and standards of the vegetation and wildlife conditions.

41. The revegetation and reclamation plans for this phase of mining shall be reviewed annually by the consulting biologist to ensure that revegetation techniques incorporated are meeting the objectives. If the objectives are not

being met, then the revegetation and reclamation plans shall be revised consistent with the intent of the revegetation plan. Revised plans will be resubmitted to the Department of Planning and Building to approve the revision or, if it is determined to be necessary, require an amendment to the development plan or reclamation plan. The consulting biologist's reports shall be submitted annually to the County SMARA inspector.

42. Workers at the quarry shall attend an initial orientation and yearly updates to make them aware of: quarry operations to avoid significant impacts to biological resources, biological information regarding natural communities of the project site, wildlife species likely to be encountered, and revegetation/reclamation efforts and requirements. Orientations shall be presented by a qualified biologist approved by the County Environmental Coordinator, or the initial annual orientation can be video taped for repeated usage (provided tape is updated annually). The quarry operation shall verify in a log that each worker has attended the orientation. The log will be available for inspection during the annual SMARA inspection.

Wildlife Habitat

43. The revised revegetation plan specified in condition 39 shall be based on the following standards:

    a. The revegetation process shall be enhanced by hydroseeding and planting native species collected from the area.

    b. A monitoring and management plan for the site, including a schedule of regular follow up inspections, shall be prepared to assure that revegetation of the site is in conformance with the stated goals. Monitoring also provides an opportunity to address unforseen problems, evaluate year to year variations in natural successional processes and to provide remedial actions as required. A log of the monitoring of the revegetation shall be kept by the consulting biologist and it shall be available for review by the SMARA inspector at regular inspections.

    c. Revegetation shall result in a vegetative cover that is compatible with the surrounding vegetation.

    d. All vegetative material that can be salvaged shall be used for mulching to the maximum extent feasible.

    e. Soil shall be applied to the exposed final slopes in a manner which minimizes erosion and slumping and provides a suitable host for revegetation.

    f. Reclamation, including final contours and revegetation, of the uppermost slopes shall occur in each phase as soon as excavation moves downslope to the next bench and be completed prior to or during the next rainy season.

    g. The restored areas shall be planned so that a continuous cover of woodland and chaparral is created that will connect to the surrounding natural ecosystem.

    h. Revegetation shall include the reestablishment of oak woodland, Chaparral, Coastal Scrub and riparian woodland.

    i. Invading species or aggressive weeds shall be controlled in order to ensure the success of plantings.

    j. A continuous wildlife corridor between the plan area and neighboring properties shall be reestablished.

    k. Although land forms will be altered, the ultimate site condition shall generally retain terrain types similar to what currently exist. There will be a variety of environments including foothill woodland, grassland, riparian woodland and chaparral.

    l. Revegetation methods shall be appropriate to the topographic, soil and climate conditions of the site and shall incorporate shrubs, grasses and trees native to the area. The natural regrowth of native vegetation shall be encouraged on disturbed areas.

    m. Mined slopes shall have soil added to support the proposed revegetation. Topsoil, overburden, and other native earth materials from the site and surrounding area shall be used. Any soil that is to be stockpiled shall be protected from erosion and nutrient loss.

    n. Access roads and benches are to be left initially to revegetate naturally from the adjacent restored areas. The revegetation plan shall set standards as to the level of revegetation these areas are to achieve after a set time

from revegetation of the slopes. If natural revegetation has not occurred to those standards, then the quarry operator is to revegetate the areas that do not comply with the standards.

Riparian Vegetation

44. The Creek Enhancement Plan that is incorporated into the Environmental Impact Report shall be implemented as indicated in that plan.

45. To prevent direct surface runoff into the creek, a berm of sufficient height and width shall be constructed and maintained. The berm is to deter sediment or accidental spills from entering the creek. The berm shall be placed along the outside edges of the creek buffer zone where the creek passes through areas disturbed by mining. Where necessary, large boulders may be required by the SMARA inspector to prevent damage to the berm by equipment.

46. The revegetation plan shall include programs for rehabilitation of the creek banks and enhancement of the riparian corridor by adding appropriate native plants and removal of all noxious weeds and exotic plants.

47. Prior to entering the creek, surface runoff shall first pass through detention basins that will allow the silt to drop out before the water is discharged.

48. The at-grade crossing at the confluence of Adobe and Rocky Canyon Creek shall have a pipe or pipes installed to assist water flows. Disturbance of the creek shall be kept to a minimum. Temporary improvements to keep sedimentation at a minimum will be reviewed and approved by a qualified biologist prior to implementation. The biologist's recommendations shall be in writing and a copy sent to the county SMARA inspector.

49. Steep areas adjacent to the creek shall include silt fencing, revegetation and/or berming to ensure that erosion does not enter the creek area.

50. The riparian buffer zone shall be marked and clearly recognizable to project personnel and shall allow for continued free movement of resident wildlife.

51. No introduction of exotic plant or wildlife species will be allowed at the quarry site.

Archaeological

52. If during excavation, any buried or isolated cultural materials are unearthed or discovered, work in that area shall halt and the County Environmental Coordinator notified in accordance with Section 22.05.140 of the Land Use Ordinance. Work shall not commence until the requirements of Section 22.05.140 and CEQA are met.