4.10 AESTHETICS

4.10 AESTHETICS

INTRODUCTION

The following section describes the existing landscape character and visual resources in the lower Cache Creek area, including typical agricultural practices and their seasonal phasing. Existing visual resources within the planning area are identified. The OCMP and project alternatives are considered for their effect on and compatibility with the visual character of the planning area. Consistency with relevant aesthetics policies of the Yolo County General Plan is also discussed. A map showing important visual features and the locations from which photographs were taken is provided in Figure 4.10-1. Photographs representing typical views and visual conditions within the planning area are provided in Figures 4.10-2 through 4.10-6 on the following pages.

SETTING

Regional Visual Character

The regional landscape of the planning area consists of broad, generally flat agricultural lands in the Sacramento Valley. Occasional rolling terrain and winding creeks are also part of this landscape. Expansive farm fields, including cultivated crop fields, pasture, and orchards are dominant visual forms. Non-agricultural tree cover is relatively sparse in these areas. The gently- to steeply-sloped hillsides of the Dunnigan Hills can be seen as they rise at the western end of the planning area where the Coast Range forms the horizon several miles to the west. The Sierra Nevada Mountains can be seen on clear days in very long-range views to the east. The planning area is dominated by agricultural land uses, with low-density residential and commercial development located in the communities of Esparto, Madison and Capay. These features contribute to the predominantly rural character of the area.

Farming operations in the planning area typically involve the use of heavy equipment (tractors, cultivators, harvesters, trucks, etc.) in a seasonal cycle of field preparation, planting, growing, and harvesting. The appearance of large farm equipment operating within the fields and traveling on local or county roads is common. The appearance of the fields themselves evolves annually, depending on the type and number of crops produced during a season. In the case of cultivated crops, fields appear as barren earth after harvesting and prior to planting.

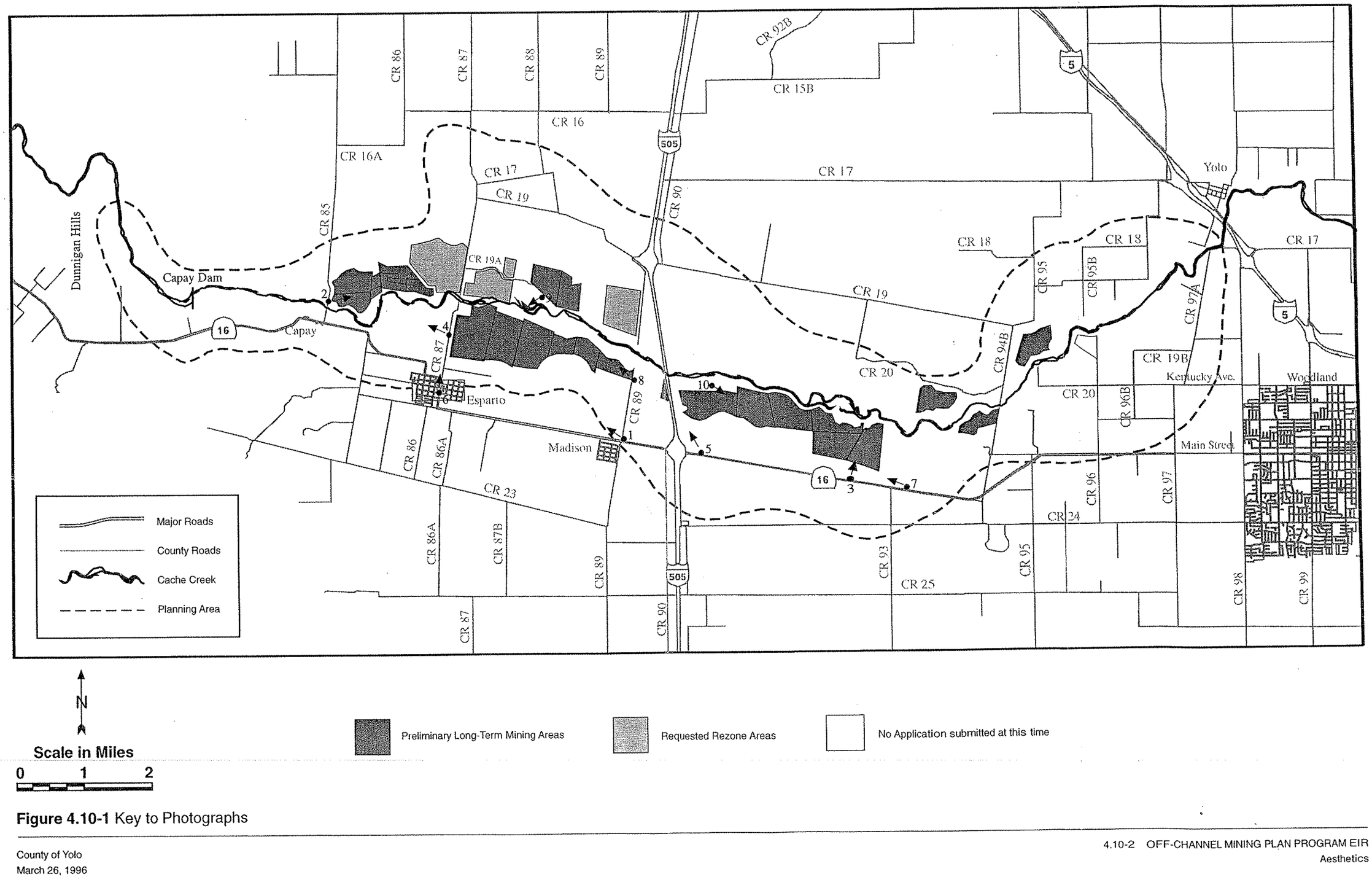
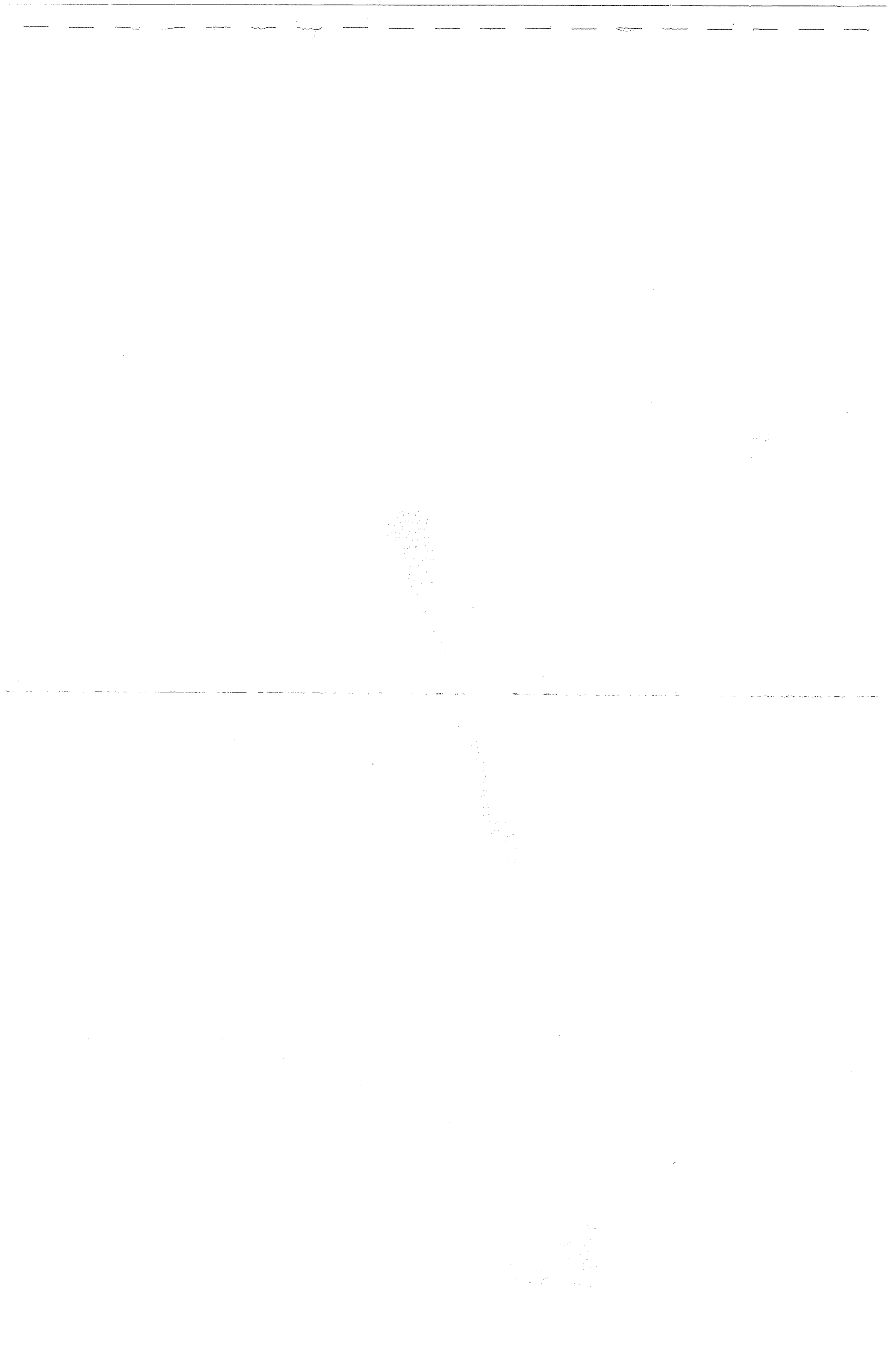
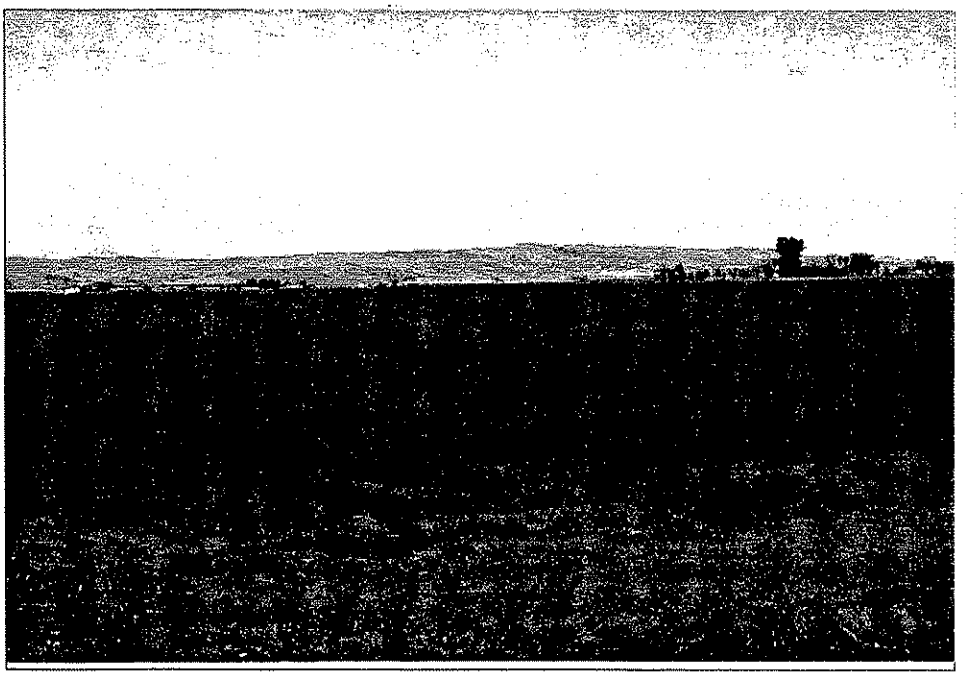


Figure 4.10-1 Key to Photographs

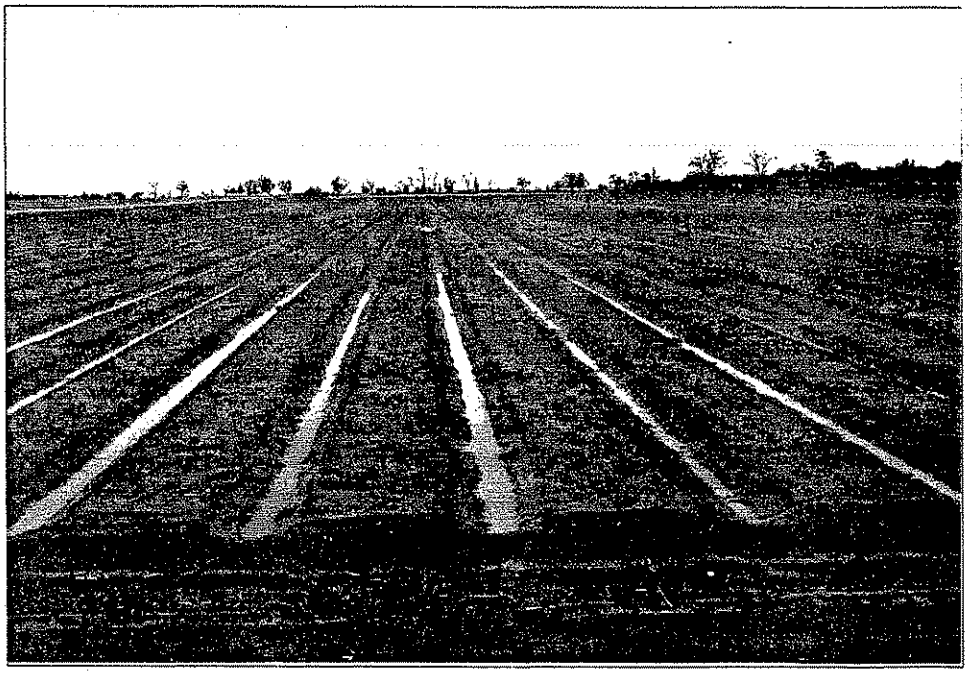




Typical view looking west from within the planning area
(State Highway 16 near Rd. 89)

Typical view looking east from within the planning area
(Rd. 85 north of Cache Creek)

Figure 4.10-2 Typical Views of the Planning Area (Photographs 1 and 2) **SOURCE: EDAW**



Farm fields along State Highway 16 east of I-505

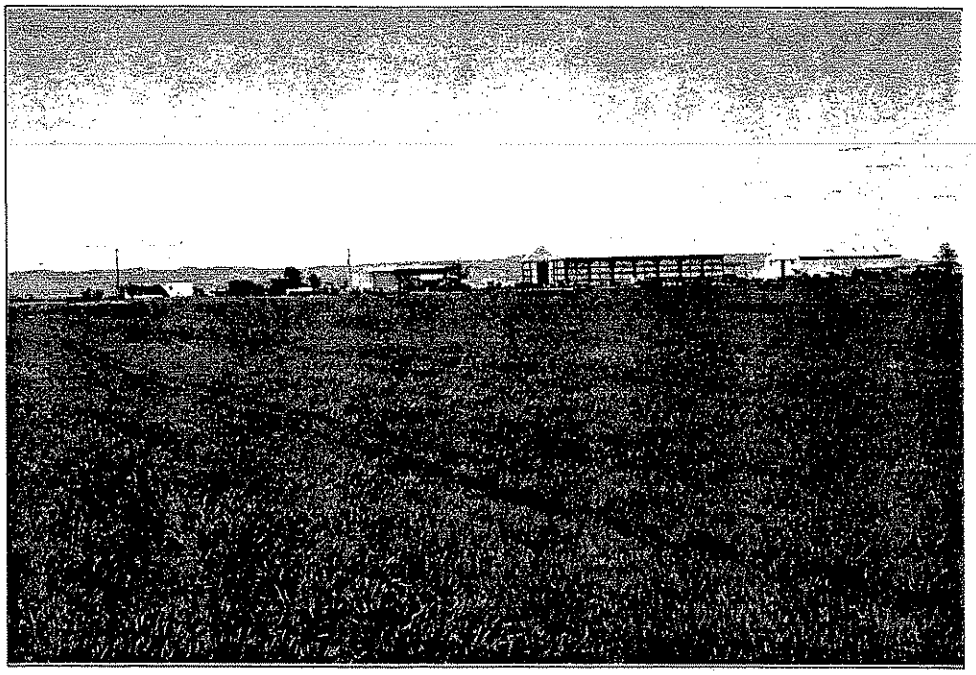
Orchards along Rd. 87

Figure 4.10-3 Typical Views of the Planning Area (Photographs 3 and 4) **SOURCE: EDAW**

Electric power transmission lines along I-505

The community of Esparto

Figure 4.10-4 Typical Views of the Planning Area (Photographs 5 and 6) **SOURCE: EDAW**



Development associated with agricultural operations along State Highway 16

Development associated with aggregate mining near I-505

Figure 4.10-5 Typical Views of the Planning Area (Photographs 7 and 8) **SOURCE: EDAW**

Area where aggregate mining has recently occurred along Cache Creek

Off-channel aggregate mining

Figure 4.10-6 Typical Views of the Planning Area (Photographs 9 and 10) **SOURCE: EDAW**

As the growing season progresses and the crops mature, the fields yield a dense, green cover mechanically arranged into evenly spaced rows which gives the ground a highly ordered and organized appearance. Most trees are found growing around pockets of rural development or along stream courses. These conditions provide for generally open, unobstructed views. In clear weather, typical views can extend for many miles. Fog is common in this region during certain times of the year (and certain times of the day), and can substantially limit viewing distances.

Four major electric power transmission corridors cross the planning area in a generally north-south direction, including:

- Table Mountain-Vaca-Dixon (500 kV), which runs Parallel to I-505 to a point between County Road 19 and Cache Creek, then turns in a northeast direction;

- Pit-Vaca-Dixon (230 kV), which runs also runs parallel to I-505, turning to the northwest where Table Mountain turns to the northeast;

- Shasta-Tracy (C.V.P.), which runs parallel and to the east of I-505, then turns to the northwest in parallel alignment to the Pit-Vaca-Dixon line; and

- Drum-Vaca-Dixon (115 kV), which runs in a southwest-to-northeast direction, in a parallel alignment to Table Mountain once it turns to the northeast.

The transmission lines are supported on tall, steel lattice towers of various designs. They appear as dominant visual features from many locations in the planning area, including major highways.

Major roads within or near the planning area include Interstate 505 (I-505) (which runs north-south through the planning area), Interstate 5 (I-5) (running north-south at the eastern margin of the planning area), and State Highway 16 (which runs east-west, south of and parallel to the planning area). State Highway 16 is a designated "Local Scenic Highway" through the Capay Valley, but not in the planning area itself. County roads and local streets which connect to the regional roadway network form a wide grid through the planning area. I-505 is a readily visible feature of the landscape, particularly at points where it is crossed by local roads.

Within the planning area where agriculture dominates the broad, open landscape, Cache Creek is an important visual feature. From Capay dam to Yolo, Cache Creek is heavily disturbed by past and current surface mining operations within and along its banks. The mining process includes the removal of vegetation and the alteration of natural landforms into various pits and piles that feature unnatural, engineered sides, slopes and shapes. At active mining sites, there is the additional visual presence of heavy equipment (graders, scrapers, trucks, etc.). In areas where mining is underway (pre-reclamation) or areas that were previously mined but have not been fully reclaimed or restored, the disturbed appearance of the creek is readily evident. These visual effects are generally confined to

the areas in which they occur and are not prominent from other locations or long distances. They are seen where public access to the creek occurs, primarily at Rd. 85, Rd. 87, Rd. 89, I-505, and Rd. 94B.

Viewers

Persons traveling roads within the planning area, especially State Highway 16 and I-505, make up the primary viewer group within the planning area. They include persons just passing through the area on their way to other destinations, persons working in the area and local and County residents. State Highway 16 runs south of Cache Creek and at a sufficient distance so that direct views of the creek or in-channel mining operations (active or past) do not occur. Aggregate processing plants are visible from State Highway 16 near I-505. As I-505 passes through the planning area in a generally north-south direction, continuous near-range to long-range views of the surrounding area occur. Very brief views of Cache Creek happen at the point where I-505 gently rises and crosses the creek. Active mining operations (Solano Concrete and Syar) are visible in this area from I-505. The number of persons traveling County and local roads through the planning area is relatively few compared to those on I-505 (see Figure 4.8-1).

Residents of the communities of Capay, Esparto, Madison and the City of Woodland represent a secondary viewer group in the vicinity of the planning area. Because of the extended duration and relative permanence of views from communities, the sensitivity of residential viewers (i.e., sensitivity to changes in the appearance of the landscape relative to visual quality) is generally considered to be higher than that of motorists. Near-range (direct) views of active or past surface mining sites do not occur from these population centers. There are no public recreation areas from which near-range views of existing mining operations occur. Within the planning area, public parks are located in Esparto and Madison, and a private golf course and clubhouse are located adjacent to the Watts-Woodland Airport; mid-range and long-range views of Cache Creek occur from these vantage points.

Relevant Plans and Policies

The Yolo County General Plan contains a number of policies intended to preserve the rural scenery and aesthetic of the area, including:

OS 9	Scenic Areas. Yolo County shall plan to maintain scenic highways and waterways or riverbank corridors of scenic value as part of its open space preservation program.
CON 27	Landscaping/Screening. Yolo County shall require assured landscaping between certain uses which may otherwise conflict.
SH 6	River Roads. Yolo County shall consider designating "river roads" as designated scenic highways.

SH 7 Natural Vegetation and Landscaping. Yolo County shall require retention of existing trees and vegetation and natural landforms, and shall require landscaping to enhance scenic qualities and/or screen unsightly views.

IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Standards of Significance

The project would have a significant effect on visual resources if it would:

- Substantially affect a scenic area, vista, or view open to the public in an adverse way.
- Create visual incompatibility with surrounding land uses.
- Introduce a negative visual element or create light or glare.
- Conflict with the applicable goals and/or policies of the Yolo County General Plan.

Methodology

The way in which the landscape would change as a result of the project and each alternative, and the conditions under which the public would see those changes, were evaluated relative to the existing visual conditions in areas where off-channel mining would occur. Consideration was given to the appearance of the landscape during active mining and after reclamation and to the relative numbers of persons who would see these areas. Impact evaluations were based on the qualitative of change (positive or negative), as compared to existing landscape conditions, and on visual compatibility with adjacent areas.

Locations at which public views of off-channel mining areas occur were identified. The scenes (existing conditions) were photographed and examined. Expected changes in the appearance of the scenes, based on implementation of the project and the alternatives, were identified. Future conditions during active mining and after reclamation were compared to existing conditions to determine if visual quality would be enhanced, remain essentially unchanged, or be decreased.

Impact 4.10-1
Effects on Existing Views or Vistas During Mining

Draft OCMP and Implementing Ordinances

Implementation of the OCMP would result in a variety of landscape changes resulting from the excavation and reclamation of off-channel mining pits in areas currently under agricultural production. These include removal of existing vegetation, excavation of pits and development of material stockpiles, and the creation of lowered topography, wildlife habitat and bodies of open water (lakes).

Off-channel operations are located on terrace surfaces above and along the active Cache Creek channel. Under the OCMP, the total area mined would be approximately 2,932 acres, the majority of which is currently under agricultural production.

Under the existing applications, approximately 55 pits would be mined over 30 years, although through reclamation, many would be combined. A total of 11 water bodies would become permanent features. During mining, pits would range in size from 7 acres up to 310 acres and would be mined to depths ranging from 10 feet to 150 feet. Pit depths greater than the depth to ground water would create water bodies. The combined reclamation plans would return 48 percent of mined areas to agricultural production, including row crops, tree crops and pasture land. Approximately 52 percent of the mined area would be reclaimed to non-agricultural uses, including open water bodies (33 percent), wildlife habitat (12 percent), and vegetated slopes and permanent roads.

Off-channel mining under the OCMP would occur in 5 year phases with reclamation being applied to sites where mining is complete while mining is initiated in other areas. Of the total area affected over the 30-year OCMP period (2,256 acres), only a portion would be disturbed at any one time (see Figures 4.2-2 through 4.2-8). Reclamation would be initiated at a site as soon as mining has been completed. At the same time, mining would begin at new sites while future, undisturbed sites await mining.

The two largest long-term mining applications (Syar and Solano Concrete) propose to mine 1,332 acres of farmland south of Cache Creek, east and west of I-505 and partially within the view of highway motorists. The next largest mining area is 360 acres of the Cache Creek Aggregates property located in the western portion of the planning area, east of Rd. 85 and north of Cache Creek. Other sites include the Teichert-West (Reiff) site (281 acres to be mined) and the 146-acre Teichert-East (Woodland) site. The areas directly adjacent to I-505 would be viewed by large numbers of people. Some off-channel mining would also be within view from County Roads 85, 87, 89 and 94B, and the golf course and clubhouse adjacent to the Watts-Woodland Airport. These areas would be seen by relatively few people compared to the sites along I-505.

Landscape changes during off-channel mining such as removal of vegetation, pit excavations, material stockpiles and the presence of equipment (graders, conveyors, haul trucks) could adversely affect views and vistas if exposed to public view and perceived as unattractive or unsightly. Within the planning area, these kinds of landscape changes are presently occurring at existing off-channel mine sites. However, they are not readily visible from local communities, recreation areas or heavily travelled roads including I-505 and State Highway 16. Instead, their visual exposure is localized and visible to relatively few persons including those working in the area or travelling County roads or local streets that pass by the sites.

The draft OCMP contains policies intended to minimize potential adverse affects on views and vistas from the types of landscape changes outlined above. The following policies would help limit direct, close-range visual exposure of mining facilities and operations.

PS. 7.5-1 New processing plants and material stockpiles shall be located a minimum of 1,000 feet from public rights-of-way, public recreation areas, and/or off-site residences, unless alternate measures to reduce visual/aesthetic impacts are developed and implemented.

PS. 7.5-2 Soil stockpiles shall be located a minimum of 500 feet from public rights-of-way, public recreation areas, and/or off-site residences, unless alternate measures to reduce visual/aesthetic impacts are developed and implemented.

PS. 7.5-3 Off-channel excavations shall maintain a minimum setback of 1,000 feet from public rights-of-way and adjacent property lines, unless a landscaped buffer is provided in which case the setback may be reduced to a minimum of 50 feet or site specific characteristics reduce potential aesthetic impacts.

Says 75 in Mng Ord – inconsistent.

The following policy would reduce potential visual impacts by eliminating or reducing clutter and ensuring an orderly, maintained appearance at mine sites:

PS. 2.5-15 During operations, the site shall be kept free of debris and maintained in an orderly manner so as not to create unsightly conditions. All overburden shall be stockpiled and all stumps, brush, or other debris shall be properly disposed.

The following policies would reduce the amount of barren ground surfaces, help slopes blend with the surrounding landscape, and help give waste and overburden piles a less of a manufactured appearance. They will help reduce the visual contrast of mine-related disturbances with the surrounding landscape.

PS 2.5-21 All final slopes above groundwater level shall be seeded with a weed-free, drought-tolerant mix of native and non-native grass species as soon as practical after grading.

PS. 2.5-22 Permanent piles of mine waste and/or overburden shall be contoured to conform visually with the surrounding topography.

The following policy would reduce the amount of landscape change created by removal of vegetation.

PS. 6.5-2 Riparian vegetation, including identified off-channel vegetation, will be retained or replaced.

The OCMP policies listed above will help limit effects during active mining on existing views and vistas. Even so, mining operations will be visible, to some degree, from various public viewpoints. The effect on views and vistas during active mining would be a significant and unavoidable impact.

Alternative 1a: No Project (Existing Conditions)

Under Alternative 1a, no OCMP would be adopted. Therefore, mining of aggregate resources and the associated landscape changes that would otherwise be allowed under the OCMP would not occur. Instead, current surface mining would continue, at existing operations (in- and off-channel), under all regulations in place as of the end of 1995. Gravel extraction, based on an estimate of remaining reserves at permitted operations, would continue on a total of 543 acres reclaimed over approximately 7½ years. After 7½

years, all permitted reserves would be exhausted and mining would cease. The in- and off-channel mining operations and their effect on the landscape that would occur under Alternative 1a would be visible, to some degree, from various public viewpoints. The effect on views and vistas during active mining would be a significant and unavoidable impact.

Alternative 1b: No Project (Existing permits and Regulatory Condition)

Under Alternative 1b, no OCMP would be adopted. Surface mining and the related changes in landscape conditions allowed under the OCMP would not occur. Restoration of Cache Creek under the CCRMP, which would benefit visual resources by improving existing conditions, would not occur. Instead, current mining would continue at existing operations (in- and off-channel) under all regulations in place as of the end of 1995 and would continue in 543 acres of disturbance (the same as Alternative 1a). These would be reclaimed over approximately 4¼ years. After this time, all permitted reserves would be exhausted and mining would cease. The in- and off-channel mining operations and their effect on the landscape that would occur under Alternative 1b would be visible, to some degree, from various public viewpoints. The effect on views and vistas during active mining would be a significant and unavoidable impact.

Alternative 2: No Mining (Alternative Site)

Under Alternative 2, no OCMP would be adopted and all existing mining permits (in- and off-channel) would be voided. Mining sites would be reclaimed as presently approved. Reclamation requirements for existing in-channel operations involve regrading, but not revegetation. Future landscape changes associated with mining under the OCMP would not occur and no new disturbance would be created by existing mining operations. Benefits to visual resources by improving existing conditions through the restoration of Cache Creek would not occur. Assuming that market demand for aggregate would be met from reserves mined outside of Yolo County, this alternative would potentially result in visual impacts at the alternate locations where mining would occur. Since active mining would not occur under Alternative 2, it would not affect views and vistas within Yolo County.

Alternative 3: (Plant Operation Only)

Under Alternative 3, no OCMP would be adopted and all existing mining permits would be voided. Mining sites would be reclaimed as presently approved. Reclamation requirements for existing in-channel operations involve regrading, but not revegetation. Future landscape changes associated with mining under the OCMP would not occur and no new disturbance would be created by existing mining operations. Benefits to visual resources by improving existing conditions through the restoration of Cache Creek would likely not occur. Mining of aggregate would occur elsewhere outside of Yolo County. Aggregate would be brought to Yolo County to be processed at existing plants. This alternative would potentially result in visual impacts at the locations where mining would

occur. Since active mining would not occur under Alternative 3, it would not affect views and vistas within Yolo County.

Alternative 4: Shallow Mining (Alternative Method/Reclamation)

Under Alternative 4, mining would be restricted to depths of not more than 10 feet above groundwater. As a consequence, mining would occur on 2,932 acres (the same area mined under the proposed project), but would produce a lower total tonnage of gravel extracted over 30 years.

The types of landscape changes associated with shallow mining would be generally similar to those described under the OCMP, except that water bodies would not be created during active mining or after reclamation and more land would be reclaimed to agricultural uses.

OCMP policies will help limit effects during active mining on views and vistas. However, mining operations and their effect on the landscape will still be visible, to some degree, from various public viewpoints. The effect on views and vistas during active mining under Alternative 4 would be a significant and unavoidable impact.

Alternative 5a: Decreased Mining (Restricted Allocation)

Under Alternative 5a, mining would occur under the OCMP, but would be reduced to levels consistent with one-half the current annual allocations. This could reduce the area disturbed by mining which would occur over a period of 30 years. The types of landscape changes that would occur would be the same as those under the proposed project. Affects on views and vistas would be reduced in extent and in their rate of occurrence compared to the proposed project (fewer acres disturbed over the same 30-year time frame), but would remain the same in kind.

OCMP policies will help limit effects during active mining on views and vistas. However, mining operations and their effect on the landscape will still be visible, to some degree, from various public viewpoints. The effect on views and vistas during active mining under Alternative 5a would be a significant and unavoidable impact.

Alternative 5b: Decreased Mining (Shorter Mining Period)

Under Alternative 5b, mining would occur under the OCMP, but within shorter permit and renewal periods. The types of landscape changes that would occur would be similar to those under the proposed project. Affects on existing views and vistas would potentially be reduced in extent compared to the proposed project (fewer acres disturbed), but would remain the same in kind and would occur at about the same rate. OCMP policies will help limit effects during active mining on views and vistas. However, mining operations and their effect on the landscape will still be visible, to some degree, from various public viewpoints. The effect on views and vistas during active mining under Alternative 5b would be a significant and unavoidable impact.

Alternative 6: Agricultural Reclamation (with Mining Operations as Proposed)

Under Alternative 6, the same total tonnage of gravel would be mined as under the proposed project, but the total acreage disturbed would more than double. Extensive earth-borrows (nearly 3,000 acres) from non-mining areas would be required to generate pit-fill material. These earth-borrow areas themselves would require reclamation (to predominantly agricultural uses). The types of landscape changes that would occur would be similar to those under the proposed project. Affects on existing views and vistas would potentially be increased in extent compared to the proposed project (more acres disturbed) although they would remain the same in kind. OCMP policies will help limit effects during active mining on views and vistas. However, mining operations and their effect on the landscape will still be visible, to some degree, from various public viewpoints. The effect on views and vistas during active mining under Alternative 6 would be a significant and unavoidable impact.

Mitigation Measure 4.10-1a (OCMP, A-4, A-5a, A-5b, A-6)

In conjunction with the environmental review of individual projects permitted under the OCMP, means of minimizing the visibility of mining operations, facilities and landform alterations from public viewpoints should be assessed based on site-specific visual characteristics and viewing conditions. The use of berms, vegetative screens, seeding, special plant materials and contouring the sides and top surfaces of modified landforms, or other measures, should be incorporated into the individual mine and reclamation plans as appropriate.

Mitigation Measure 4.10-1b (OCMP, A-4, A-5a, A-5b, A-6)

Where mining would occur within 1,000 feet of a public right-of-way, including Roads 85, 87, 89, 94B and I-505, the Operators shall phase mining such that no more than 50 acres of the area that lies within 1,000 feet of the right-of-way would be actively disturbed at any time. Actively disturbed areas are defined as those on which mining operations of any kind, or the implementation of reclamation such as grading, seeding or installation of plant material are taking place.

Since mining under the OCMP would occur in close proximity to various public roads, OCMP policies and the mitigation measures described above can not entirely eliminate visibility of mining operations, facilities and landform alterations from public viewpoints. Therefore, the impact on views and vistas during active mining would be significant and unavoidable, even with mitigation.

Mitigation Measure 4.10-1c (A-1a, A-1b)

None available. However, Mitigation Measures 4.10-1a and 4.10-1b would be applicable to the portion of mining which would occur off-channel, and would

therefore partially reduce the effects on views and vistas. The overall impact on views and vistas during active mining would be significant and unavoidable.

Mitigation Measure 4.10-1d (A-2, A-3)

None required.

Impact 4.10-2
Effects on Views or Vistas Following Reclamation

Draft OCMP and Implementing Ordinances

The draft OCMP and its implementing ordinances would allow increased surface mining operations in the lower Cache Creek area over the next 30 years. This would result in the long-term, temporary conversion of approximately 2,211 acres of farmland to surface mining, which would eventually be reclaimed to one of the following uses: approximately 48 percent agriculture including row crops, tree crops and pasture land; 33 percent open lakes; 12 percent habitat; and 6 percent additional areas slopes and maintenance roads.

Permanent changes in the landscape following reclamation would include lowered ground elevation in reclaimed pit areas, creation of 11 lakes of various sizes and depths, and piles of waste earth material. Reclamation would also result in the establishment of replacement vegetation or creation of vegetative screens. Upon reclamation, agricultural uses, wildlife habitat areas or water recharge basins would replace active mining operations in the landscape.

When open to public view, some of these landscape changes could adversely affect views and vistas if perceived as unattractive or unsightly, or if they block important views. Ponds or lakes are generally considered to be visually positive landscape features, especially when they exhibit a natural (as opposed to a manufactured or engineered) character. Wildlife habitat areas would contribute to the rural character of the planning area and would add visual variety. The visual presence of topographic depressions and waste stockpiles following reclamation would serve as ongoing evidence of the past disturbance associated with mining and would influence the visual character of the area. Evidence of these features and the amount of attention they attract would likely diminish over time as vegetation becomes established and matures, and as they become familiar and accepted features of the local landscape.

Within the planning area, landscape changes associated with reclamation would be visible, but generally not over long distances. They would not be readily visible from local communities, recreation areas or State Highway 16. They would be visible to some extent from I-505, since this highway bisects the planning area. Otherwise, visual exposure would tend to be localized and experienced by relatively few viewers.

The draft OCMP contains policies intended to minimize potential adverse affects on views and vistas following reclamation. The following policies would reduce the potential for barren ground surfaces, help slopes blend with the surrounding landscape, give waste piles a less of a manufactured appearance, and ensure riparian vegetation would be retained or replaced. Collectively, implementation of these policies would reduce the visual contrast of mine-related disturbances with the surrounding landscape following reclamation, and create a setting that is consistent with the area's rural character.

PS 2.5-21 All final slopes above groundwater level shall be seeded with a weed-free, drought-tolerant mix of native and non-native grass species as soon as practical after grading.

PS. 2.5-22 Permanent piles of mine waste and/or overburden shall be contoured to conform visually with the surrounding topography.

PS. 6.5-2 Riparian vegetation, including identified off-channel vegetation, will be retained or replaced.

PS. 7.5-3 Off-channel excavations shall maintain a minimum setback of 1,000 feet from public rights-of-way and adjacent property lines, unless a landscaped buffer is provided in which case the setback may be reduced to a minimum of 50 feet or site specific characteristics reduce potential aesthetic impacts.

The following policy would help to screen views of reclaimed areas from adjacent locations.

Action 6.4-11 Include vegetated buffers between restored habitat and adjoining farmland.

The following policy would help make water bodies that will persist following reclamation more attractive reduce their man-made appearance.

PS. 6.5-5 Reclaimed wetland habitat (permanent water bodies) shall include features such as scalloped perimeters, extended peninsulas, islands, and stepped benches of various widths.

The following policy would enhance the rural character of the area and reduce visual evidence of mining-related disturbances.

Obj. 7.3-3 Create a continuous corridor of natural open space along the Creek.

The OCMP policies listed above would minimize potential adverse affects on views and vistas following reclamation. Restoration of Cache Creek under the CCRMP would also provide visual benefits by improving existing conditions. The impact on views or vistas following reclamation would be less than significant.

Alternative 1a: No Project (Existing Conditions)

Under Alternative 1a, no OCMP would be adopted. Therefore, mining of aggregate resources and the associated landscape disturbance that would otherwise occur under the OCMP would not take place and reclamation would not be required. Instead, current surface mining would continue, at existing operations (in- and off-channel), under all regulations in place as of the end of 1995. Areas disturbed by the current short-term off-

channel projects would be reclaimed to agricultural uses, as required under their approved reclamation plans. The current in-channel mining projects operate under permits approved in 1980 that are based on operational and reclamation regulations adopted in 1979. Reclamation for these projects involves regrading disturbed areas, but not revegetation.

The reclamation requirements for off-channel mining operations under Alternative 1a are similar to those under the OCMP. Reclamation of most in-channel mining, however, does little in the way of restoring the visual quality of the channel. The effect on views and vistas after reclamation would be a significant and unavoidable impact.

Alternative 1b: No Project (Existing permits and Regulatory Condition)

Under Alternative 1b, no OCMP would be adopted. Surface mining and the related changes in landscape conditions allowed under the OCMP would not occur. Instead, current mining would continue at existing operations (in- and off-channel) under all regulations in place as of the end of 1995 (the same as Alternative 1a). Areas disturbed under Alternative 1b would be reclaimed in the same manner as described above for Alternative 1a.

The effect on views and vistas after reclamation under Alternative 1b would be a significant and unavoidable impact.

Alternative 2: No Mining (Alternative Site)

Under Alternative 2, no OCMP would be adopted and all existing mining permits (in- and off-channel) would be voided. All active mining sites subject to voiding would be reclaimed as presently approved.

The reclamation requirements for existing off-channel mining operations are similar to those under the OCMP. The required reclamation for most in-channel mining, however, does little in the way of restoring the visual quality of the channel. The effect on views and vistas after reclamation would be a significant and unavoidable impact.

Alternative 3: (Plant Operation Only)

Under Alternative 3, no OCMP would be adopted and all existing mining permits (in- and off-channel) would be voided. All active mining sites would be reclaimed as presently approved. Although extraction operations would cease and the sites would be reclaimed, plant operations would continue to process aggregate mined outside the County and brought in by truck. The reclamation requirements for existing off-channel mining operations are similar to those under the OCMP. The required reclamation for most in-channel mining, however, does little in the way of restoring the visual quality of the channel. The effect on views and vistas after reclamation would be a significant and unavoidable impact.

Alternative 4: Shallow Mining (Alternative Method/Reclamation)

Under Alternative 4, mining would occur under the OCMP, but would be restricted to depths of not more than 10 feet above groundwater. The same total number of acres would be disturbed as with the proposed project. Reclamation of shallow mining would not result in permanent water bodies. Instead, reclamation to agricultural uses would occur at 80 percent and to habitat at 20 percent as compared to 48 percent and 12 percent respectively under the proposed project. OCMP policies would minimize potential adverse affects to views and vistas following reclamation. Restoration of Cache Creek under the CCRMP would also provide visual benefits by improving existing conditions. The impact on views or vistas following reclamation under Alternative 4 would be less than significant.

Alternative 5a: Decreased Mining (Restricted Allocation)

Under Alternative 5a, mining would occur under the OCMP, but would be reduced to levels consistent with one-half the current annual allocations. This could reduce the number of acres disturbed by mining and requiring reclamation as compared to the proposed project. Disturbed areas would be reclaimed to the same uses and in the same manner as the proposed project (49 percent agriculture, 33 percent open lakes, 12 percent habitat, and 6 percent vegetated slopes and roads). OCMP policies would minimize potential adverse affects to views and vistas following reclamation. Restoration of Cache Creek under the CCRMP would also provide visual benefits by improving existing conditions. The impact on views or vistas following reclamation under Alternative 5a would be less than significant.

Alternative 5b: Decreased Mining (Shorter Mining Period)

Under Alternative 5b, mining would occur under the OCMP, but within shorter permit and renewal periods. As with Alternative 5a, this would reduce the number of acres disturbed by mining and requiring reclamation as compared to the proposed project. Also, the time period within which mining would occur would be shortened to 15 years as opposed to 30. Disturbed areas would be reclaimed to the same uses and in the same manner as the proposed project (49 percent agriculture, 33 percent open lakes, 12 percent habitat, and 6 percent vegetated slopes and roads). OCMP policies would minimize potential adverse affects to views and vistas following reclamation. Restoration of Cache Creek under the CCRMP would also provide visual benefits by improving existing conditions. The impact on views or vistas following reclamation under Alternative 5b would be less than significant.

Alternative 6: Agricultural Reclamation (with Mining Operations as Proposed)

Under Alternative 6, the total acreage requiring reclamation would more than double as compared to the proposed project. Extensive earth-borrows (nearly 3,000 acres) from non-mining areas would be required to generate pit-fill material. These earth-borrow areas themselves would require reclamation to predominantly agricultural uses.

OCMP policies would minimize potential adverse affects to views and vistas following reclamation. Restoration of Cache Creek under the CCRMP would also provide visual benefits by improving existing conditions. The impact on views or vistas following reclamation under Alternative 6 would be less than significant even though reclamation would be applied to more acreage than with other alternatives.

Mitigation Measure 4.10-2a (OCMP, A-4, A-5a, A-5b, A-6)

None required. However, the following mitigation measure would further reduce the impact on views and vistas after reclamation.

In conjunction with the environmental review of individual projects permitted under the OCMP, further means of improving the appearance of the landscape after reclamation should be assessed based on site-specific visual characteristics, site lines and view corridors. The use and placement of berms, vegetative screens, special plant materials, grading slopes and contouring the sides and top surfaces of modified landforms to mimic surrounding landforms, or other measures, should be incorporated into the mine reclamation plans as appropriate.

Mitigation Measure 4.10-2b (A-1a, A-1b, A-2 and A-3)

No mitigation available. The impact on views and vistas after reclamation would be significant and unavoidable.

Impact 4.10-3
Potential for Visual Incompatibility with Surrounding Land Uses

Draft OCMP and Implementing Ordinances

Mining allowed under the OCMP would result in the visual presence of various mine-related activities, equipment and facilities during active operations and permanent changes to the landscape after reclamation. Of the 2,211 acres mined under the OCMP, 48 percent would be reclaimed to agricultural use, 33 percent as open lakes, 12 percent as habitat, and 6 percent as vegetated slopes and roads. Depending on the immediate landscape setting, the visual presence of activities, equipment and facilities during active mining or landscape changes after reclamation could appear incompatible with the visual character of surrounding land uses.

In a general sense, the appearance of active mining bears a resemblance to large-scale agricultural operations that presently occur within the planning area and at locations where mining would occur under the OCMP. Both employ the use of various kinds of heavy equipment, require certain support facilities (buildings, storage yards, etc,) and affect many acres of ground. Conversely, mining creates substantial topographic changes (depressions from the excavation of pits and piles of overburden and waste material) whereas agriculture generally creates surface disturbance only. Reclaimed areas would

be visually compatible with the rural character within the planning area, especially those areas reclaimed to agricultural uses.

Within the planning area, mining operations, equipment and facilities located at one site are usually not visible over long distances. Instead, their visual exposure tends to be localized. Where the adjacent land use is agriculture, which would be the case almost exclusively, aggregate mining under the OCMP is expected to be visually compatible.

Several OCMP policies address minimizing visual incompatibility with surrounding land uses. The following policies will limit the visual exposure of mining operations.

PS. 7.4-7 Ensure that active surface mining operations are located away from public areas, such as County Roads, residences, and sites reclaimed to recreational uses.

PS. 7.5-1 New processing plants and material stockpiles shall be located a minimum of 1,000 feet from public rights-of-way, public recreation areas, and/or off-site residences, unless alternate measures to reduce visual/aesthetic impacts are developed and implemented.

PS. 7.5-2 Soil stockpiles shall be located a minimum of 500 feet from public rights-of-way, public recreation areas, and/or off-site residences, unless alternate measures to reduce visual/aesthetic impacts are developed and implemented.

PS. 7.5-3 Off-channel excavations shall maintain a minimum setback of 1,000 feet from public rights-of-way and adjacent property lines, unless a landscaped buffer is provided in which case the setback may be reduced to a minimum of 50 feet or site specific characteristics reduce potential aesthetic impacts.

The following policies will help disturbed areas to blend with their surroundings.

PS. 2.5-15 During operations, the site shall be kept free of debris and maintained in an orderly manner so as not to create unsightly conditions. All overburden shall be stockpiled and all stumps, brush, or other debris shall be properly disposed.

PS 2.5-21 All final slopes above groundwater level shall be seeded with a weed-free, drought-tolerant mix of native and non-native grass species as soon as practical after grading.

PS. 2.5-22 Permanent piles of mine waste and/or overburden shall be contoured to conform visually with the surrounding topography.

Action 6.4-11 Include vegetated buffers between restored habitat and adjoining farmland.

PS. 6.5-2 Riparian vegetation, including identified off-channel vegetation, will be retained or replaced.

PS. 6.5-5 Reclaimed wetland habitat (permanent water bodies) shall include features such as scalloped perimeters, extended peninsulas, islands, and stepped benches of various widths.

Obj. 7.3-3 Create a continuous corridor of natural open space along the Creek.

In summary, the OCMP policies listed above would minimize the potential for visual incompatibility with surrounding land uses. The impacts would be less than significant.

Alternative 1a: No Project (Existing Conditions)

Under Alternative 1a, no OCMP would be adopted. Therefore, mining of aggregate resources and the associated landscape changes that would be allowed under the OCMP would not occur. Current surface mining would continue for approximately 7½ years at existing sites (in- and off-channel) under the regulations in place as of the end of 1995. Reclamation would occur as presently approved. The impacts from visual incompatibility with surrounding land uses would be less than significant.

Alternative 1b: No Project (Existing permits and Regulatory Condition)

Under Alternative 1b, no OCMP would be adopted. Surface mining and the related changes in landscape conditions allowed under the OCMP would not occur. Instead, mining at existing in- and off-channel operations would continue at an accelerated rate for approximately 4¼ years under all regulations in place as of the end of 1995. Reclamation would occur as presently approved. The impacts from visual incompatibility with surrounding land uses would be less than significant.

Alternative 2: No Mining (Alternative Site)

Under Alternative 2, no OCMP would be adopted and all existing mining permits would be voided. Future landscape changes associated with mining under the OCMP and existing mining would not occur. All active mining sites would be reclaimed as presently approved. The impacts from visual incompatibility with surrounding land uses in Yolo County would be less than significant. Assuming that market demand for aggregate would be met from reserves mined outside of Yolo County, this alternative would potentially result in visual incompatibility at the alternate locations where mining would occur.

Alternative 3: (Plant Operation Only)

Under Alternative 3, no OCMP would be adopted and all existing mining permits would be voided. Future landscape changes associated with mining under the OCMP and existing mining would not occur. All active mining sites would be reclaimed as presently approved. Mining of aggregate would occur elsewhere outside of Yolo County and would be brought to Yolo County to be processed at existing plants. The visual relationships between existing plants and surrounding land uses would persist. The impacts from visual incompatibility with surrounding land uses in Yolo County would be less than significant. This alternative would potentially result in visual incompatibilities at the alternate locations where mining would occur.

Alternative 4: Shallow Mining

Under Alternative 4, mining would occur under the OCMP, but would be restricted to depths of not more than 10 feet above groundwater. The same total number of acres would be disturbed as with the proposed project. Reclamation of shallow mining would not

result in permanent water bodies. Instead, reclamation to agricultural uses would increase to 80 percent and as habitat to 20 percent as compared to 48 percent and 12 percent respectively under the proposed project. This would facilitate visual compatibility with surrounding land use, which is primarily agriculture, after reclamation. OCMP policies would minimize the potential for visual incompatibility with surrounding land uses. The impacts would be less than significant.

Alternative 5a: Decreased Mining (Restricted Allocation)

Under Alternative 5a, mining would occur under the OCMP, but would be reduced to levels consistent with one-half the current annual allocations, thus potentially reducing the number of acres disturbed by mining over a 30-year period as compared to the proposed project. This would likewise reduce the potential for visual incompatibility with surrounding land uses. OCMP policies would minimize the potential for visual incompatibility between the areas that would be mined under Alternative 5a and surrounding land uses. The impacts would be less than significant.

Alternative 5b: Decreased Mining (Shorter Mining Period)

Under Alternative 5b, mining would occur under the OCMP, but within shorter permit and renewal periods. This would reduce the number of acres disturbed by mining compared to the proposed project and would occur over a 15-year period as compared to 30. Consequently the potential for visual incompatibility with surrounding land uses would be reduced. OCMP policies would minimize the potential for visual incompatibility between the areas that would be mined under Alternative 5b and surrounding land uses. The impacts would be less than significant.

Alternative 6: Agricultural Reclamation

Under Alternative 6, the total acreage requiring reclamation would more than double as compared to the proposed project. Extensive earth-borrows (nearly 3,000 acres) from non-mining areas would be required to generate pit-fill material. These earth-borrow areas themselves would require reclamation to predominantly agricultural uses. Although the total area of disturbance increases under this alternative, since most of the disturbance would occur in areas dominated by agriculture, the likelihood for visual incompatibility, especially after reclamation, would not increase.

OCMP policies would minimize the potential for visual incompatibility between the areas that would be mined under Alternative 6 and surrounding land uses. The impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure 4.10-3 (OCMP, A-1a, A-1b, A-2, A-3, A-4, A-5a, A-5b, A-6)

None required.

Impact 4.10-4
Introduction of Light and Glare

Draft OCMP and Implementing Ordinances

In order to avoid disruptions of traffic on major roads, it has become customary for state and local governments to perform road construction and resurfacing at night. Since asphalt cools quickly, it must be delivered for use soon after it is mixed. In order to accommodate this trend, the OCMP would not prohibit mining-related activities after dark. Night lighting of mining facilities and headlights of heavy equipment traveling in and out of pits could potentially affect nearby sensitive receptors, depending on their proximity to the light sources. It is expected that night operations would occur infrequently, and lowered pits could partially block headlights. Development of new processing facilities or other buildings under the OCMP represent potential sources of glare depending on the reflective qualities of materials used and the location of facilities relative to sensitive receptors. In most cases, there would be few sensitive receptors to light and glare throughout the planning area due to its rural character and dominance of large-scale agriculture. Private residences in outlying areas and persons traveling on County roads and local streets in close proximity to processing plants or locations within the planning area where night time operations are taking place are possible exceptions.

The OCMP contains the following policies that address minimizing adverse affects of night lighting by controlling stray light and ensuring that light does not extend to public areas or adjacent properties, and would keep new facilities a sufficient distance from potential sensitive receptors.

PS. 2.5-10 All lighting shall be arranged and controlled so as not to illuminate public rights-of-way or adjacent properties.

PS. 7.5-1 New processing plants and material stockpiles shall be located a minimum of 1,000 feet from public rights-of-way, recreation areas, or off-site residences.

The OCMP policies listed above would keep light and glare impacts generated by facilities (processing plants) to a less than significant level. Impacts from headlights of equipment operating at night would be unavoidable.

Alternative 1a: No Project (Existing Conditions)

Under Alternative 1a, no OCMP would be adopted. Therefore, mining of aggregate resources under the OCMP would not occur. Current surface mining would continue under all regulations in place as of the end of 1995. Environmental review of current off-channel mining projects under CEQA showed that no significant impacts from light and glare would occur.

Alternative 1b: No Project (Existing permits and Regulatory Condition)

Under this Alternative 1b, no OCMP would be adopted. Surface mining under the OCMP would not occur. Instead, existing mining permits would continue to be exercised under all regulations in place as of the end of 1995. Environmental review of current off-channel mining projects showed that no significant impacts from light and glare would occur.

Alternative 2: No Mining (Alternative Site)

Under Alternative 2, no OCMP would be adopted and all existing mining permits would be voided. Assuming that market demand for aggregate would be met from reserves mined outside of Yolo County, this alternative would potentially result in impacts from light and glare at the locations where mining would occur.

Alternative 3: (Plant Operation Only)

Under Alternative 3, no OCMP would be adopted and all existing mining permits would be voided. Mining of aggregate would occur outside of Yolo County and would be brought to Yolo County to be processed at existing plants. This alternative would potentially result in impacts from light and glare at the locations where mining would occur outside Yolo County.

Alternative 4: Shallow Mining (Alternative Method/Reclamation)

Under Alternative 4, mining under the OCMP would be restricted to depths of not more than 10 feet above groundwater, but the same total acreage would be mined as under the proposed project. The primary sources of potential light and glare are mining-related facilities, night lighting of these facilities and headlights of equipment operating after dark. OCMP policies would reduce light and glare impacts generated by facilities (processing plants) to a less than significant level. Impacts from headlights of equipment operating at night would be unavoidable.

Alternative 5a: Decreased Mining (Restricted Allocation)

Under Alternative 5a, mining would occur under the OCMP, but would be reduced to levels consistent with one-half the current annual allocation thus reducing the number of acres disturbed by mining. The primary sources of potential light and glare are mining-related facilities, night lighting of these facilities, and headlights of equipment operating after dark. OCMP policies would reduce light and glare impacts generated by facilities (processing plants) to a less than significant level. Impacts from headlights of equipment operating at night would be unavoidable.

Alternative 5b: Decreased Mining (Shorter Mining Period)

Under Alternative 5b, mining would occur under the OCMP, but within shorter permit and renewal periods. This would reduce the number of acres disturbed by mining during the permit period. The primary sources of potential light and glare are mining-related facilities, night lighting of these facilities and headlights of equipment operating after dark. OCMP policies would keep light and glare impacts generated by facilities (processing plants) to a less than significant level. Impacts from headlights of equipment operating at night would be unavoidable.

Alternative 6: Agricultural Reclamation (with Mining Operations as Proposed)

Under Alternative 6, the total number of acres disturbed and later reclaimed under the OCMP would increase from 2,256 (including a 45-acre borrow area) under the proposed project to 5,250. However, the primary sources of potential light and glare are mining-related facilities, night lighting of these facilities, and headlights of equipment operating after dark. OCMP policies would keep light and glare impacts generated by facilities (processing plants) to a less than significant level. Impacts from headlights of equipment operating at night would be unavoidable.

Mitigation Measure 4.10-4a (OCMP, A-1a, A-1b, A-2, A-3, A-4, A-5a, A-5b, A-6)

None required.

Impact 4.10-5
Consistency with Yolo County General Plan Policies

Draft OCMP and Implementing Ordinances

Mining allowed under the OCMP would result in the alteration of natural topography and in some cases removal of existing trees and vegetation. If visible from scenic highways or scenic corridors, these actions would conflict with Policy SH 7 of the Yolo County General Plan which requires retention of existing trees and vegetation and natural landforms. Scenic highways within Yolo County include Highway 128 from Winters to Lake Berryessa, and State Highway 16 through the Capay Valley, but not within the planning area. Alterations to landforms and vegetation under the OCMP would not be visible from these scenic highways.

In addition, the following OCMP policies would limit the visual exposure of altered landforms and vegetation from adjacent areas.

PS. 6.5-2 Riparian vegetation, including identified off-channel vegetation, will be retained or replaced.

PS. 2.5-22 Permanent piles of mine waste and/or overburden shall be contoured to conform visually with the surrounding topography.

Policy SH 6 of the General Plan states that the County shall consider designating "river roads" as designated scenic highways. If the scenic highway designation is applied to river roads within the planning area, alterations to landforms and vegetation occurring under the OCMP could be visible from those roads and could be inconsistent with Policy SH 7.

Under present circumstances, the OCMP would be consistent with policies of the Yolo County General Plan that address preservation of the rural scenery and aesthetics of the area.

Alternative 1a: No Project (Existing Conditions)

Under Alternative 1a, no OCMP would be adopted. Current surface mining would continue at existing operations under all regulations in place as of the end of 1995. Current surface mining is not be visible from designated scenic highways and is consistent with Yolo County General Plan policies addressing rural scenery and aesthetics.

Alternative 1b: No Project (Existing permits and Regulatory Condition)

Under this alternative, no OCMP would be adopted and surface mining at existing operations would continue under all regulations in place as of the end of 1995. Current surface mining is not be visible from designated scenic highways and is consistent with Yolo County General Plan policies addressing rural scenery and aesthetics.

Alternative 2: No Mining (Alternative Site)

Under Alternative 2, no OCMP would be adopted and all existing mining permits would be voided. Regional demand for aggregate would be met from reserves mined outside of Yolo County. Landscape alterations associated with mining outside Yolo County could conflict with applicable plans and visual resource policies in the locations where mining would occur.

Alternative 3: Plant Operation Only

Under Alternative 3, no OCMP would be adopted and all existing mining permits would be voided. Mining of aggregate would occur elsewhere outside of Yolo County. Aggregate would be brought to Yolo County to be processed at existing plants. Existing plants are not visible from designated scenic highways. Landscape alterations associated with mining outside Yolo County could conflict with applicable plans and visual resource policies in the locations where mining would occur.

Alternative 4: Shallow Mining (Alternative Method/Reclamation)

Under Alternative 4, mining would occur under the OCMP, but would be restricted to depths of not more than 10 feet above groundwater. As a consequence, a greater number of acres would be subjected to mining in order to offset the shallow depth limitation, but

would not be visible from currently designated scenic highways. Under present circumstances, Alternative 4 would be consistent with policies of the Yolo County General Plan that address preservation of the rural scenery and aesthetics of the area.

Alternative 5a: Decreased Mining (Restricted Allocation)

Under Alternative 5a, mining would occur under the OCMP, but would be reduced to levels consistent with one-half the current annual allocation thus reducing the number of acres disturbed by mining. Mining would not be visible from currently designated scenic highways. Alternative 5a would be consistent with policies of the Yolo County General Plan that address preservation of the rural scenery and aesthetics of the area.

Alternative 5b: Decreased Mining (Shorter Mining Period)

Under Alternative 5b, mining would occur under the OCMP, but within shorter permit and renewal periods. This would reduce the number of acres disturbed by mining during the permit period. Mining would not be visible from currently designated scenic highways. Alternative 5b would be consistent with policies of the Yolo County General Plan that address preservation of the rural scenery and aesthetics of the area.

Alternative 6: Agricultural Reclamation (with Mining Operations as Proposed)

Under Alternative 6, the total number of acres disturbed and later reclaimed under the OCMP would increase. Even so, mining would not be visible from currently designated scenic highways. Alternative 6 would be consistent with policies of the Yolo County General Plan that address preservation of the rural scenery and aesthetics of the area.

Mitigation Measures 4.10-5a (OCMP, A-1a, A-1b, A-2, A-3, A-4, A-5a, A-5b, A-6)

None required.

Issue 4.10-6
Contribution to Cumulative Visual Impacts

Draft OCMP and Implementing Ordinances

Under the OCMP and its implementing ordinances, several types of landscape changes would occur within the planning area. Aggregate mining, which has been carried out within Cache Creek for nearly 100 years, could occur on up to 2,887 acres of the 23,174 acres covered by the OCMP. However, off-channel aggregate mining and reclamation would occur in a cycle. That is, only a portion of the minable area within a project site would be actively mined at one time. As mining is completed in an area, reclamation would be initiated as soon as possible, while mining is extended to other areas of the site. In this way, reclamation follows on the heels of mining, limiting the total amount of disturbed, unreclaimed areas that exist at any one time. The total amount of land reclaimed,

however, will continually increase over the 30 year mining period under the OCMP. As described earlier in this section, disturbed areas during active mining and after reclamation have visual characteristics that differ from existing conditions in off-channel areas. While the visual exposure of mining is generally localized, it will occur at several locations during the 30 year OCMP time frame for mining, while the acreage of reclaimed lands increases. The public would encounter these reclaimed areas on an increasingly frequent basis.

The Woodland General Plan indicates that between 2,108 acres and 2,296 acres could be developed as urban land uses by 2015. Growth within the spheres of influence of Esparto and Madison could result in up to 2,200 acres of future urban development. The total amount of actively disturbed land that would exist at any one time under the OCMP would be limited while the acreage of reclaimed lands would mount.

Alternative 1a: No Project (Existing Conditions)

Under Alternative 1a, no OCMP or CCRMP would be adopted. Current surface mining would continue at existing sites resulting in 543 acres of disturbance over about 7½ years which would be reclaimed to agricultural use. The beneficial affect on the visual resources of Cache Creek from reclamation and restoration under the CCRMP would not occur. These landscape changes would have a less than significant impact.

Alternative 1b: No Project (Existing permits and Regulatory Condition)

Under this alternative, no OCMP or CCRMP would be adopted and surface mining and existing mining permits would continue to be exercised under all regulations in place as of the end of 1995. This would result in 543 acres of disturbance over about 4¼ years which would be reclaimed to agricultural use. The beneficial affect on the visual resources of Cache Creek from reclamation and restoration under the CCRMP would not occur. These landscape changes would have a less than significant impact.

Alternative 2: No Mining (Alternative Site)

Under Alternative 2, no OCMP or CCRMP would be adopted and all existing mining permits would be voided. Disturbed areas would be reclaimed in accordance with the existing permits. Regional demand for aggregate would be met from reserves mined outside of Yolo County and brought in. Further aggregate mining would not contribute to cumulative visual impacts in Yolo County, but could in the areas outside the County where mining would occur. The beneficial affect on the visual resources of Cache Creek from reclamation and restoration under the CCRMP would not occur. These landscape changes would have a less than significant impact.

Alternative 3: (Plant Operation Only)

Under Alternative 3, no OCMP or CCRMP would be adopted and all existing mining permits would be voided. Disturbed areas would be reclaimed in accordance with the

existing permits. Mining of aggregate would occur elsewhere outside of Yolo County. Aggregate would be brought to Yolo County to be processed at existing plants. Further aggregate mining would not contribute to cumulative visual impacts in Yolo County, but could in the areas outside the County where mining would occur. The beneficial affect on the visual resources of Cache Creek from reclamation and restoration under the CCRMP would not occur. These landscape changes would have a less than significant impact.

Alternative 4: Shallow Mining (Alternative Method/Reclamation)

Under Alternative 4, mining would occur under the OCMP, but would be restricted to depths of not more than 10 feet above groundwater although the total acreage mined and reclaimed would not increase as compared to the proposed project. The acreage actively disturbed at any given time would be limited while the total acreage reclaimed would increase as time goes on. The CCRMP provides for restoration of mined areas within Cache Creek and would have an overall beneficial affect on the visual resources of the creek, relative to existing visual conditions. These landscape changes would have a less than significant impact.

Alternative 5a: Decreased Mining (Restricted Allocation)

Under Alternative 5a, mining would occur under the OCMP, but would be reduced to levels consistent with one-half the current annual allocation, thus reducing the number of acres disturbed by mining and reclaimed over 30 years as compared to the proposed project. This would decrease the contribution of mining to cumulative visual impacts. The CCRMP provides for restoration of mined areas within Cache Creek and would have an overall beneficial affect on visual resources, relative to existing visual conditions. These landscape changes would have a less than significant impact.

Alternative 5b: Decreased Mining (Shorter Mining Period)

Under Alternative 5b, mining would occur under the OCMP, but within shorter permit and renewal periods. This would reduce the number of acres disturbed by mining and reclaimed, and the time frame in which mining and reclamation would occur, as compared to the proposed project. This would in turn decrease the contribution of mining to cumulative visual impacts. The CCRMP provides for restoration of mined areas within Cache Creek and would have an overall beneficial affect on visual resources, relative to existing visual conditions. These landscape changes would have a less than significant impact.

Alternative 6: Agricultural Reclamation (with Mining Operations as Proposed)

Under Alternative 6, reclamation of 80 percent of mined areas to agriculture use would be required. To accomplish this, extensive earth-borrows from non-mining areas would be used to generate pit-fill material. This would more than double the number of acres disturbed and reclaimed under the OCMP as compared to the proposed project, although

the acreage actively disturbed at any given time would be limited. The total acreage of land reclaimed would increase as time goes on. Consequently, the contribution of mining-related activities to cumulative visual impacts would increase. The CCRMP provides for restoration of mined areas within Cache Creek, providing an overall beneficial effect on the visual resources. These landscape changes would have a less than significant impact.

Mitigation Measure 4.10-6a (OCMP, A-1a, A-1b, A-2, A-3, A-4, A-5a, A-5b, A-6)

None required.