

2.10 Mineral Resources

<i>Issues (and Supporting Information Sources):</i>	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation</i>	<i>Less Than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
10. MINERAL RESOURCES—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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting

Existing Mineral Resources

Mineral resources in Del Norte County that are considered major producing areas include sand and gravel obtained from river, terrace, and beach deposits (Del Norte County, 2003). Numerous small aggregate production areas make up the majority of mining activities in Del Norte County but none are producing more than 0.5 million tons per year and all are located outside the Proposed Project study area (Kohler, 2002). The aggregate production areas are located primarily along the lower Smith River with some activity on the Klamath River and its tributaries (Del Norte County, 2003).

The California Geological Survey (CGS) has classified the regional significance of mineral resources in accordance with the California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA). Mineral Resource Zones (MRZs) delineated by CGS identify the presence and significance of mineral deposits within the study area. In general, areas subject to pressure of urbanization are zoned by the CGS, while those areas outside these areas are not. The CGS has not prepared any reports that designate Mineral Resource Zones to be protected in Del Norte County (Kohler, 2002).

Geothermal Resources

There are no known or potential geothermal resources identified in Del Norte County. Industrial or geothermal category operations do not exist anywhere near the Proposed Project study area (Laney and Brizzee, 2003).

Regulatory Context

State

Surface Mining and Reclamation Act

The primary State law concerning conservation and development of mineral resources is SMARA, as amended to date. SMARA is found in the California Public Resources Code (PRC), Division 2, Chapter 9, Sections 2710, et seq.

Depending on the region, natural resources can include geologic deposits of valuable minerals used in manufacturing processes and the production of construction materials. SMARA was enacted in 1975 to limit new development in areas with significant mineral deposits. SMARA calls for the State geologist to classify the lands within California based on mineral resource availability. In addition, the California Health and Safety Code requires the covering, filling, or fencing of abandoned shafts, pits and excavations (California Health and Safety Code Sections 24400-03.). Furthermore, mining may also be regulated by local government, which has the authority to prohibit mining pursuant to its general plan and local zoning laws.

SMARA states that the extraction of minerals is essential to the continued economic well-being of the State and to the needs of society, and that reclamation of mined lands is necessary to prevent or minimize adverse effects on the environment and to protect the public health and safety. The reclamation of mined lands will permit the continued mining of minerals and will provide for the protection and subsequent beneficial use of the mined and reclaimed land. Surface mining takes place in diverse areas where the geologic, topographic, climatic, biological, and social conditions are significantly different, and reclamation operations and the specifications therefore may vary accordingly (California Public Resources Code Section 2711).

Local

Del Norte County General Plan

The *Del Norte County General Plan* includes a Natural Resources Element with an Extractive Resources section that provides policies to protect the mineral resources that exist within the County by providing well-defined natural areas that are protected from development. The following Goal provides the guidance for the policies developed related to mining:

Goal 1.1.1: To encourage commercial mining operations where environmental, aesthetic and adjacent land use compatibility impacts can be adequately mitigated to ensure that extractive resource deposits will be accessible when extraction becomes necessary.

Mineral Resources Impacts and Mitigation Measures

a) **Loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state: *No impact***

Extraction operations exist outside the Proposed Project study area. There are no known economically viable sources of rock materials in the immediate study area. In addition, there are no known unique geologic features identified within the study area. Therefore, the potential for the project to result in the loss of mineral or unique geologic features is low and there would be no impact.

b) Loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan: *No impact*

The activities that would be associated with the Proposed Project would affect only a small area, all of which would be located on previously-disturbed private property previously used for industrial operations related to a lumber mill. The Proposed Project would not be in an area currently used to extract known mineral resources. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in the loss of availability of locally-important minerals.

References – Mineral Resources

Del Norte County, 2003. *Del Norte County General Plan*, January 28, 2003.

Kohler, Susan L., 2002, California Geological Survey, *Aggregate Availability in California*, July 2002.

Laney, Patrick and Julie Brizzee, 2003, Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory, *California Geothermal Resources*, November, 2003.