4.2 Agriculture Resources

This section provides a description of local agricultural resources within the study area on parcels through which the Proposed Project, Weed Segment, and alternatives would traverse. A general overview of applicable State and county regulations is also provided. The impact analysis evaluates the Proposed Project, Weed Segment, and alternative's potential to adversely affect existing agricultural resources, and mitigation is identified, where appropriate, to reduce these impacts.

4.2.1 Setting

Existing Agriculture Resources Overview

According to the 2002 Census of Agriculture, there are 610,388 acres of farmland in Siskiyou County (USDA, 2002). The Proposed Project would traverse parcels that are currently agricultural in nature, varying from open fields to grazing to cattle ranching. The Weed Segment would traverse parcels that are primarily open space in character, with the exception of the Lincoln Heights residential neighborhood. The alternatives would traverse parcels that are primarily open space interspersed with single family homes. Please refer to Section 4.08, *Land Use and Planning*, for a more detailed description of existing land uses through which the Proposed Project, Weed Segment, and alternatives would traverse.

Important Farmland

To characterize the environmental baseline for agricultural resources, Important Farmland Maps produced by the California Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) were reviewed. Important Farmland maps show categories of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Local Importance (if adopted by the county), Grazing Land, Urban and Built-up Land, Other Land, and Water. Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance map categories are based on qualifying soil types, as determined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), as well as current land use. These map categories are defined by the Department of Conservation's FMMP as follows:

> **Prime Farmland:** Land which has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for the production of crops. It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields of crops when treated and managed, including water management, according to current farming methods.
>
> **Farmland of Statewide Importance:** Land that is similar to *Prime Farmland* but with minor shortcomings, such as greater slopes or less ability to hold and store moisture.
>
> **Unique Farmland:** Land of lesser quality soils used for the production of specific high economic value crops. It has the special combination of soil quality, location, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high quality or high yields of a specific crop when treated and managed according to current farming methods. It is usually

irrigated, but may include non-irrigated orchards or vineyards as found in some climatic zones in California. Examples of crops include oranges, olives, avocados, rice, grapes, and cut flowers.

Farmland of Local Importance: Land of importance to the local agricultural economy, as determined by each county's board of supervisors and local advisory committees. Examples include dairies, dryland farming, aquaculture, and uncultivated areas with soils qualifying for *Prime Farmland* and *Farmland of Statewide Importance*.

Grazing Land: Land on which the existing vegetation, whether grown naturally or through management, is suitable for grazing or browsing of livestock.

Urban and Built-up Land: Land used for residential, industrial, commercial, construction, institutional, public administrative purpose, railroad yards, cemeteries, airports, golf courses, sanitary landfills, sewage treatment plants, water control structures, and other development purposes. Highways, railroads, and other transportation facilities are also included in this category.

Other Land: Land which is not included in any of the other mapping categories. Common examples include low-density rural developments, brush, timber, wetland, and riparian areas not suitable for livestock grazing, confined livestock, poultry or aquaculture facilities, strip mines, borrow pits, and water bodies smaller than 40 acres.

Water: Water areas with an extent of at least 40 acres.

The Proposed Project, Weed Segment, and alternatives would traverse parcels that contain soils classified as Farmland of Statewide Importance and Farmland of Local Importance (Figure 4.2-1). The majority of the Proposed Project would cross land designated as Farmland of Local Importance in addition to crossing five parcels (4, 5, 6, 7 and 8) designated as Farmland of Statewide Importance (see Figures 4.2-1(a) through 4.2-1(c)). The Weed Segment would traverse parcels designated mostly as Farmland of Local Importance, with the Lincoln Heights neighborhood and the Weed Substation site being designated as Urban and Built-Up Land (see Figures 4.2-1(d) through 4.2-1(e)). All of the alternatives would mainly traverse lands designated as Farmland of Local Importance, with the exception of lands designated as Urban and Built-Up Land that would be traversed by access roads (Figure 4.2-1).

Williamson Act Contracts

Williamson Act contracts are a tool often used by local governments to preserve agricultural and open space lands by discouraging premature and unnecessary conversion to urban uses (see Regulatory Context below for more specific details). Approximately 10.1 percent of the land acreage in Siskiyou County is currently in a Williamson Act contract (CSAC, 2006). The Proposed Project would cross ten parcels (1-10); the Weed Segment one parcel (6); and the alternatives four parcels (6, 8, 9, and 10) currently under a Williamson Act contract (see Figure 4.2-2).

Weed Junction Substation
Weed Substation
Staging Area
Gate
Hoy Road
California Street
Railroad Avenue
Rainbow Way
1st Ave
Central Ave
97

Legend

Pole Location
- Existing
- Proposed Project
- Weed Segment

Transmission Line
- Existing
- Proposed
- Alternatives

Access Roads
- Existing
- New Permanent
- Overland

Other Features
- Substation
- Staging Area
- Pull and Tension Site

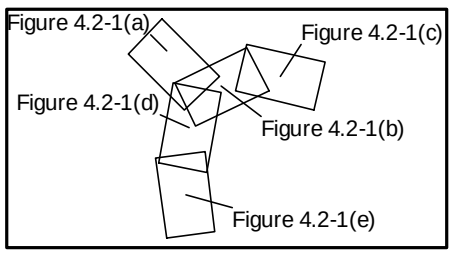
Important Farmland
- Prime Farmland
- Farmland of Local Importance
- Farmland of Statewide Importance
- Grazing Land
- Urban and Built-Up Land
- Other Land

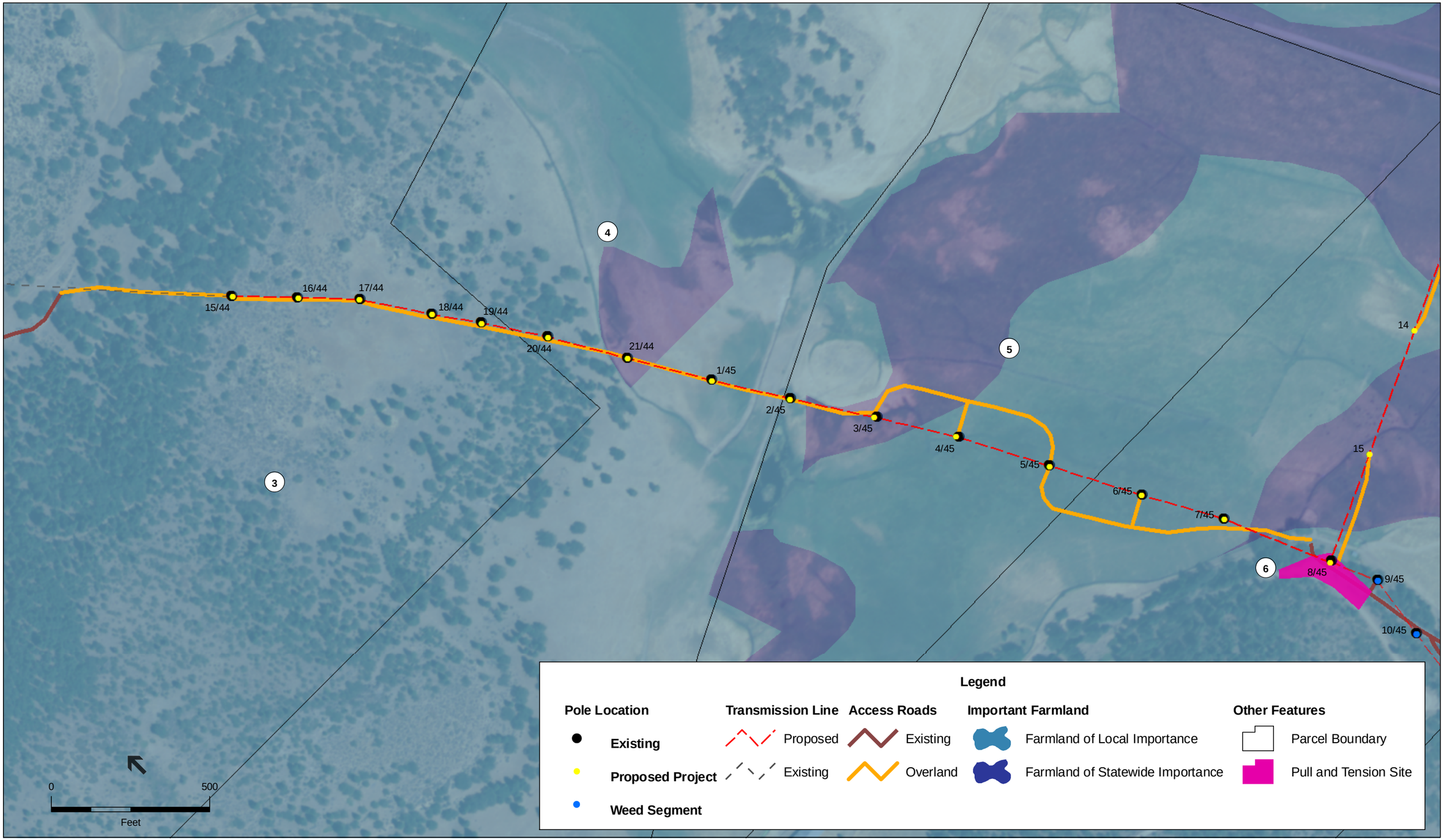
0 1,000
Feet

SOURCES: ESA (2007), FMMP (2004), PacifiCorp (2007)

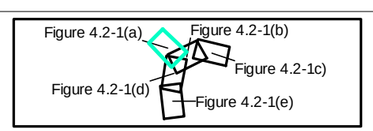
PacifiCorp's Yreka-Weed Transmission Line Upgrade Project - Southern Portion. 205439

Figure 4.2-1
Important Farmlands



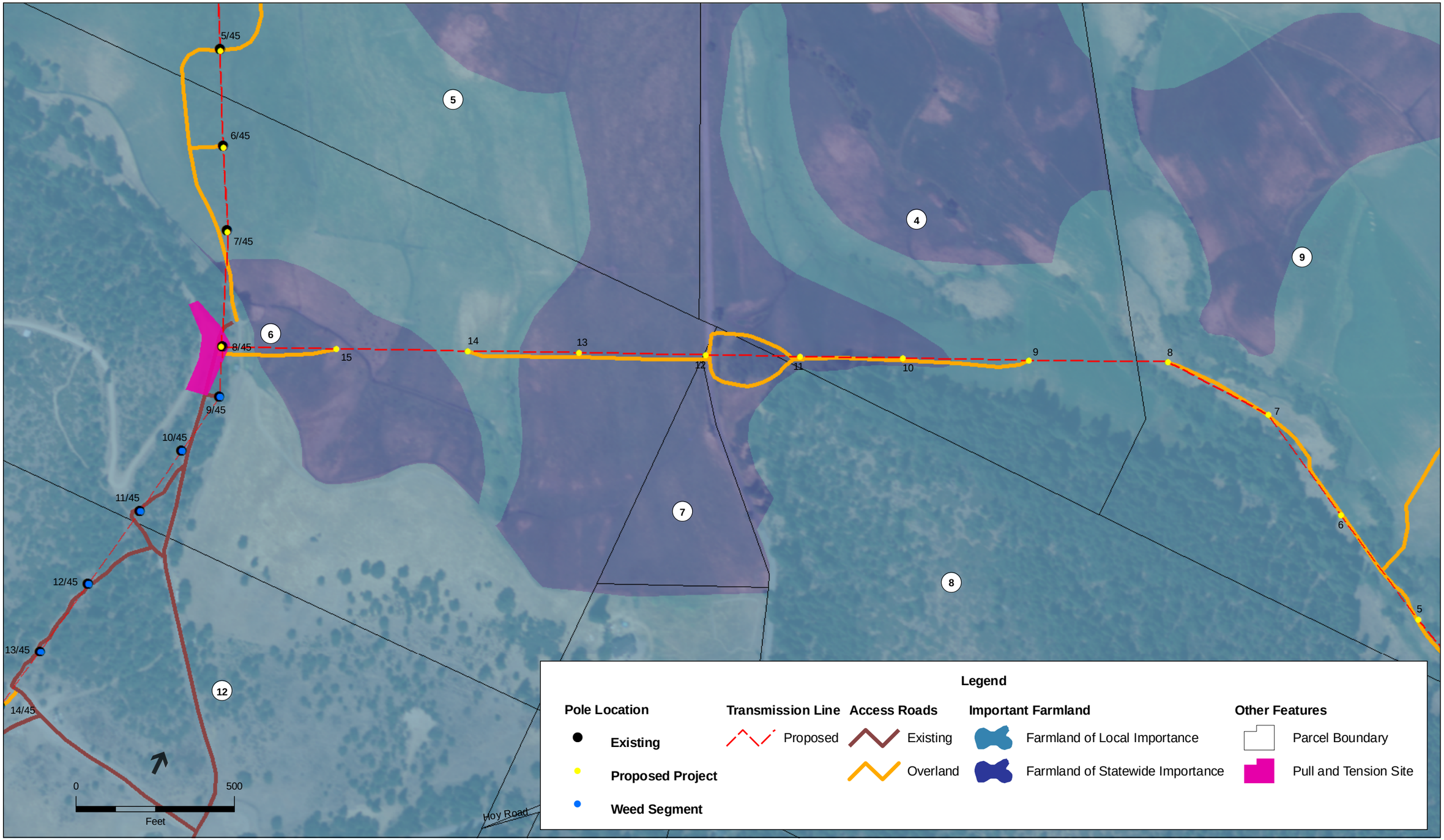


SOURCES: ESA (2007), FMMP (2004), PacifiCorp (2007)
Note: Parcels 1 and 2 status can be seen on Figure 4.1-1.

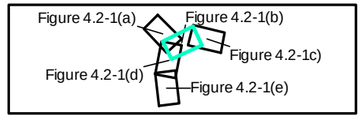


PacifiCorp's Yreka-Weed Transmission Line Upgrade Project - Southern Portion. 205439

Figure 4.2-1(a)
Important Farmlands

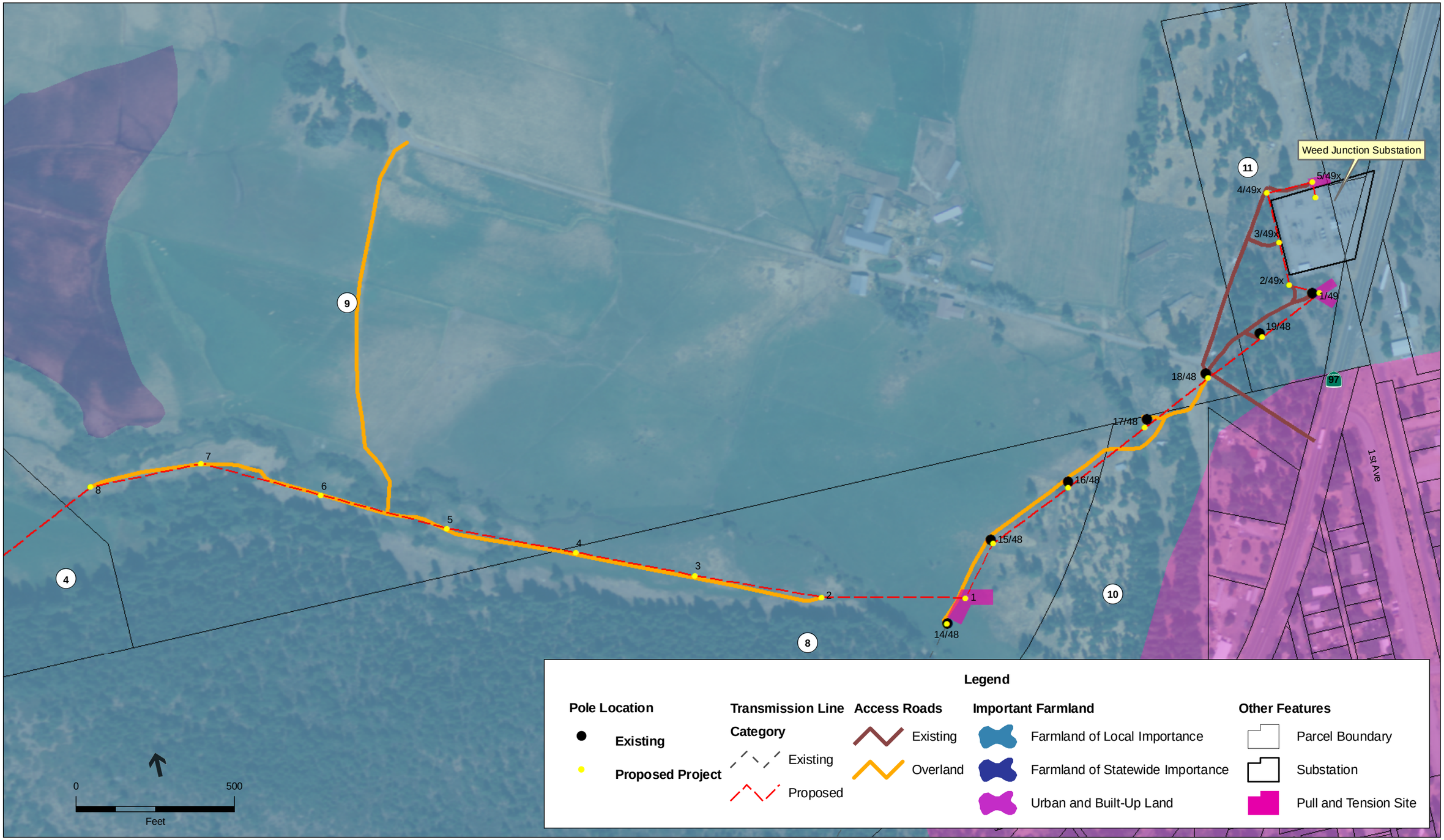


SOURCES: ESA (2007), FMMP (2004), PacifiCorp (2007)
Note: Parcels 1 and 2 status can be seen on Figure 4.1-1.

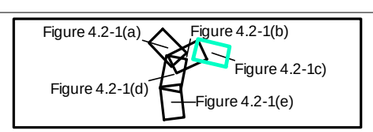


PacifiCorp's Yreka-Weed Transmission Line Upgrade Project - Southern Portion. 205439

Figure 4.2-1(b)
Important Farmlands

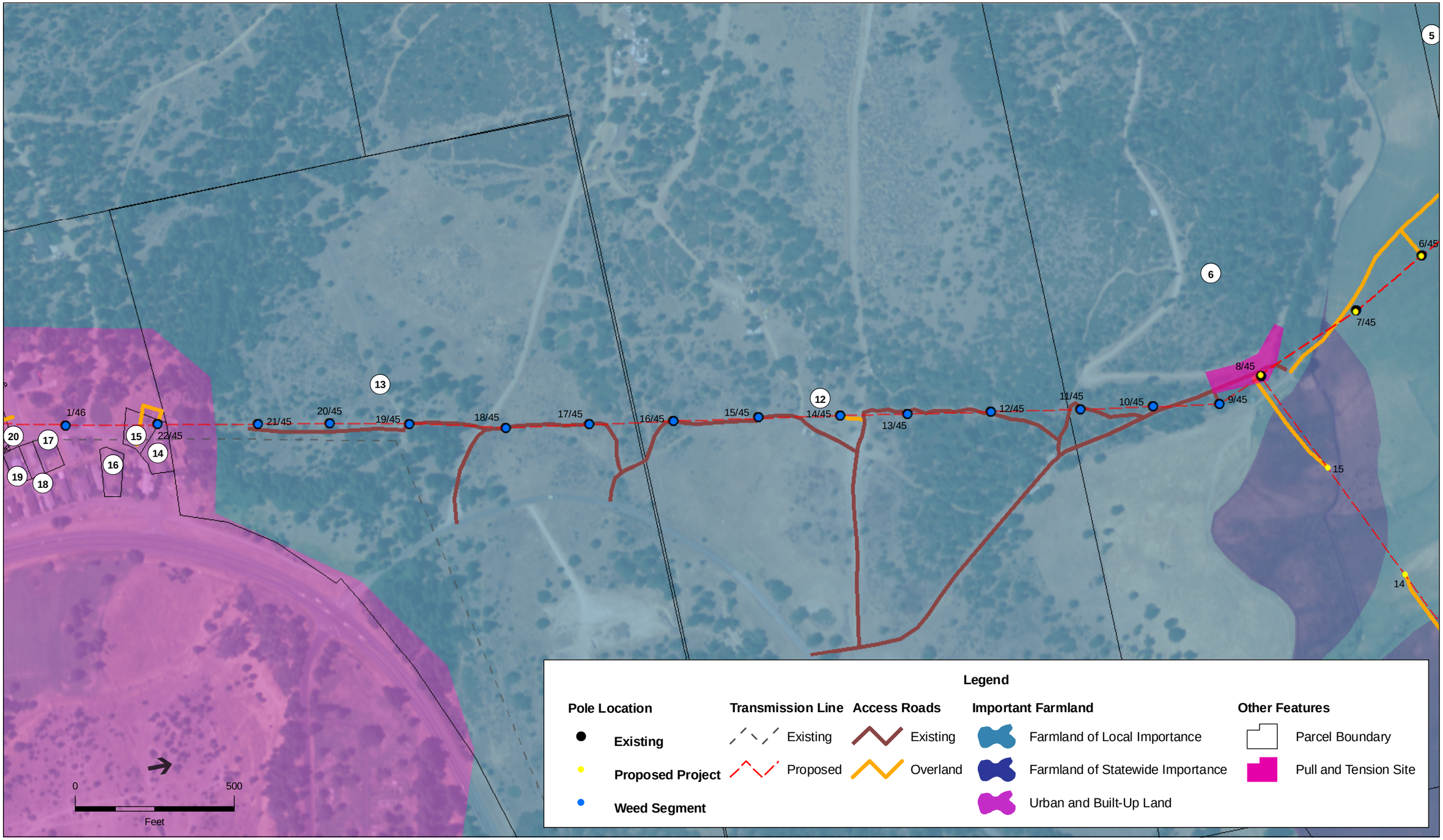


SOURCES: ESA (2007), FMMP (2004), PacifiCorp (2007)
Note: Parcels 1 and 2 status can be seen on Figure 4.1-1.

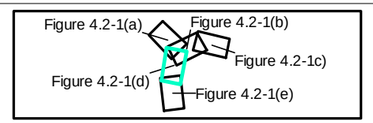


PacifiCorp's Yreka-Weed Transmission Line Upgrade Project - Southern Portion. 205439

Figure 4.2-1c)
Important Farmlands



SOURCES: ESA (2007), FMMP (2004), PacifiCorp (2007)
Note: Parcels 1 and 2 status can be seen on Figure 4.1-1.



PacifiCorp's Yreka-Weed Transmission Line Upgrade Project - Southern Portion. 205439

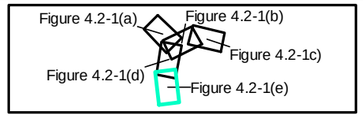
Figure 4.2-1(d)
Important Farmlands

Weed Substation
Railroad Avenue
Gate
Staging Area
Church Avenue
West Lincoln Avenue
Alameda Avenue
Kennedy Avenue
97
13/46
12/46
11/46
10/46
9/46
8/46
7/46
6/46
5/46
4/46
3/46
2/46
1/46
22/45
21/45
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
36
0
500
Feet

Legend

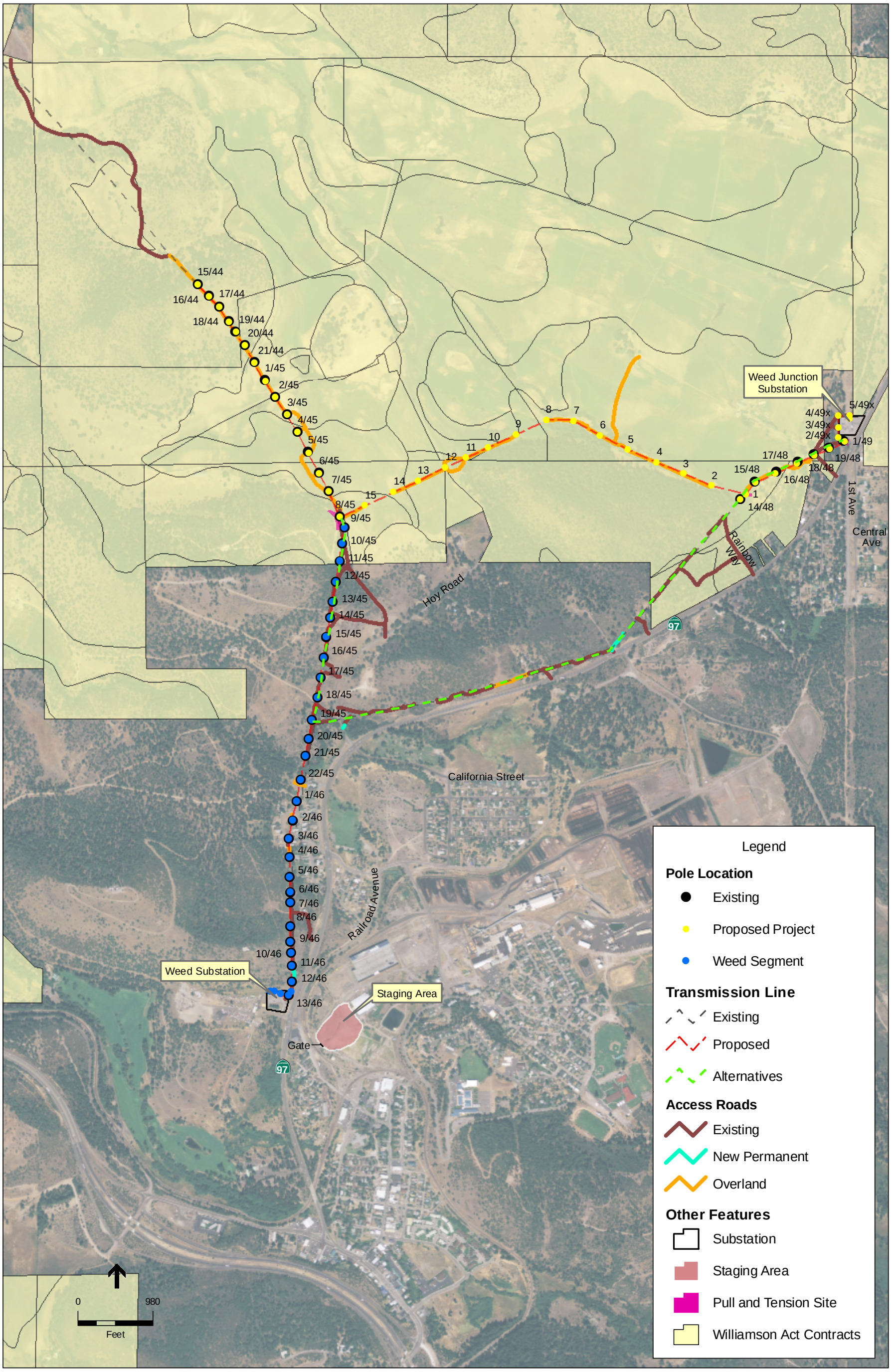
Pole Location	Transmission Line	Access Roads	Important Farmland	Other Features
Existing	Existing	Existing	Farmland of Local Importance	Parcel Boundary
Weed Segment	Proposed	New Permanent	Urban and Built-Up Land	**Staging Area**
		Overland		

SOURCES: ESA (2007), FMMP (2004), PacifiCorp (2007)
Note: Parcels 1 and 2 status can be seen on Figure 4.1-1.



PacifiCorp's Yreka-Weed Transmission Line Upgrade Project - Southern Portion. 205439

Figure 4.2-1(e)
Important Farmlands



SOURCES: ESA (2007), CDC (2004), PacifiCorp (2007)

PacifiCorp's Yreka-Weed Transmission Line Upgrade Project - Southern Portion. 205439

Figure 4.2-2
Williamson Act Contracts

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Table 4.2-1 shows the acres of farmland in Siskiyou County, as well as the amount of recent farmland conversions.

TABLE 4.2-1
FARMLAND CONVERSION FROM 2002–2004 IN SISKIYOU COUNTY

	Total Acres Inventoried		2002–2004 Acreage Changes		
Land Use Category	**2002**	**2004**	**Acres Lost**	**Acres Gained**	**Net Change**
Prime Farmland	93,046	79,822	13,351	127	-13,224
Farmland of Statewide Importance	31,525	28,747	2,796	18	-2,778
Unique Farmland	34,691	33,714	1,143	166	-977
Farmland of Local Importance	626,964	620,164	8,757	1,957	-6,800
Grazing Land	393,253	386,315	13,123	6,185	-6,938
Agricultural Land Subtotal	**1,179,479**	**1,148,762**	**39,170**	**8,453**	**-30,717**

SOURCE: California Department of Conservation (2004)

Regulatory Context

State

California Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (Non-regulatory)

The California Department of Conservation, under the Division of Land Resource Protection, has set up the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP). The FMMP monitors the conversion of the state's farmland to and from agricultural use. The map series identifies eight classifications and uses a minimum mapping unit size of 10 acres. The FMMP also produces a biannual report on the amount of land converted from agricultural to non-agricultural use. The FMMP is an informational service only and does not have regulatory jurisdiction over local land use decisions. For the purpose of this environmental analysis and consistent with the Farmland Policy Act of 1981, farmland includes prime farmland, unique farmland, and land of statewide or local importance, and any conversion of land within these categories is typically considered to be an adverse impact.

California Land Conservation Act of 1965 (Williamson Act) (Non-regulatory)

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965 (Williamson Act) enables local governments to enter into contracts with private landowners for the purpose of restricting specific parcels of land to agricultural or related open space use. Its intent is to preserve agricultural and open space lands by discouraging premature and unnecessary conversion to urban uses. In return, landowners receive property tax assessments which are much lower than normal because they are based upon farming and open space uses as opposed to full market value. Local governments receive an annual subvention of forgone property tax revenues from the state via the Open Space Subvention

Act of 1971. The vehicle for these agreements is a rolling term 10 year contract (i.e., unless either party files a "notice of nonrenewal" the contract is automatically renewed annually for an additional year). Several parcels within the study area are currently under a Williamson Act contract (Figure 4.2-2).

Local

Siskiyou County General Plan

The Siskiyou County General Plan identifies certain constraints to development for land within its jurisdiction. The General Plan does not identify agriculture land impacts for parcels through which the Proposed Project, Weed Segment, and Alternatives would traverse. However, the General Plan Conservation Element recognizes that prime soil is a "land resource [that is] not…readily renewable…and must be protected for its present and future value to the people of the county and state." The General Plan further states that "...safeguarding of agricultural lands is as essential as the protection afforded other types of land use." The following Conservation Element objective related to agricultural resources would be applicable to the proposed project:

- Preserve and protect the prime and productive agricultural lands and the agricultural economy of Siskiyou County.

(Siskiyou County, 1973).

City of Weed General Plan

The City of Weed General Plan designates the parcels through which the Weed Segment and alternatives would traverse for residential, industrial, and open space uses; it does not designate any of the parcels for agricultural use (Salvestrin, 2006).

4.2.2 Significance Criteria

Based on guidance provided by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) regarding what constitutes a significant environmental effect (Guidelines Section 15064, 15126, and Appendix G), a project would have a significant impact if it would:

a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, 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) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use.

4.2.3 Agriculture Resources Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Approach to Analysis

This section addresses potential project impacts to agricultural lands from implementation of the Proposed Project and Weed Segment. The analysis considers potential impacts that could result from the construction, operation, and maintenance of the Proposed Project and Weed Segment. Agricultural issues include compatibility of the project with agricultural lands, and potential conflicts with the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program and/or Williamson Act.

a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use: *Less than significant with mitigation* (Class II). (See c, below, for discussion)

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c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use: *Less than significant with mitigation* (Class II).

As discussed in the Setting, the majority of the Proposed Project would cross lands designated as *Farmland of Local Importance.* In addition, the Proposed Project would cross five parcels (4, 5, 6, 7 and 8) that are designated as *Farmland of Statewide Importance*. The majority of the Weed Segment would traverse parcels designated as *Farmland of Local Importance*, with the exception of the parcels in the Lincoln Heights neighborhood and the Weed Substation site, which are designated as *Urban and Built-Up Land* (see Figures 4.2-1(a) through 4.2-1(e)).

Proposed Project and Weed Segment construction would involve temporary impacts to designated agricultural lands. For purposes of analyzing impacts to agricultural lands, temporary impacts would occur in areas that would be used for construction related purposes for the duration of the project (i.e., overland access roads and staging area), as well as to any work area and/or pull and tension sites that may need to be prepared for use during construction. Temporary impacts do not include work areas at pole sites that would not need preparation, as no grading would occur in these areas and the duration would be less than one day.

The Proposed Project and Weed Segment would cause temporary disturbance to designated agricultural lands due to site preparation associated with 16 work areas[1] (i.e., nine tangent structures, two angle/dead angle structures, and five side hill work areas); as well as four pull and tension sites. Brush clearing on an existing access road between Pole 18/48 and Pole 19/48 near the Weed Junction Substation would also cause

[1] The four-acre staging area at the Roseburg Forest Products plant across Highway 97 from the Weed Substation is considered previously disturbed, i.e., no impact identified.

approximately 5,225 square feet (i.e., 0.12 acres) of temporary disturbance. No temporary impacts to designated farmland would occur from the use of the staging area, as it is located in lands designated as *Urban and Built-Up Land.*

Table 4.2-2 shows temporary impacts that would result from construction related activities associated with the Proposed Project and Weed Segment. In total, the Proposed Project and Weed Segment would result in the temporary removal of approximately 5.63 acres of designated Farmland.

TABLE 4.2-2
TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS TO AGRICULTURAL LANDS

	Overland Access Roads (acres)	Brush Clearing	Work Areas (acres)	Pull/Tension Sites (acres)	Total
Farmland of Statewide Importance	0.78	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.78
Farmland of Local Importance	2.16	0.12	1.42	1.15	4.85
Total Farmland Impact	**2.94**	**0.12**	**1.42**	**1.15**	**5.63**

SOURCES: ESA (2007) and PacifiCorp (2007)

Impact AG-PPWS-1: Construction activities would result in the temporary removal of farmland that is designated *Farmland of Statewide Importance*, or *Farmland of Local Importance*. *Less than significant with mitigation* (Class II).

In total, the temporary use of overland access roads as well as preparation of work areas and pull and tension sites would temporarily reduce the amount of designated Farmland available for agricultural purposes by approximately 5.6 acres.

Mitigation Measure AG-PPWS-1: Implement Mitigation Measure BIO-PPWS-2b.

Implementation of BIO-PPWS-2b would require PacifiCorp to salvage the topsoil, store topsoil separately from subsoil, and spread the topsoil either at the disturbance site or during the restoration process.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than significant.

Similar to the existing transmission line, the Proposed Project and Weed Segment would occupy a small amount of designated farmlands for pole placement. Permanent impacts to designated farmland would occur from the incremental increase in pole diameter and from construction of a new permanent access road located near Pole 11/46.

The installation of poles would result in a total permanent conversion of approximately 0.0036 acres of land designated as *Farmland of Local Importance* and *Farmland of Statewide Importance* under the Proposed Project and Weed Segment. The new access

road would result in a permanent conversion of approximately 0.06 acres of land designated as *Farmland of Local Importance*.

Table 4.2-3 provides a summary of the permanent impacts to designated farmlands from poles that would be installed as part of the Proposed Project and Weed Segment.

TABLE 4.2-3
PERMANENT IMPACTS TO AGRICULTURAL LANDS FROM POLE PLACEMENT

	Proposed Project Impact Area (acres)	Weed Segment Impact Area (acres)	Total
Farmland of Local Importance	0.0025	0.0009	0.0034
Farmland of Statewide Importance	0.0002	0.0000	0.0002
Total Farmland Impact	**0.0027**	**0.0009**	**0.0036**

SOURCES: ESA (2007) and PacifiCorp (2007)

The reduction of 0.0036 acres of designated farmland, which is equivalent to approximately 157 square feet, would not result in the conversion of a significant amount of designated farmland. The 0.0036 acres of designated farmland that would be converted would be comprised of many individual pole footprints spread out over the length of the Proposed Project and Weed Segment and would not result in the permanent conversion of any entire parcels of designated farmland. Additionally, this would allow for many agricultural uses under and adjacent to the transmission line. Therefore, permanent impacts to designated farmlands would be less than significant impact.

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b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract: *Less than significant* (Class III).

Proposed Project and Weed Segment

All parcels that would be traversed by the Proposed Project are zoned for agricultural use and 10 of those parcels are currently under a Williamson Act contract. The Weed Segment would traverse land zoned by the City of Weed as *General Industrial (M)*, *Limited Industrial (C-M)*, *Open Space (OS)*, and *Low Density Residential (R-1)* and would not conflict with existing agricultural zoning. The Weed Segment would cross one parcel, Parcel 6, which is currently under a Williamson Act contract. Government Code Section 51238 states that electrical facilities are a compatible Williamson Act use. The placement of transmission poles on land currently under Williamson Act contract would not remove the land from Williamson Act contract status. Thus, there would be no impact related to Williamson Act status of parcels through which the Proposed Project and Weed Segment would traverse. In addition, the transmission line would allow for many

agricultural uses under and adjacent to the line. The Proposed Project and Weed Segment would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, as the projects would primarily replace an existing transmission line in an existing utility corridor. In addition, while a new 1.6 mile segment would be constructed as part of the Proposed Project, agriculture is generally considered to be a compatible land use with utility corridors.

4.2.4 Cumulative Impacts

The construction, operation and maintenance of the Proposed Project and Weed Segment, in addition to other reasonably foreseeable future development, listed in Section 3.6, *Cumulative Projects*, could result in cumulative impacts to agricultural resources. If cumulative impacts to agriculture were to occur in Siskiyou County and the City of Weed, the Proposed Project and Weed Segment's contribution to those impacts would be less than cumulatively considerable because the Proposed Project and Weed Segment would not result in a permanent change to agricultural land (i.e. impacts would be spread over many parcels and would not permanently convert an entire parcel from agricultural use) or conflict with agricultural zoning. Additionally, implementation of Mitigation Measures AG-PPWS-1 would ensure that any impact from the temporary reduction of agricultural lands is temporary and the duration is minimized to less than significant. Therefore, the effect to agricultural resources from the Proposed Project and Weed Segment, in combination with the other past, present and reasonable foreseeable projects would not be cumulatively considerable (Class II).

4.2.5 Alternatives

PacifiCorp Option 4 Alternative

a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use: *Less than significant with mitigation* (Class II). (See c, below, for discussion).

c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use: *Less than significant with mitigation* (Class II).

The PacifiCorp Option 4 alternative would mainly traverse lands designated as *Farmland of Local Importance,* with the exception of lands designated as *Urban and Built-Up Land* that would be traversed by access roads.

Construction of the PacifiCorp Option 4 alternative would involve temporary impacts to designated agricultural lands. For purposes of analyzing impacts to agricultural lands, temporary impacts would occur in areas that would be used for construction related purposes for the duration of the project (i.e. overland access roads and staging area) as well as to any work area and/or pull and tension sites that may need to be prepared for use during construction. Temporary impacts do not include work areas at pole sites that would not need preparation, as no grading would occur in these areas and the duration would be less than one day.

The total number of work areas for pole installation and removal would be slightly higher under this alternative when compared to the Proposed Project, as there would be approximately 5 more tangent structure work areas that would require site preparation and grading. However, none of the tangent structure work areas would be located in lands designated as *Farmland of Statewide Importance.*

The PacifiCorp Option 4 alternative would cause temporary disturbance to designated agricultural lands due to site preparation associate with eight tangent structure work area, two angle/dead end work area and five pull and tension sites[2]. Brush clearing on an existing access road between Pole 18/48 and 19/48 near the Weed Junction Substation would also cause approximately 5,225 square feet (i.e., 0.12 acres) of temporary disturbance. No temporary impacts to designated farmland would occur from the use of the staging area, as it would be located in lands designated as *Urban and Built-Up Land.*

Table 4.2-4 shows temporary impacts that would result from construction related activities associated with the PacifiCorp Option 4 alternative. In total, the PacifiCorp Option 4 alternative would result in the temporary removal of approximately 4.11 acres of designated Farmland; approximately 1.52 acres less than the Proposed Project and Weed Segment.

TABLE 4.2-4
TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS TO AGRICULTURAL LANDS

	Overland Access Roads (acres)	Brush Clearing	Work Areas (acres)	Pull/Tension Sites (acres)	Total
Farmland of Statewide Importance	0.22	0.00	0	0	0.22
Farmland of Local Importance	1.54	0.12	0.92	1.43	3.89
Total Farmland Impact	**1.76**	**0.12**	**0.92**	**1.43**	**4.11**

2 This analysis includes three tangent structure and two angle/dead end work areas as well as two pull and tension sites that would be common to the Proposed Project.

Impact AG-OPT4-1: Construction activities would result in the temporary removal of farmland that is designated *Farmland of Statewide Importance*, or *Farmland of Local Importance*. *Less than significant with mitigation* (Class II).

In total, the temporary use of overland access roads as well as preparation of work areas and pull and tension sites would temporarily reduce the amount of designated Farmland available for agricultural purposes by approximately four acres.

Mitigation Measure AG-OPT4-1: Implement Mitigation Measure BIO-PPWS-2b.

Implementation of BIO-PPWS-2b would require PacifiCorp to salvage the topsoil, store topsoil separately from subsoil, and spread the topsoil either at the disturbance site or during the restoration process.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than significant.

The PacifiCorp Option 4 alternative would occupy a small amount of designated farmlands for pole placement. Permanent impacts to designated farmland would occur from the incremental increase in pole diameter and from construction of two new permanent access roads near Pole 12/47 and between Pole 5/48 and Pole 6/48.

The installation of poles would result in a total permanent conversion of approximately 0.002 acres of land designated as *Farmland of Local Importance* and *Farmland of Statewide Importance* under the PacifiCorp Option 4 alternative[3]. The new access road would result in a permanent conversion of approximately 0.09 acres of land designated as *Farmland of Local Importance*.

Table 4.2-5 provides a summary of the impacts to designated farmlands from poles that would be installed as part of the PacifiCorp Option 4 alternative.

TABLE 4.2-5
PERMANENT IMPACTS TO AGRICULTURAL LANDS FROM POLE PLACEMENT

	PacifiCorp Option 4 Impact Area (acres)
Farmland of Local Importance	0.0028
Farmland of Statewide Importance	0.0001
Total Farmland Impact	**0.0029**

SOURCES: ESA (2007) and PacifiCorp (2007)

The permanent reduction of approximately 0.093 acres of designated farmland, which is equivalent to approximately 4,051 square feet, would not result in the conversion of a significant amount of designated farmland. The PacifiCorp Option 4 alternative would

3 This analysis includes all poles common to the Proposed Project and alternatives

result in approximately 0.0007 acres less of permanent impacts to designated farmlands. The approximately 0.093 acres of designated farmland that would be converted would be comprised of many individual pole footprints spread out over the length of the PacifiCorp Option 4 alternative and would not result in the permanent conversion of any entire parcels of designated farmland. Additionally, this would allow for many agricultural uses under and adjacent to the transmission line. Therefore, impacts to designated farmlands would be less than significant impact.

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b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract: *Less than significant* (Class III).

The majority the PacifiCorp Option 4 alternative traverses parcels zoned for agricultural use by Siskiyou County as well as several parcels zoned by the City of Weed as *Low Density Residential* and would not conflict with existing agricultural zoning. As discussed in the Setting, this alternative would traverse four parcels (6, 8, 9, and 10) under a Williamson Act contract (see Figure 4.2-2). Government Code Section 51238 states that electrical facilities are a compatible Williamson Act use. The placement of transmission poles on land currently under Williamson Act contract would not remove the land from Williamson Act contract status. Thus, there would be no impact related to Williamson Act status of parcels through which this alternative would traverse. In addition, the transmission line would allow for many agricultural uses under and adjacent to the line. The PacifiCorp Option 4 alternative would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, as this alternative would primarily replace an existing transmission line in an existing utility corridor.

Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A Alternative

a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use: *Less than significant with mitigation* (Class II). (See c, below, for discussion).

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c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use: *Less than significant with mitigation* (Class II).

The Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A alternative would mainly traverse lands designated as *Farmland of Local Importance,* with the exception of lands designated as *Urban and Built-Up Land* that would be traversed by access roads.

Construction of the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A alternative would involve temporary impacts to designated agricultural lands. For purposes of analyzing impacts to agricultural lands, temporary impacts would occur in areas that would be used for construction related purposes for the duration of the project (i.e. overland access roads and staging area) as well as to any work area and/or pull and tension sites that may need to be prepared for use during construction. Temporary impacts do not include work areas at pole sites that would not need preparation, as no grading would occur in these areas and the duration would be less than one day.

The total number of work areas for pole installation and removal would be slightly higher under this alternative when compared to the Proposed Project, as there would be approximately 5 more tangent structure work areas that would require site preparation and grading. However, none of the tangent structure work areas would be located in lands designated as *Farmland of Statewide Importance.*

The Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A alternative would cause temporary disturbance to designated agricultural lands due to site preparation associate with eight tangent structure work area, two angle/dead end work area and five pull and tension sites[4]. Brush clearing on an existing access road between Pole 18/48 and 19/48 near the Weed Junction Substation would also cause approximately 5,225 square feet (i.e., 0.12 acres) of temporary disturbance. No temporary impacts to designated farmland would occur from the use of the staging area, or from the installation of a temporary 115/69 kV transformer, transformer protection, and 69 kV circuit breaker at the Weed Substation as these facilities would be located in lands designated as *Urban and Built-Up Land.*

Table 4.2-4 shows temporary impacts that would result from construction related activities associated with the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A alternative. In total, the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A alternative would result in the temporary removal of approximately 4.11 acres of designated Farmland; approximately 1.52 acres less than the Proposed Project and Weed Segment.

TABLE 4.2-6
TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS TO AGRICULTURAL LANDS

	Overland Access Roads (acres)	Brush Clearing (acres)	Work Areas (acres)	Pull/Tension Sites (acres)	Total
Farmland of Statewide Importance	0.22	0.00	0	0	0.22
Farmland of Local Importance	1.54	0.12	0.92	1.43	3.89
Total Farmland Impact	**1.76**	**0.12**	**0.92**	**1.43**	**4.11**

4 This analysis includes three tangent structure and two angle/dead end work areas as well as two pull and tension sites that would be common to the Proposed Project.

Impact AG-VAR/A-1: Construction activities would result in the temporary removal of farmland that is designated *Farmland of Statewide Importance*, or *Farmland of Local Importance*. *Less than significant with mitigation* (Class II).

In total, the temporary use of overland access roads as well as preparation of work areas and pull and tension sites would temporarily reduce the amount of designated Farmland available for agricultural purposes by approximately four acres.

> **Mitigation Measure AG-VAR/A-1:** Implement Mitigation Measure BIO-PPWS-2b.

Implementation of BIO-PPWS-2b would require PacifiCorp to salvage the topsoil, store topsoil separately from subsoil, and spread the topsoil either at the disturbance site or during the restoration process.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than significant.

The Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A alternative would occupy a small amount of designated farmlands for pole placement. Permanent impacts to designated farmland would occur from the incremental increase in pole diameter and from construction of two new permanent access roads near Pole 12/47 and between Pole 5/48 and Pole 6/48.

The installation of poles would result in a total permanent conversion of approximately 0.002 acres of land designated as *Farmland of Local Importance* and *Farmland of Statewide Importance* under the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A alternative[5]. The new access road would result in a permanent conversion of approximately 0.09 acres of land designated as *Farmland of Local Importance*.

Table 4.2-5 provides a summary of the impacts to designated farmlands from poles that would be installed as part of the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A alternative.

TABLE 4.2-7
PERMANENT IMPACTS TO AGRICULTURAL LANDS FROM POLE PLACEMENT

	Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A Impact Area (acres)
Farmland of Local Importance	0.0028
Farmland of Statewide Importance	0.0001
Total Farmland Impact	**0.0029**

SOURCES: ESA (2007) and PacifiCorp (2007)

5 This analysis includes all poles common to the Proposed Project and alternatives

The permanent reduction of approximately 0.093 acres of designated farmland, which is equivalent to approximately 4,051 square feet, would not result in the conversion of a significant amount of designated farmland. The Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A alternative would result in approximately 0.0007 acres less of permanent impacts to designated farmlands. The approximately 0.093 acres of designated farmland that would be converted would be comprised of many individual pole footprints spread out over the length of the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A alternative and would not result in the permanent conversion of any entire parcels of designated farmland. Additionally, this would allow for many agricultural uses under and adjacent to the transmission line. Therefore, impacts to designated farmlands would be less than significant impact.

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b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract: *Less than significant* (Class III).

The majority the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A alternative traverses parcels zoned for agricultural use by Siskiyou County as well as several parcels zoned by the City of Weed as *Low Density Residential* and would not conflict with existing agricultural zoning. As discussed in the Setting, this alternative would traverse four parcels (6, 8, 9, and 10) under a Williamson Act contract (see Figure 4.2-2). Government Code Section 51238 states that electrical facilities are a compatible Williamson Act use. The placement of transmission poles on land currently under Williamson Act contract would not remove the land from Williamson Act contract status. Thus, there would be no impact related to Williamson Act status of parcels through which this alternative would traverse. In addition, the transmission line would allow for many agricultural uses under and adjacent to the line. The Mackintosh/ALJ Variation A alternative would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, as this alternative would primarily replace an existing transmission line in an existing utility corridor.

Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B Alternative

a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use: *Less than significant with mitigation* (Class II). (See c, below, for discussion).

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c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use: *Less than significant with mitigation* (Class II).

The Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B alternative would mainly traverse lands designated as *Farmland of Local Importance*, with the exception of lands designated as *Urban and Built-Up Land* that would be traversed by access roads.

Construction of the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B alternative would involve temporary impacts to designated agricultural lands. For purposes of analyzing impacts to agricultural lands, temporary impacts would occur in areas that would be used for construction related purposes for the duration of the project (i.e. overland access roads and staging area) as well as to any work area and/or pull and tension sites that may need to be prepared for use during construction. Temporary impacts do not include work areas at pole sites that would not need preparation, as no grading would occur in these areas and the duration would be less than one day.

The total number of work areas for pole installation and removal would be slightly higher under this alternative when compared to the Proposed Project, as there would be approximately 5 more tangent structure work areas that would require site preparation and grading. However, none of the tangent structure work areas would be located in lands designated as *Farmland of Statewide Importance.*

The Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B alternative would cause temporary disturbance to designated agricultural lands due to site preparation associate with eight tangent structure work area, two angle/dead end work area and five pull and tension sites[6]. Brush clearing on an existing access road between Pole 18/48 and 19/48 near the Weed Junction Substation would also cause approximately 5,225 square feet (i.e., 0.12 acres) of temporary disturbance. No temporary impacts to designated farmland would occur from the use of the staging area as it would be located in lands designated as *Urban and Built-Up Land*.

Table 4.2-4 shows temporary impacts that would result from construction related activities associated with the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B alternative. In total, the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B alternative would result in the temporary removal of approximately 4.11 acres of designated Farmland; approximately 1.52 acres less than the Proposed Project and Weed Segment.

TABLE 4.2-8
TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS TO AGRICULTURAL LANDS

	Overland Access Roads (acres)	Brush Clearing (acres)	Work Areas (acres)	Pull/Tension Sites (acres)	Total
Farmland of Statewide Importance	0.22	0.00	0	0	0.22
Farmland of Local Importance	1.54	0.12	0.92	1.43	3.89
Total Farmland Impact	**1.76**	**0.12**	**0.92**	**1.43**	**4.11**

6 This analysis includes three tangent structure and two angle/dead end work areas as well as two pull and tension sites that would be common to the Proposed Project.

Impact AG-VAR/B-1: Construction activities would result in the temporary removal of farmland that is designated *Farmland of Statewide Importance*, or *Farmland of Local Importance*. *Less than significant with mitigation* (Class II).

In total, the temporary use of overland access roads as well as preparation of work areas and pull and tension sites would temporarily reduce the amount of designated Farmland available for agricultural purposes by approximately four acres.

> **Mitigation Measure AG-VAR/B-1:** Implement Mitigation Measure BIO-PPWS-2b.

Implementation of BIO-PPWS-2b would require PacifiCorp to salvage the topsoil, store topsoil separately from subsoil, and spread the topsoil either at the disturbance site or during the restoration process.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than significant.

The Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B alternative would occupy a small amount of designated farmlands for pole placement. Permanent impacts to designated farmland would occur from the incremental increase in pole diameter and from construction of two new permanent access roads near Pole 12/47 and between Pole 5/48 and Pole 6/48.

The installation of poles would result in a total permanent conversion of approximately 0.002 acres of land designated as *Farmland of Local Importance* and *Farmland of Statewide Importance* under the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B alternative[7]. The new access road would result in a permanent conversion of approximately 0.09 acres of land designated as *Farmland of Local Importance*.

Table 4.2-5 provides a summary of the impacts to designated farmlands from poles that would be installed as part of the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B alternative.

TABLE 4.2-9
PERMANENT IMPACTS TO AGRICULTURAL LANDS FROM POLE PLACEMENT

	Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B Impact Area (acres)
Farmland of Local Importance	0.0028
Farmland of Statewide Importance	0.0001
Total Farmland Impact	**0.0029**

SOURCES: ESA (2007) and PacifiCorp (2007)

7 This analysis includes all poles common to the Proposed Project and alternatives

The permanent reduction of approximately 0.093 acres of designated farmland, which is equivalent to approximately 4,051 square feet, would not result in the conversion of a significant amount of designated farmland. The Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B alternative would result in approximately 0.0007 acres less of permanent impacts to designated farmlands. The approximately 0.093 acres of designated farmland that would be converted would be comprised of many individual pole footprints spread out over the length of the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B alternative and would not result in the permanent conversion of any entire parcels of designated farmland. Additionally, this would allow for many agricultural uses under and adjacent to the transmission line. Therefore, impacts to designated farmlands would be less than significant impact.

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b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract: *Less than significant* (Class III).

The majority the Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B alternative traverses parcels zoned for agricultural use by Siskiyou County as well as several parcels zoned by the City of Weed as *Low Density Residential* and would not conflict with existing agricultural zoning. As discussed in the Setting, this alternative would traverse four parcels (6, 8, 9, and 10) under a Williamson Act contract (see Figure 4.2-2). Government Code Section 51238 states that electrical facilities are a compatible Williamson Act use. The placement of transmission poles on land currently under Williamson Act contract would not remove the land from Williamson Act contract status. Thus, there would be no impact related to Williamson Act status of parcels through which this alternative would traverse. In addition, the transmission line would allow for many agricultural uses under and adjacent to the line. The Mackintosh/ALJ Variation B alternative would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, as this alternative would primarily replace an existing transmission line in an existing utility corridor.

No Project

For the purposed of this analysis, the No Project Alternative includes the following two assumptions: 1) the project would not be implemented and the existing conditions in the project area would not be changed; and 2) a new transmission line and/or additional power generation would be constructed in or near the project area to supply power to the Weed area. Given the highly speculative nature of the No Project Alternative assumptions, this analysis is qualitative in nature.

a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use: (See c, below, for discussion).

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c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use:

Construction, operations and maintenance of a new transmission line and/or a power plant would result in impacts similar to those that would occur under the Proposed Project and Weed Segment. Like the Proposed Project and Weed Segment, because a new transmission line would likely traverse largely undeveloped areas within existing or new public rights-of-way it could be anticipated that temporary impacts to designated agricultural lands could occur. Due to the nature of a transmission line, permanent impacts from the installation of poles would not likely result in a significant impact to agricultural lands. However, the potential impacts from a future power plant would likely be of greater significance when compared to the Proposed Project and Weed Segment given that there could be larger structures that could cause more substantial permanent impact and could result in the conversion of designated farmland; this could result in a potentially significant impact.

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

Construction, operations and maintenance of a new transmission line and/or a power plant would result in impacts similar to those that would occur under the Proposed Project and Weed Segment. Like the Proposed Project, because a new transmission line would likely traverse largely undeveloped areas within existing or new public rights-of-the No Project Alternative could traverse lands with agricultural designations and/or under a Williamson Action contract; however, because agriculture is generally a compatible land use with utility corridors, it is unlikely that the No Project alternative would conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use and/or a Williamson Act contract. However, the potential impacts from a future power plant would likely be of greater significance when compared to the Proposed Project and Weed Segment as it would cause permanent impacts to lands designated for agricultural uses and could require conversion of Williamson Act contract lands; this could result in a potentially significant impact.

References – Agricultural Resources

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