4.2 AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

4.2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Agricultural Resources chapter of the EIR summarizes existing agricultural resources within the boundaries of the proposed project, including identification of any Prime/Unique Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance within the project boundaries. If Prime/Unique Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance is determined to be on-site, the analysis will address the conversion of said lands to mining uses. In addition, any conflicts with existing zoning for agricultural use are identified. Based on the analysis included in the Initial Study prepared for the proposed project (Appendix A), no impact related to forest resources were identified. Accordingly, further analysis of forest resources is not included in this EIR.

Documents referenced to prepare this chapter include the Yolo County General Plan,[1] and associated EIR,[2] the EIR for the Cache Creek Area Plan (CCAP),[3] a Custom Soil Resource Report[4] prepared for the project by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Yolo County Important Farmland Map.[5]

In response to the NOP, the County received comments related to Agricultural Resources from a number of residents in the area. These commenters expressed that the Draft EIR should consider the following:

- The conversion of prime farmland to non-agricultural uses (California Department of Conservation – Division of Land Resource Protection);
- Reclamation of the site back to farmland (Resident);
- Potential impacts related to conflicts with agricultural zoning or the Williamson Act (California Department of Conservation – Division of Land Resource Protection);
- The percentage of agricultural land relative to total mining acreage of the site (Resident);
- Compliance with State reclamation regulations (Resident);
- Health of topsoil post-reclamation (Resident);
- Agricultural conservation easements regarding the removal of prime farmland (Resident); and
- Incremental impacts leading to cumulative impacts on agricultural land (California Department of Conservation – Division of Land Resource Protection).

The CEQA Guidelines note that comments received during the NOP scoping process can be helpful in "identifying the range of actions, alternatives, mitigation measures, and significant effects to be analyzed in depth in an EIR and in eliminating from detailed study issues found not

1 Yolo County. *2030 Countywide General Plan.* November 2009.
2 Yolo County. *Yolo County 2030 Countywide General Plan Environmental Impact Report. SCH# 2008102034*. April 2009.
3 Yolo County. *Cache Creek Area Plan Update Project, Final Environmental Impact Report. SCH# 2017052069.* December 2019.
4 U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. *Custom Soil Resource Report for Yolo County, California. Shifler Mining and Reclamation Project.* June 12, 2019.
5 California Department of Conservation. *Yolo County Important Farmland 2016.* July 2017.

to be important." (CEQA Guidelines Section 15083.) Neither the CEQA Guidelines or Statutes require a lead agency to respond directly to comments received in response to the NOP, but they do require they be considered. Consistent with these requirements, the comments have been carefully reviewed and considered by Yolo County and are reflected in the analysis of impacts in this chapter. Appendix B includes all NOP comments received.

Concepts and Terminology

The following terms are used throughout this section and have important bearing upon properly evaluating agricultural resources within the context of the CEQA. As a result, this section begins by providing definitions of key terms, as follows:

Farmland Classifications

The USDA NRCS uses two systems to determine a soil's agricultural productivity: the Land Capability Classification System and the Storie Index Rating System. The "prime" soil classification of both systems indicates the presence of few to no soil limitations, which, if present, would require the application of management techniques (e.g., drainage, leveling, special fertilizing practices) to enhance production. The Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP), part of the Division of Land Resource Protection, California Department of Conservation (DOC), uses the information from the NRCS to create maps illustrating the types of farmland in the area.

Land Capability Classification System

The Land Capability Classification System takes into consideration soil limitations, the risk of damage when soils are used, and the way in which soils respond to treatment. Capability classes range from Class I soils, which have few limitations for agriculture, to Class VIII soils, which are unsuitable for agriculture. Generally, as the rating of the capability classification system increases, yields and profits are more difficult to obtain. A general description of soil classification as defined by the NRCS is provided in Table 4.2-1.

Storie Index Rating System

The Storie Index Rating system ranks soil characteristics according to their suitability for agriculture from Grade 1 soils (80 to 100 rating) which have few or no limitations for agricultural production, to Grade 6 soils (less than 10 rating) which are not suitable for agriculture. Under the Storie Index Rating system, soils deemed less than prime can function as prime soils when limitations such as poor drainage, slopes, or soil nutrient deficiencies are partially or entirely removed. The six grades, ranges in index rating, and definition of the grades, as defined by the NRCS, are provided below in Table 4.2-2.

Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program

The FMMP was established in 1982 to continue the Important Farmland mapping efforts begun in 1975 by the USDA. The intent of the USDA was to produce agriculture maps based on soil quality and land use across the nation. As part of the nationwide agricultural land use mapping effort, the USDA developed a series of definitions known as Land Inventory and Monitoring (LIM) criteria. The LIM criteria classified the land's suitability for agricultural production; suitability included both the physical and chemical characteristics of soils and the actual land use. Important Farmland maps are derived from the USDA soil survey maps using the LIM criteria.

Table 4.2-1
Land Capability Classification

Class	Definition
I	Soils have slight limitations that restrict their use.
II	Soils have moderate limitations that restrict the choice of plants or that require moderate conservation practices.
III	Soils have severe limitations that restrict the choice of plants or that require special conservation practices, or both.
IV	Soils have very severe limitations that restrict the choice of plants or that require very careful management, or both.
V	Soils are not likely to erode but have other limitations; impractical to remove that limit their use largely to pasture or range, woodland, or wildlife habitat.
VI	Soils have severe limitations that make them generally unsuited to cultivation and limit their use largely to pasture or range, woodland, or wildlife habitat.
VII	Soils have very severe limitations that make them unsuited to cultivation and that restrict their use largely to pasture or range, woodland, or wildlife habitat.
VIII	Soils and landforms have limitations that preclude their use for commercial plants and restrict their use to recreation, wildlife habitat, or water supply or to aesthetic purposes.

Note: Capability subclasses are soil groups within one class. They are designated by adding a small letter, e, w, s, or c, to the class numeral, for example, IIe. The letter e shows that the main hazard is the risk of erosion unless close-growing plant cover is maintained; w shows that water in or on the soil interferes with plant growth or cultivation (in some soils the wetness can be partly corrected by artificial drainage); s shows that the soil is limited mainly because it is shallow, droughty, or stony; and c, used in only some parts of the United States, shows that the chief limitation is climate that is very cold or very dry.
Source: USDA NRCS, Soil Survey of Yolo County, 1972.

Table 4.2-2
Storie Index Rating System

Grade	Index Rating	Definition
1 – Excellent	80 through 100	Soils are well suited to intensive use for growing irrigated crops that are climatically suited to the region.
2 – Good	60 through 79	Soils are good agricultural soils, although they may not be so desirable as Grade 1 because of moderately coarse, coarse, or gravelly surface soil texture; somewhat less permeable subsoil; lower plant available water holding capacity, fair fertility; less well drained conditions, or slight to moderate flood hazards, all acting separately or in combination.
3 – Fair	40 through 59	Soils are only fairly well suited to general agriculture use and are limited in their use because of moderate slopes; moderate soils depths; less permeable subsoil; fine, moderately fine or gravelly surface soil textures; poor drainage; moderate flood hazards; or fair to poor fertility levels, all acting alone or in combination.
4 – Poor	20 through 39	Soils are poorly suited. They are severely limited in their agricultural potential because of shallow soil depths; less permeable subsoil; steeper slope; or more clayey or gravelly surface soil texture than Grade 3 soils, as well as poor drainage; greater flood hazards; hummocky micro-relief; salinity; or poor fertility levels, all acting alone or in combination.
5 – Very Poor	10 through 19	Soils are very poorly suited for agriculture, are seldom cultivated and are more commonly used for range, pasture, or woodland.
6 – Non-Agriculture	Less and 10	Soils are not suited for agriculture at all due to very severe to extreme physical limitations, or because of urbanization.

Source: USDA NRCS, Soil Survey of Yolo County, 1972.

Since 1980, the State of California has assisted the USDA with completing the mapping in the State. The FMMP was created within the California DOC to carry on the mapping activity on a continuing basis, and with a greater level of detail. The California DOC applied a greater level of detail by modifying the LIM criteria for use in California. The LIM criteria in California utilize the Land Capability Classification and Storie Index Rating systems, but also consider physical conditions such as dependable water supply for agricultural production, soil temperature range, depth of the groundwater table, flooding potential, rock fragment content, and rooting depth.

The California DOC classifies lands into seven agriculture-related categories: Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance (Statewide Farmland), Unique Farmland, Farmland of Local Importance (Local Farmland), Grazing Land, Urban and Built-up Land (Urban Land), and Other Land. The first four types listed above are collectively designated by the State as Important Farmlands. Important Farmland maps for California are compiled using the modified LIM criteria and current land use information. The minimum mapping unit is 10 acres unless otherwise specified. Units of land smaller than 10 acres are incorporated into surrounding classifications.

Each of the seven land types are summarized below, based on California DOC's *A Guide to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program*.[6]

Prime Farmland: Prime Farmland is land with the best combination of physical and chemical features able to sustain the long-term production of agricultural crops. The land has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields. The land must have been used for the production of irrigated crops at some time during the two update cycles (a cycle is equivalent to two years) prior to the mapping date.

Statewide Farmland: Farmland of Statewide Importance is land similar to Prime Farmland, but with minor shortcomings, such as greater slopes or with less ability to hold and store moisture. The land must have been used for the production of irrigated crops at some time during the two update cycles prior to the mapping date.

Unique Farmland: Unique Farmland is land of lesser quality soils used for the production of the State's leading agricultural crops. The land is usually irrigated, but may include non-irrigated orchards or vineyards, as found in some climatic zones in California. The land must have been cultivated at some time during the two update cycles prior to the mapping date.

Local Farmland: Farmland of Local Importance is land of importance to the local agricultural economy, as determined by each county's Board of Supervisors and a local advisory committee. Yolo County local farmland includes lands which do not qualify as Prime, Statewide, or Unique designation, but are currently irrigated crops or pasture or non-irrigated crops; lands that would meet the Prime or Statewide designation and have been improved for irrigation, but

[6] California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection. *A Guide to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program*. 2004.

are now idle; and lands that currently support confined livestock, poultry operations and aquaculture.

Grazing Land: Grazing Land is land on which the existing vegetation, whether grown naturally or through management, is suited to the grazing of livestock. The minimum mapping unit for this category is 40 acres.

Urban Land: Urban and Built-up Land is occupied with structures with a building density of at least one unit to one-half acre. Uses may include but are not limited to, residential, industrial, commercial, construction, institutional, public administration purposes, 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 mapped as part of this unit, if they are part of a surrounding urban area.

Other Land: Other Land is land that is not included in any other mapping categories. The following uses are generally included: rural development, brush timber, government land, strip mines, borrow pits, and a variety of other rural land uses.

Williamson Act Contracts

Under the provisions of the Williamson Act (California Land Conservation Act 1965, Section 51200), landowners contract with the County to maintain agricultural or open space use of their lands in return for reduced property tax assessment. The contract is self-renewing and the landowner may notify the County at any time of intent to withdraw the land from its preserve status.

Under a Williamson Act contract, the landowner and the County agree that the land will be maintained in agricultural production for a period of not less than 10 years. The 10-year period renews every year unless a Notice of Non-Renewal is filed by either the landowner or the County. Nine years after a Notice of Non-Renewal is filed, the contract expires.

Withdrawal involves a ten-year period of tax adjustment to full market value before protected open space can be converted to urban uses. Consequently, land under a Williamson Act Contract can be in either renewal status or non-renewal status. Lands with a non-renewal status indicate the farmer has withdrawn from the Williamson Act Contract and is waiting for a period of tax adjustment for the land to reach its full market value.

4.2.2 EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The following setting information provides an overview of the existing conditions of the project site and surrounding area in relation to agricultural resources.

Description of Regional Environment

The project region is characterized primarily by continuous agricultural lands within a broad, alluvial valley surrounded by distant rolling hills. Cache Creek generally meanders west to east and runs into the Sacramento Valley, ending in a settling basin east of Woodland, eventually flowing into the Sacramento River. Regional topography is generally flat. Vegetation, other than

agricultural crops, is primarily limited to grasslands, ornamental landscaping, and scattered native vegetation.

The region is rural and sparsely populated, with urban development being primarily concentrated within small towns such as Capay, Esparto, and Madison. Rural residences, farm dwellings with various accessory and agricultural structures, and commercial uses sparsely dot the landscape. Roads provide interconnections between agricultural properties having various crops, such as row crops, orchards, and vineyards. Telephone and electricity poles frequently parallel the roadways throughout the region. Aggregate mining operations, inclusive of above-ground structures and equipment, are prevalent throughout the region, in particular, along the banks of Cache Creek, within the CCAP boundaries.

According to the County's General Plan, 92 percent of the land surface of Yolo County is off-limits to residential, commercial, and industrial development uses that are not consistent with the agricultural designation. Rather, these lands are currently set aside for farming, grazing, and open space. Over 85 percent of County land is used for agriculture and 67 percent of the unincorporated area of the County is protected under Williamson Act contracts to provide further long-term protection of these lands.

Over 63 percent of total County farmland is on Class I, II, and selected Class III soils; 11 percent is on other Class III and Class IV soils; and 26 percent is on Class VI and VII soils. Most of the unincorporated County consists of Class I and II soils, with areas of poorer quality soils in the Dunnigan Hills, along the Colusa Basin Drain, and the Yolo Bypass and in the western foothills.

The majority of the County's farmland is Prime Farmland, particularly in flat areas. Most of the County's cities and unincorporated communities are surrounded by Prime Farmland. The western foothills are predominantly classified as Grazing Land.

Description of Local Environment

The central and southern portions of the project site consist primarily of actively managed agricultural land. Crops planted at the site over the past decade have included wheat, alfalfa, tomatoes, cucumbers, canola, sunflower, and safflower. The northeastern portion of the site previously contained a ranch headquarters (Stevens Ranch); however, the structures that comprised the headquarters were burned down as part of a fire department training exercise in the late 1970s or early 1980s. Currently, structures do not exist at the location and the area is currently overgrown by low-lying brush. The northern portion of the site consists of 52 scattered oak trees and ruderal grassland vegetation.

Moore Canal, a concrete-lined water conveyance structure owned and operated by the Yolo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (YCFCWCD), bisects the central portion of the site from west to east. Magnolia Canal is an unlined water conveyance structure owned and operated by the YCFCWCD that intersects the Moore Canal on the northeastern portion of the project site. An existing groundwater well used for agricultural purposes is located along the western site boundary. In addition, a domestic water supply well is located at the location of the former ranch headquarters. The northern portion of the site also includes an electric conveyor and associated gravel road formerly used to transport mined aggregate from the Teichert Woodland Storz mining site to the Woodland Plant located north of the project site. The natural environment of the immediate vicinity is similarly characterized by agricultural lands, but also

includes Cache Creek, immediately north of the project site. Riparian woodland vegetation is located along portions of the banks of Cache Creek.

The environment of the immediate vicinity is dominated by aggregate mining operations to the north; a golf course (Yolo Fliers Club), rural residential, airport (Watts-Woodland), and farm dwellings to the west/southwest; rural residential and cemetery (Monument Hill Memorial Park cemetery) to the south; and farm dwellings to the east. The aggregate mining operations to the north consist of Teichert's Storz mining site to the northwest and Teichert's Woodland Plant site to the northeast, beyond which is Teichert's Schwarzgruber mining site. The Teichert-Woodland Plant has been in continuous operation for over 50 years.

The following sections provide an overview of the local existing soils and agricultural activity, as well as Williamson Act contracts and important farmland designations associated with the project site.

Local Soils

According to the Custom Soil Resource Report prepared for the project by the NRCS, the project site consists of the following soils:

- Brentwood silty clay loam, zero to two percent slopes (BrA);
- Loamy alluvial land (Lm);
- Riverwash (Rh);
- Sehorn-Balcom complex, two to 15 percent slopes (SmD);
- Sehorn-Balcom complex, 30 to 50 percent slopes, eroded (SmF2); and
- Yolo silt loam, zero to two percent slopes, MLRA 17 (Ya).

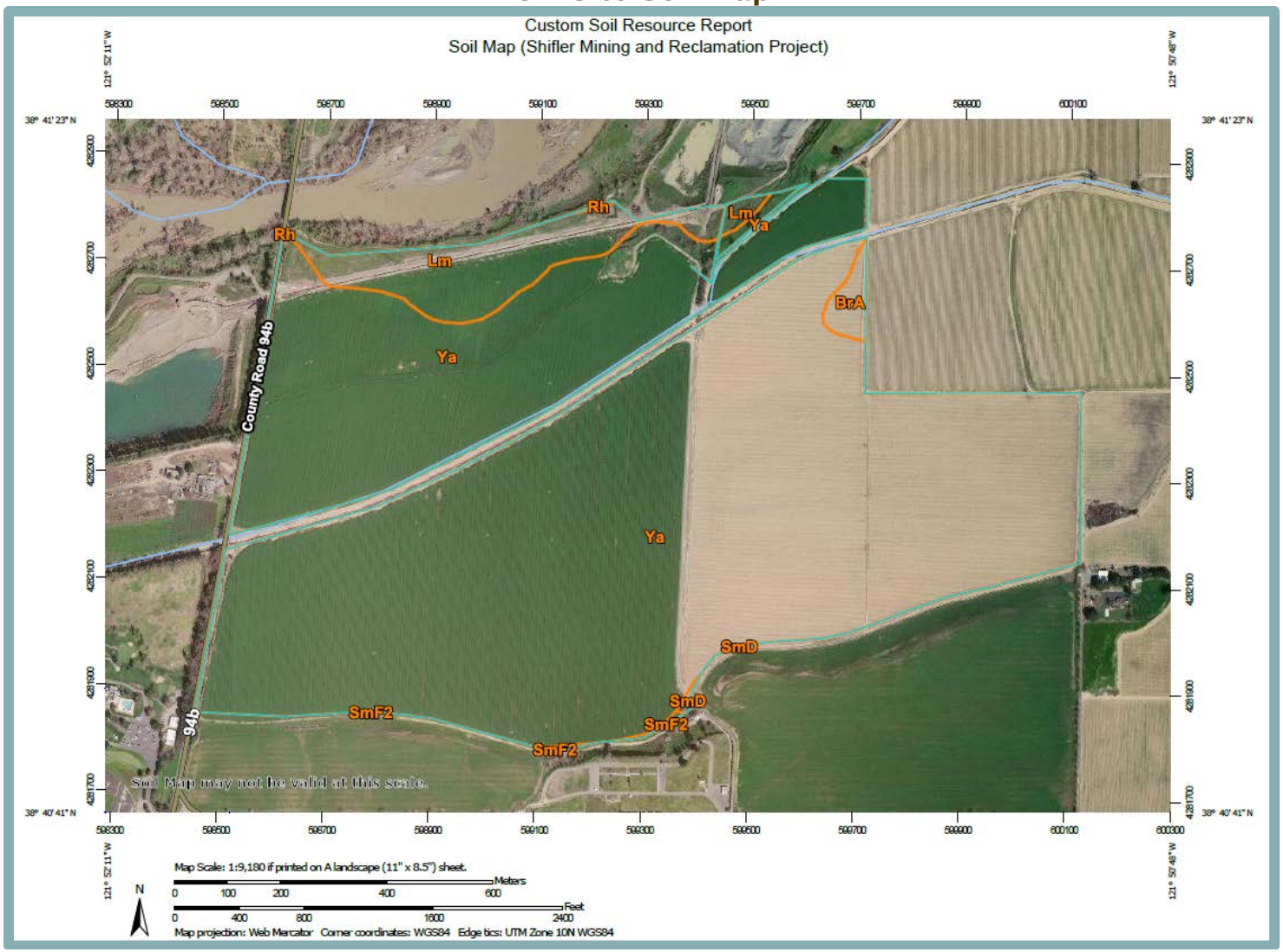
The soils are summarized below in Table 4.2-3 and shown in Figure 4.2-1. The land capability classification, Storie index, and grade for each on-site soil type is shown in Table 4.2-3. As also shown in Table 4.2-3, based on the on-site soil characteristics, the NRCS provides the associated farmland classification for each soil type. According to the NRCS, the soils BrA and Ya meet the criteria for Prime Farmland, if irrigated, and soil SmD meets the criteria for Farmland of Statewide Importance.

Table 4.2-3
On-Site Land Capability Classification and Storie Index Rating

Soil Name and Map Symbol	Land Capability Classification	Storie Index	Grade	NRCS Farmland Classification
Brentwood silty clay loam (BrA)	I	90	1	Prime Farmland if irrigated
Loamy alluvial land (Lm)	IV	95	1	Not Prime Farmland
Riverwash (Rh)	N/A	N/A	N/A	Not Prime Farmland
Sehorn-Balcom complex (SmD)	III	34	4	Farmland of Statewide Importance
Sehorn-Balcom complex (SmF2)	N/A	21	4	Not Prime Farmland
Yolo silt loam (Ya)	I	85	1	Prime Farmland if irrigated

Notes:
N/A = Not Available ***Source: USDA NRCS, 2019.***

Figure 4.2-1
On-Site Soil Map



Source: USDA NRCS, 2019.

Soil Descriptions

The six different soil types found on-site are described in detail below.

- *Brentwood silty clay loam, zero to two percent slopes (BrA)* is located in Alluvial fans. Permeability on the Brentwood silty clay loam is moderately slow. Runoff is very slow, and the erosion hazard is none to slight. The available water holding capacity is 11.0 – 13.0 inches. The effective rooting depth is more than 60 inches. Natural fertility is high. The Brentwood silty clay loam soil is primarily used for irrigated almonds, walnuts, sugar beets, tomatoes, alfalfa, and dryland barley.

- *Loamy alluvial land (Lm)* is formed in mixed, stratified alluvium recently deposited adjacent to streams. The Loamy alluvial land soils are nearly level and excessively drained. Permeability of Loamy alluvial land is rapid and surface runoff is very slow. The erosion hazard is very low and water holding capacity is 2.0 to 4.0 inches. Rooting depth is 24 to 40 inches. Natural fertility is moderately high. Loamy alluvial land is primarily used for dryland pasture, alfalfa, tomatoes, and almonds.

- *Riverwash (Rh)* is found in stream channels and is subject to overflow. Permeability of Riverwash is very rapid and surface runoff is very slow when the land is not flooded. Water carrying capacity is variable. The effective rooting depth is variable. Fertility is very low. The land type is mainly used as a source of sand and gravel.

- *Sehorn-Balcom complex, zero to 15 percent slopes (SmD)* is located on dissected uplands. Permeability of the Sehorn-Balcom complex is slow in the Sehorn soil and moderately slow in the Balcom soils. Surface runoff is slow to medium, and the erosion hazard is slight to moderate for both soils. The available water holding capacity is 6.0 to 10.0 inches for the Sehorn soil and 4.0 to 6.0 inches for the Balcom soil. The effective rooting depth is 36 to 60 inches. Natural fertility is high. These soils are primarily used for dryfarmed barley and pasture.

- *Sehorn-Balcom complex, 30 to 50 percent slopes, eroded (SmF2)* is located on dissected uplands. The Sehorn-Balcom complex is well drained to somewhat excessively drained. Permeability is slow in the Sehorn soil and moderately slow in the Balcom soil. Surface runoff is rapid, and the erosion hazard is high for both soils. The available water holding capacity is 6.0 to 8.0 inches for the Sehorn soil and 4.0 to 6.0 inches for the Balcom soil. The effective rooting depth is 24 to 40 inches. Natural Fertility is moderate to high. These soils are primarily used as rangeland.

- *Yolo silt loam, zero to two percent slopes, MLRA 17 (Ya)* is located on alluvial fans. The yolo silt loam soils are moderately permeable. Surface runoff is very slow, and the erosion hazard is none to slight. The available water holding capacity is 9.0 to 11.0 inches. The effective rooting depth is more than 60 inches. Natural fertility is high. The Yolo silt loam soils is primarily used for almonds, walnuts, con, sugar beets, tomatoes, alfalfa, and melons.

Local Agricultural Activity

The primary crops grown within the vicinity of the project site are row crops. Currently, the project site is farmed for row and field crops, such as tomatoes, safflower, and wheat. In 2017, the four

highest earning crops in the County were almonds, tomatoes, wine grapes, and walnuts, respectively.[7]

Williamson Act Contracts

Two of the parcels in the project site (APNs 025-120-032 and 025-430-002) were previously subject to a Williamson Act contract. A notice of non-renewal was recorded in January 2007 and the contract expired at the end of January 2016. Currently, no portion of the project site is subject to a Williamson Act contract.

Important Farmlands Inventory

Based on Figure 4.2-2, the California DOC has designated 267.50 acres of the 319.30-acre project site as Prime Farmland, 0.50 acres as Farmland of Statewide Importance, 8.25 acres of Unique Farmland, 5.85 acres of Farmland of Local Importance, and 30.20 acres of Other Land. A summary of the FMMP designations on the project site is provided in Table 4.2-4.

Table 4.2-4
FMMP Designation Summary

Designation	Acres
Prime Farmland	267.50
Farmland of Statewide Importance	0.50
Unique Farmland	8.25
Farmland of Local Importance	5.85
Other Land	30.20
Canal footprint (FMMP designations do not apply)	7.00
TOTAL	**319.30**

Notes:
- The approximately seven acres underlying the existing on-site canals cannot be farmed. This seven-acre area includes the dirt buffer along both sides of the canal.
- Other Land is land that is not included in any other mapping categories. The following uses are generally included: rural development, brush timber, government land, strip mines, borrow pits, and a variety of other rural land uses.

4.2.3 REGULATORY CONTEXT

The following is a description of federal, State, and local environmental laws and policies that are relevant to the review of agricultural resources under the CEQA process.

Federal Regulations

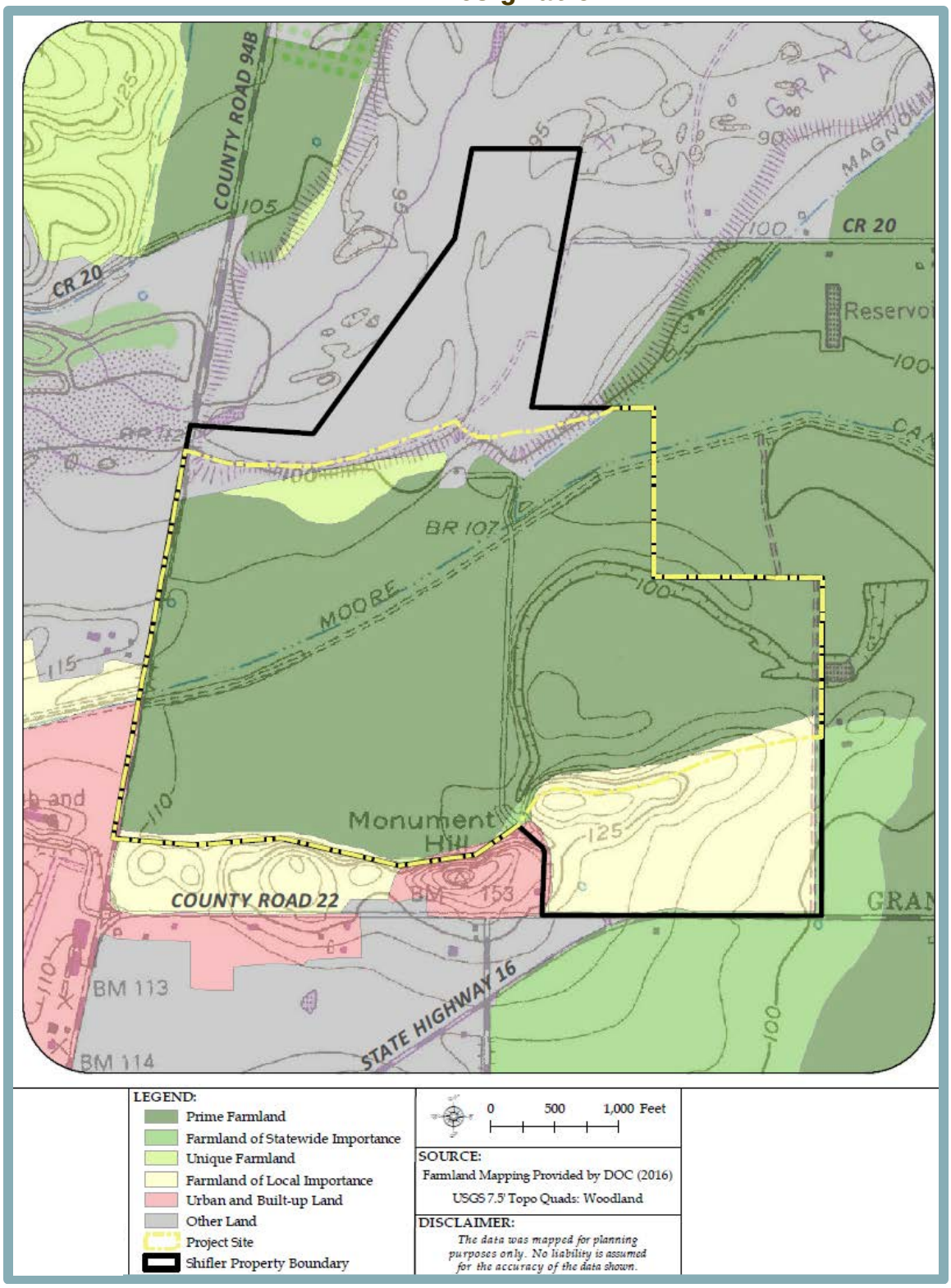
Federal regulations applicable to agricultural resources within the project area do not exist.

State Regulations

The following are the State regulations relevant to agricultural resources.

[7] Yolo County Department of Agriculture and Weights and Measures. *Yolo County 2017 Agricultural Crop Report.* October 2018.

Figure 4.2-2
FMMP Designation



Source: California Department of Conservation, Yolo County Important Farmland 2016, July 2017.

California Land Conservation Act of 1965 (Williamson Act)

Under the provisions of the Williamson Act (California Land Conservation Act 1965, Section 51200), landowners contract with the County to maintain agricultural or open space use of their lands in return for reduced property tax assessment. The contract is self-renewing and the landowner may notify the County at any time of intent to withdraw the land from its preserve status.

Withdrawal involves a ten-year period of tax adjustment to full market value before protected open space can be converted to urban uses. Consequently, land under a Williamson Act Contract can be in either renewal status or non-renewal status. Lands with a non-renewal status indicate the farmer has withdrawn from the Williamson Act Contract and is waiting for a period of tax adjustment for the land to reach its full market value. As noted previously the project site is not under a Williamson Act contract.

Local Regulations

The following are the regulatory agencies and regulations pertinent to the proposed project on a local level.

Yolo County General Plan

The relevant goals and policies from the County's General Plan related to agricultural resources are presented below.

Goal LU-1 Range and Balance of Land Uses. Maintain an appropriate range and balance of land uses to maintain the variety of activities necessary for a diverse, healthy and sustainable society.

Policy LU-1.1 [excerpt] Assign the following range of land use designations throughout the County, as presented in detail in Table LU-4 (Land Use Designations):

Open Space (OS) includes public open space lands, major natural water bodies, agricultural buffer areas, and habitat. The primary land use is characterized by "passive" and/or very low-intensity management, as distinguished from AG or PR land use designations, which involve more intense management of the land. Detention basins are allowed as an ancillary use when designed with naturalized features and native landscaping, compatible with the open space primary use.

Agriculture (AG) includes the full range of cultivated agriculture, such as row crops, orchards, vineyards, dryland farming, livestock grazing, forest products, horticulture, floriculture, apiaries, confined animal facilities and equestrian facilities. It also includes agricultural industrial uses (e.g. agricultural research, processing and storage; supply; service; crop dusting; agricultural chemical and equipment sales; surface mining; etc.) as well as agricultural commercial uses (e.g. road side stands, "Yolo Stores," wineries, farm-based tourism (e.g. u-pick, dude ranches, lodging), horseshows,

rodeos, crop-based seasonal events, ancillary restaurants and/or stores) serving rural areas. Agriculture also includes farmworker housing, surface mining, and incidental habitat.

Residential Rural (RR) includes large lot rural homes with primarily detached single-family units, although attached and/or detached second units or duplexes are allowed. Density range: 1du/5ac to <1 du/ac.

Public and Quasi-Public (PQ) includes public/governmental offices, places of worship, schools, libraries, and other community and/or civic uses. Also includes public airports, including related visitor services, and infrastructure including wastewater treatment facilities, municipal wells, landfills, and stormwater detention basins. May include agricultural buffer areas.

Agricultural District Overlay (ADO) applies to designated agricultural districts. Land uses consistent with the base designation and the district specifications are allowed.

Mineral Resource Overlay (MRO) applies to State designated mineral resource zones (MRZ-2) containing critical geological deposits needed for economic use, as well as existing mining operations.

Goal LU-2 Agricultural Preservation. Preserve farm land and expand opportunities for related business and infrastructure to ensure a strong local agricultural economy.

Policy LU-2.4 Vigorously conserve, preserve, and enhance the productivity of the agricultural lands in areas outside of adopted community growth boundaries and outside of the city SOIs.

Goal AG-1 Preservation of Agriculture. Preserve and defend agriculture as fundamental to the identify of Yolo County.

Policy AG-1.4 Prohibit land use activities that are not compatible within agriculturally designated areas.

Policy AG-1.6 Continue to mitigate at a ratio of no less than 1:1 the conversion of farm land and/or the conversion of land designated or zoned for agriculture, to other uses.

Goal CO-3 Mineral Resources. Protect mineral and natural gas resources to allow for their continued use in the economy.

Policy CO-3.1 Encourage the production and conservation of mineral resources, balanced by the consideration of important social values, including recreation, water, wildlife, agriculture, aesthetics, flood control, and other environmental factors.

Action CO-A47 Ensure that mined areas are reclaimed to a usable condition that is readily adaptable for alternative land uses, such as agriculture, wildlife habitat, recreation, and groundwater management facilities.

Goal ED-1 Economic Diversity. Diversity the local economy to provide substantial and sustainable long-term growth that will benefit businesses, residents, and local government.

Policy ED-1.2 Support the continued operation of existing aggregate mining activities within the county as well as new aggregate mining in appropriate areas, to meet the long-range construction needs of the region.

Policy ED-1.8 Retain and encourage growth in important economic export sectors, including mining, natural gas, tourism and manufacturing.

Off-Channel Mining Plan

The County's Off-Channel Mining Plan (OCMP) contains the following objectives and actions within the Agricultural Resources Element relevant to the project.

Goal 2.2-2 Encourage the production and conservation of mineral resources, balanced by the consideration of important social values, including recreation, watershed, wildlife, agriculture, aesthetics, flood control, and other environmental factors.

Goal 2.2-5 Ensure that mined areas are reclaimed to a usable condition which are readily adaptable for alternative land uses, such as agriculture, wildlife habitat, recreation, and groundwater management facilities.

Objective 5.3-1 Encourage the preservation of prime and important farmland along Cache Creek, while giving consideration to other compatible beneficial uses, such as groundwater storage and recharge facilities, surface mining operations, riparian habitat, and public recreation. Reclamation of agricultural lands to other uses; however, is discouraged wherever agricultural reclamation is feasible.

Objective 5.3-2 Ensure the use of appropriate agricultural management practices in reclaiming mined areas to productive farmland.

Action 5.4-1 Maintain the existing A-N (Agricultural Intensive) or A-X (Agricultural Extensive) base zoning within the off-channel planning area, except where it serves as a holding area for growth within the community spheres of Capay, Madison, Esparto, and Yolo, so as to preserve the agricultural character of the region.

Action 5.4-3 Provide for the protection of farmland within the planning area, including mined and reclaimed farmland, through the use of agricultural preserves and/or conservation easements. *(Each approved mining permit under the CCAP contains a condition of approval that states: "Upon the completion of reclamation within each phase of the project, the operator shall enroll each reclaimed parcel in Williamson Act contracts, and provide long-term easements or an equivalent (e.g., deed restrictions) to protect open space and agriculture.")*

Action 5.4-4 Ensure that all proposed surface mining operations that include reclamation to agricultural uses comply with the requirements of the Land Conservation (Williamson) Act and the State Mining and Geology Board Reclamation Regulations.

Action 5.4-6 Encourage off-channel excavation operations to access additional aggregate reserves through the use of wet pits, in order to minimize the amount of agricultural land disturbed by mining.

Action 5.4-7 Ensure maximum public benefit from reclaimed uses by establishing the following priority to be used to assess the adequacy of the proposed reclamation plans:

1. Reclamation to viable agricultural uses
2. Reclamation to native habitat
3. Reclamation to public recreation/open space uses
4. Reclamation to other uses

Action 6.4-3 Mitigate for short-term and long-term loss of agricultural land and habitat pursuant to applicable County requirements and CEQA. Comply with the Yolo HCP/NCCP for species covered by that Plan. For non-covered species for which impacts may occur, ensure compliance with appropriate measures in site-specific biological assessments required under the OCMP and CCRMP, in compliance with the State Fish and Wildlife Code, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and other applicable regulations, plans and programs, as appropriate.

Off-Channel Surface Mining Ordinance

Section 10-4.103 of the Yolo County Off-Channel Surface Mining Ordinance (OCSMO) provides the following requirements related to balancing of economic wellbeing and societal values:

> Section 10-4.103. Purposes. [excerpt]
> The purposes of this chapter are as follows:
> (a) The extraction of sand and gravel is essential to the continued economic wellbeing of the state and to the needs of society. Although the County encourages the production of

sand and gravel, consideration must also be balanced by other societal values, including but not limited to recreation, water resources, wildlife, agriculture, and aesthetics;

Section 10-4.220. Prime Agricultural Land.

"Prime agricultural land" shall mean all land which meets the definition of prime agricultural land set forth in Section 51201 of the Government Code of the State as administered by the County in the administration of its agricultural preserve program.

Section 10-4.220 of the OCSMO provides the following requirements related to wildlife habitat:

Section 10-4.440. Wildlife Habitat.

Avoid disturbance to important wildlife habitat features such as bird nesting trees, colonial breeding locations, elderberry host plants for Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle, and mature riparian forest and oak woodland habitat. This shall include sensitive siting of haul roads, trails, and recreational facilities away from these features. Suitable habitat for special-status species shall be protected and enhanced, or replaced as a part of mitigation plans prepared by a qualified biologist where necessary, and through compliance with the Yolo HCP/NCCP for special-status species covered by that Plan. Mining and reclamation activities shall be performed in accordance with the State Fish and Wildlife Code, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and other applicable regulations to protect bird nests when in active use.

Native-planted hedgerows and/or other vegetated buffers shall be included between restored habitat areas and adjoining farmland, in order to minimize the potential for riparian areas to serve as harbors for predators and insect pests. These buffers will also reduce the noise, dust, and spraying generated by agricultural operations, in addition to providing valuable pollinator resources that in turn could enhance agricultural production.

Section 10-4.701 of the OCSMO provides the following requirements related to annual reporting:

Section 10-4.701. Annual Reports: Contents.

Every surface mining operator shall submit an annual report of surface mining operations no later than November 1 of each year, describing the activities of the previous twelve (12) months. Annual reports shall no longer be required, once final reclamation has been completed and financial assurances have been released. Operators shall submit one hard copy and one electronic copy to the County. Such reports shall contain the following information:

(a) A site plan submitted in the form prescribed by the Director, including all property proposed to be included in the reclamation plan, drawn to a scale of one-inch equals one-hundred feet (1" = 100'), or other scale acceptable to the Director for larger holdings, and showing the following information:
    (1) Property boundaries and the boundaries of permitted mining areas, including the depiction of separate mining phases;
    (2) The existing contours;
    (3) Contours which show the areas and depth of mining which have occurred since the previous annual report;
    (4) Identification of any significant changes in the topography, such as bank failures, levee breaches, extensive erosion, etc. which have occurred since the previous annual report;
    (5) Identification of erosion control structures, levees, berms, stockpiles, haul roads, settling ponds, habitat avoidance areas, and processing facilities;
    (6) The extent of areas reclaimed since the previous annual report;
    (7) The extent of any borrow areas, where topsoil and overburden are excavated for use in the reclamation of mined lands; and

(8) Updated graphic depictions of the control cross-sections approved in the surface mining permit application.

The site plan shall include a certificate from a licensed land surveyor or registered civil engineer certifying that the site plan and cross-sections were prepared by or under the direct supervision of the surveyor or engineer;

(b) A statement of the total amount of minerals produced since the date of the initial permit approval and since the date of the preceding annual report. Such information shall be consistent with the data submitted to the Department, as required in Section 2207 et seq. of Chapter 2 of Division 2 of the Public Resources Code of California. Production information shall be considered confidential under Section 10-4.901 of this chapter. Such reports shall be submitted as a declaration under penalty of perjury;

(c) A statement of the total amount of concrete and asphalt materials recycled since the date of the preceding annual report, and a statement of the total amount of aggregate removed from Cache Creek as a result of channel maintenance and reshaping activities in accordance with the CCRMP;

(d) A report prepared by a qualified hydrologist describing the data obtained from the on-site groundwater monitoring program, prepared in accordance with Section 10-4.417. The report shall recommend appropriate remedial measures if contamination in exceedance of established thresholds is indicated;

(e) A report describing the previous year's crop yields on any land in the process of being reclaimed to agriculture in accordance with the approved reclamation plan. The report shall include a soil analysis and appropriate remedial measures prepared by a qualified agronomist if crop yields do not meet the production standards set forth in the approved reclamation plan;

(f) A report prepared by a qualified biologist describing the density, coverage, and species-richness of any on-site areas that are being revegetated with plants other than agricultural crops in accordance with the approved reclamation plan. The report shall compare the observed data with the performance standards set forth in the approved reclamation plan and shall recommend remedial measures if the previous year's revegetation efforts have not been successful;

(g) A report prepared by a Registered Geologist, a Licensed Geotechnical Engineer, or a Registered Civil Engineer describing the remedial measures necessary to remediate any slope failures, levee breaches, or other topographical problems referred to in the site plan above;

(h) A report describing the extent of mining carried out over the previous year and the conformance of the operation with the approved reclamation timetable and/or phasing plan. Said report shall also describe the proposed extent of operations to be carried out over the following year;

(i) A report describing the compliance of the surface mining operation with the approved conditions of approval;

(j) A table, matrix, or report identifying all adopted CEQA mitigation measures by number and text, and describing compliance with these measures, pursuant to the Mitigation Monitoring Program adopted for the project; and

(k) A statement describing the status of any permits or approval issued by other agencies of jurisdiction; and

(l) A report describing the compliance with the applicable terms of the approved Development Agreement.

Other County Codes

In 2015, the County prepared an ordinance (Section 8-2.404 of the Yolo County Code) revising the existing Agricultural Conservation and Mitigation Program. Revisions to the program: (a) allow development projects below 20 acres in size to pay an “in-lieu” fee (the previous threshold was

five acres); (b) establish a 3:1 ratio for conversion of prime farmland to non-agricultural uses and 2:1 mitigation ratio for projects that convert other farmland to non-agricultural uses; (c) require all agricultural mitigation to occur within two miles of a city or certain unincorporated towns; (d) allow adjustments to the mitigation ratio based on conservation easement location (potential ratio decrease) and, potentially, project residential density (potential ratio increase); and (e) eliminate the current requirement that conservation easements acquired as mitigation be located within two to four miles of the project site. Mining activities under the CCAP were exempted from these expanded mitigation requirements.

Surface Mining Reclamation Ordinance

Section 10-5.103 of the Surface Mining Reclamation Ordinance (SMRO) provides the following requirements related to reclamation of mining sites:

Section 10-5.103. Purposes.

The purposes of this chapter are as follows:

(a) The reclamation of mined lands is necessary to prevent or minimize the adverse effects of mining on the environment and to protect the public health and safety;

(b) The reclamation of mined lands shall provide for the protection and subsequent beneficial use of mined lands. However, mining takes place in diverse areas, with significantly different geologic, topographic, climatic, biological, and social conditions, so that the methods and operations of reclamation plans may vary accordingly to provide for the most beneficial reclamation of mined lands;

(c) In order to provide for reclamation plans that are specifically adapted to the requirements of particular mined lands; and to ensure that mined land is reclaimed to end uses such as agriculture, habitat, groundwater recharge, flood control, and channel stabilization in a consistent manner to maximize their overall management; this chapter imposes performance standards by which reclamation methods and operations shall be measured;

(d) The continued protection of agriculture and open-space uses is essential. As such, all off-channel, prime agricultural land and/or off-channel lands zoned Agricultural Preserve (A-P) and within a Williamson Act contract at the time that mining commences shall be reclaimed to an agriculturally productive state equal to or greater than that which existed before mining commenced. Prime agricultural land that is within the A-P Zone and is not within a Williamson Act contract shall be reclaimed to those uses which are declared by the County to be compatible with agricultural activities. Such uses include, but are not limited to, the following:

  (1) Agriculture and range land;
  (2) Groundwater storage and recharge areas;
  (3) Native fish, wildlife, invertebrate, and plant habitat;
  (4) Watercourses and flood control basins; and,
  (5) Recreational or open space lands.

(e) Non-prime agricultural land shall be similarly reclaimed to one of the alternate uses described above; and

(f) Reclamation plans shall be designed to integrate with the long-term goals of encouraging agriculture and recreation while protecting, habitat, recreation, and protecting the riparian corridor. Provisions shall be made to continue monitoring and maintenance activities after reclamation is completed, where appropriate, in order to ensure that reclaimed uses remain compatible with and enhance local resource management.

Section 10-5.221 of the SMRO provides the following requirements related to Prime Farmland:

> **Section 10-5.221. Prime Agricultural Land.**
> "Prime agricultural land" shall mean all land which meets the definition of prime agricultural land set forth in Section 51201 of the Government Code of the State as administered by the County in the administration of its agricultural preserve program.

Section 10-5.509 of the SMRO provides the following requirements related to fence row habitat:

> **Section 10-5.509. Fence Row Habitat.**
> Where fence row or field margin habitat previously existed, reestablish similar habitat as part of reclamation to agricultural use to replace and improve the wildlife habitat value of agricultural lands, allowing for the reestablishment of scattered native trees, shrubs, and ground covers along the margins of reclaimed fields. Reestablished habitat can be located in areas other than where it occurred originally. Restoration plans shall specify ultimate fence row or field margin locations, identify planting densities for trees and shrubs, and include provisions for monitoring and maintenance to ensure establishment. Restoration plans should be reviewed and approved by the TAC.

Section 10-5.512 of the SMRO provides the following requirements related to field releveling of reclaimed agricultural land:

> **Section 10-5.512. Field Releveling.**
> The operator shall retain a Licensed Land Surveyor or Registered Civil Engineer to resurvey any areas reclaimed to agricultural usage after the first two (2) crop seasons have been completed. Any areas where settling has occurred shall be releveled to the field grade specified in the approved reclamation plan.

Section 10-5.516 of the SMRO provides the following requirements related to ground surface elevation for reclaimed agricultural fields:

> **Section 10-5.516. Lowered Elevations for Reclaimed Agricultural Fields.**
> The final distance between lowered surfaces reclaimed to agriculture and the average high groundwater shall not be less than five (5) feet. The average high groundwater level shall be established for each proposed mining area. The degree of groundwater level fluctuation varies with location throughout the basin and within relatively small areas (proposed mining sites). The determination of the average high groundwater level shall be conducted by a Registered Civil Engineer or Certified Hydrogeologist and shall be based on wet season water level elevation data collected at the proposed site or adjacent areas with similar hydrogeological conditions. Water level records prior to 1977 shall not be used since they would reflect conditions prior to the installation of the Indian Valley Dam. The dam caused a significant change in hydrology of the basin and data collected before its installation shall not be used in estimating current average high groundwater levels. The wells shall be adequately distributed throughout the proposed mining site to reflect spatial variation in groundwater levels and fluctuations.

Section 10-5.520.2 of the SMRO provides the following requirements related to agricultural easements:

> ## Section 10-5.520.2 Permanent Easements.
> Upon completion of reclamation within each phase of the project, for land that will not be dedicated or deeded to the County, the operator shall enroll each parcel reclaimed to agriculture in Williamson Act contract, or other equivalent long-term easement or deed restriction satisfactory to the County, for the purpose of protecting the agricultural use of the reclaimed land in perpetuity.

Section 10-5.522 of the SMRO provides the following requirements related to phasing plans:

> ## Section 10-5.522. Phasing Plans.
> All proposed mining and reclamation plans shall present a phasing plan for mining and reclamation activities. The phasing plan shall be structured to minimize the area of disturbed agricultural lands during each mining phase, and encourage the early completion of the reclamation of agricultural land.

Section 10-5.523 of the SMRO provides the following requirements related to planting plans:

> ## Section 10-5.523. Planting Plans.
> Site-specific planting plans shall be developed by a qualified biologist for proposed habitat reclamation projects. Restoration components of reclamation plans shall include provisions to enhance habitat for special-status species, where feasible.
>
> Native-planted hedgerows and other vegetated buffers shall be included between restored habitat areas and adjoining farmland, in order to minimize the potential for riparian areas to serve as harbors for predators and insect pests. These buffers will also reduce the noise, dust, and spraying generated by agricultural operations, in addition to providing valuable pollinator resources that in turn could enhance agricultural production.

Section 10-5.525 of the SMRO provides the following requirements related to Farmland conversion:

> ## Section 10-5.525. Farmland Conversion.
> All mining permit applications shall identify the location and acreage of prime farmlands, unique farmland, and farmland of statewide significance, as shown on the State Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) which, as a result of reclamation, would be permanently converted to non-agricultural uses. For each acre of farmland in these categories that would be converted to non-agricultural use, the reclamation plan shall present provisions to offset the conversion of these lands, at a ratio consistent with Section 8-2.404 (Agricultural Conservation and Mitigation Program) of the County Code. This mitigation requirement may be satisfied using a variety of flexible options identified below so long as the total acreage of benefit is found to be equivalent to the applicable ratio and acreage required under Section 8-2.404 of the County Code, by type and amount of farmland being impacted, and so long as a minimum ratio of 1:1 of permanently protected agriculture land of equivalent or better quality/capability is achieved.
>
> (a) Implementation of improvements, identified by a qualified soil scientist, to the agricultural capability of non-prime lands within the project site or outside the project site but within the OCMP area, that convert non-prime to prime agricultural conditions. These improvements can include permanent improvement of soil capability through soil amendments, reduction of soil limitations (such as excessive

levels of toxins), or improvements in drainage for areas limited by flooding or low permeability soils.

(b) Placement of permanent conservation easements on land of equal or better quality/capability. The operator shall be encouraged to target property "at risk" of conversion to non-agricultural uses in selecting areas for permanent protection. Prior to approval of the conservation easement, the operator shall consult with the County and/or an appropriate non-profit agency to determine the relative risk of conversion, to which the proposed property might otherwise be subject. A minimum ratio of 1:1 is required in this category

(c) Dedication of land, funding, or equivalent improvements, consistent with the County's net gains goals, above and beyond the net gains benefits otherwise required under the CCAP program.

(d) Dedication of land, funding, or equivalent improvements, consistent with the Parkway Plan, above and beyond net gains benefits otherwise required under the CCAP program.

Section 10-5.531 of the SMRO provides the following requirements related to soil ripping of reclaimed agricultural areas:

> **Section 10-5.531. Soil Ripping.**
> Where areas are to be reclaimed to agricultural usage, all A and B horizon soil shall be ripped to a depth of three (3) feet after every two (2) foot layer of soil is laid down, in order to minimize compaction.

Section 10-5.532 of the SMRO provides the following requirements related to use of overburden and fine sediments for reclamation:

> **Section 10-5.532. Use of Overburden and Fine Sediments in Reclamation.**
> Sediment fines associated with processed in-channel aggregate deposits (excavated as a result of maintenance activities performed in compliance with the CCIP) may be used in the backfill or reclamation of off-channel permanent lakes, for in-channel reshaping or habitat restoration, and/or as a soil amendment in agricultural fields provided the operator can demonstrate that no detrimental sediment toxicity exists (consistent with the state's Stream Pollution Trends Monitoring Program protocols) and fine-grained soil (<63 micron) do not exceed 0.4 mg/kg total mercury.
>
> The operator shall use overburden and processing fines whenever possible to support reclamation activities for pit lakes. If topsoil (A-horizon soil), formerly in agricultural production, is proposed for use within a pit lake or its drainage area, the operator must sample the soils prior to placement and analyze them for pesticides and herbicides (EPA Methods 8141B and 8151A, or equivalent) as well as for total mercury (EPA Method 7471B, or equivalent). The operator shall collect and analyze samples in accordance with EPA Test Methods for Evaluating Solid Waste Physical/Chemical Methods, SW-846 (as updated). Topsoil that contains pesticides or herbicides above the Maximum Contaminant Levels for primary drinking water (California Code of Regulations), or that contains fine-grained soils exceeding on average 0.4 mg/kg total mercury shall not be placed in areas that drain to the pit lakes.
>
> Land reclaimed to a subsequent use that includes planting of vegetation (e.g., agriculture, habitat) shall be provided an adequate soil profile (i.e., depth and texture of soil) to ensure successful reclamation. At the discretion of the Director and at the operator's sole expense, the proposed reclamation plan for the project may be peer reviewed by an appropriate

expert/professional, and recommendations, if any, shall be incorporated into the project as conditions of approval.

4.2.4 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

The discussion below describes the standards of significance and methodology used to analyze and determine the proposed project's potential impacts related to agricultural resources. A discussion of the project's impacts, as well as mitigation measures where necessary, are also presented.

Standards of Significance

The significance criteria used for this analysis were developed from Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, and applicable policies and regulations of Yolo County. An agricultural resources impact is considered significant if the proposed project would:

- Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance ("Farmland"), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use;
- Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract;
- Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220[g]), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104[g]);
- Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use;
- Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use; or
- Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any applicable plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating impacts to agricultural resources.

Impacts Found Less-than-Significant in Initial Study

The Initial Study prepared for the proposed project (see Appendix A) determined that implementation of the proposed project would result in no impact or a less-than-significant impact related to conflicts with existing agricultural zoning, Williamson Act Contracts, and forestry resources. Therefore, the following impacts are not discussed further in this EIR:

- Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract.
- Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220[g]), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104[g]); or
- Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

Method of Analysis

Evaluation of potential impacts of the proposed project on agricultural resources was based on the proposed project's potential changes to the existing local agricultural resources environment in comparison to the standards of significance listed above.

Soil data from the USDA NRCS was used to characterize the amount of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Local Importance within the project site boundaries. The proposed area of disturbance associated with the proposed project was overlaid with the known on-site agricultural resources to determine the overall impact to agricultural land that would occur during the proposed mining activities. Of the agricultural land impacted during mining activities, a portion would be reclaimed back to agricultural uses following reclamation of the project site. To calculate the permanent net loss of agricultural land occurring as a result of the proposed project, the reclaimed agricultural land was subtracted from the total agricultural land impacted by the proposed mining activities.

Project-Specific Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The following discussion of impacts related to agricultural resources is based on implementation of the proposed project in comparison to existing conditions and the standards of significance presented above.

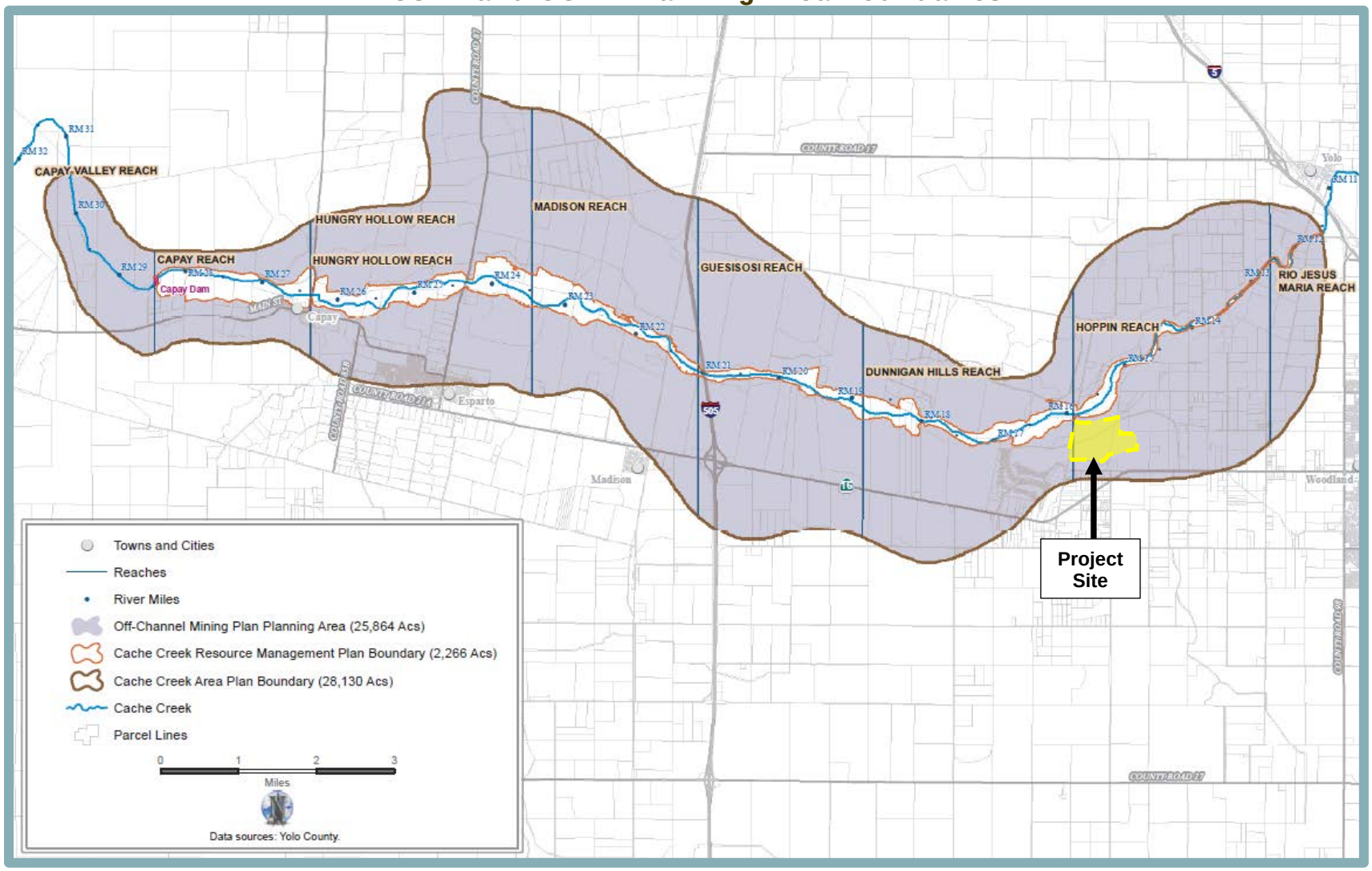
4.2-1 Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use. The impact would be *significant*.

While much of the site is currently used for agriculture, the site falls within the boundaries of the CCAP and within the Planning Area for the OCMP (see Figure 4.2-3). Approximately 107 acres of the site is designated by the California State Mining and Geology Board as MRZ-2, reflecting the existence of known significant mineral deposits or a high likelihood for the presence of mineral deposits. The remaining approximately 212 acres of the project site is designated MRZ-3, indicating an area of known reserves of unknown significance (see Figure 4.2-4). The applicant as submitted an application to the DOC in July 2020 to change the MRZ-3 State designation of the site to MRZ-2 to reflect the existence of known significant aggregate reserves over the entire project site. The property is identified for Future Proposed Mining on Figure 5 of the CCAP. As such, proposed mining at the property is consistent with the CCAP and mining operations are an anticipated use.

Approximately 107 acres of the 319-acre project site is located within the County's Mineral Resource Overlay (MRO) designation. The County's MRO applies to existing mining operations and State designated MRZ-2 areas. The project proposes redesignation of the remainder of project site to add the MRO in order to reflect the existence of known aggregate deposits, as well as a rezone of the entire project site to add the Sand and Gravel Overlay (SG-O) to allow for mining to occur. Approval of mining at the site, while anticipated, would nevertheless result in the conversion of Farmland.

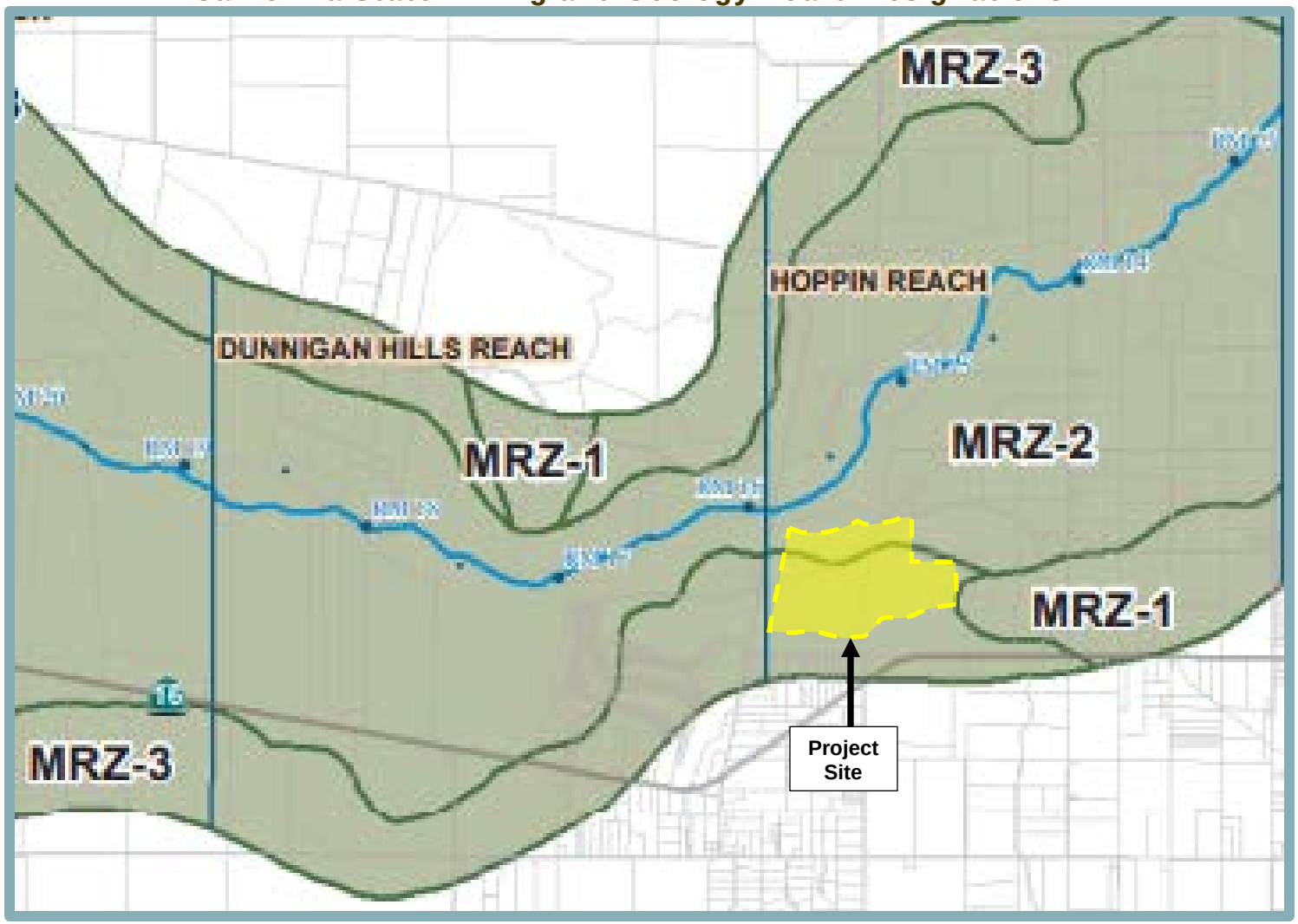
Per Section 10-5.522 of the SMRO, all proposed mining and reclamation plans must include a phasing plan. The purpose of the phasing plan is to minimize the area of disturbed agricultural lands during each mining phase and to encourage early reclamation as mining progresses through the phases.

Figure 4.2-3
CCAP and OCMP Planning Area Boundaries



Source: OCMP, 2019.

Figure 4.2-4
California State Mining and Geology Board Designations



Source: OCMP, 2019.

Under the proposed phasing, the first phase of mining (Phase A) would occur on the western side of the site and would include 64.7 acres. The second phase of mining (Phase B) would occur within the remaining 212.4 acres. Reclamation would occur in three phases: Phase A (98.1 acres), Phase B (142.2 acres), Phase C (36.8 acres). An example of the proposed mining and reclamation phasing is presented below in Table 4.2-5 (also included as Table 3-4 of Project Description). The phasing approach would allow reclamation of the western portion of the site to occur to agriculture, while mining of the eastern portion of the site continues. Reclamation would occur in three phases, as shown in Figure 4.2-5. The phasing of mining operations and reclamation, including restoration of 116.7 acres to Prime Farmland, would minimize impacts to existing agricultural land by allowing agriculture to continue to occur on-site as long as feasible.

Table 4.2-5
Mining and Reclamation Phasing Example

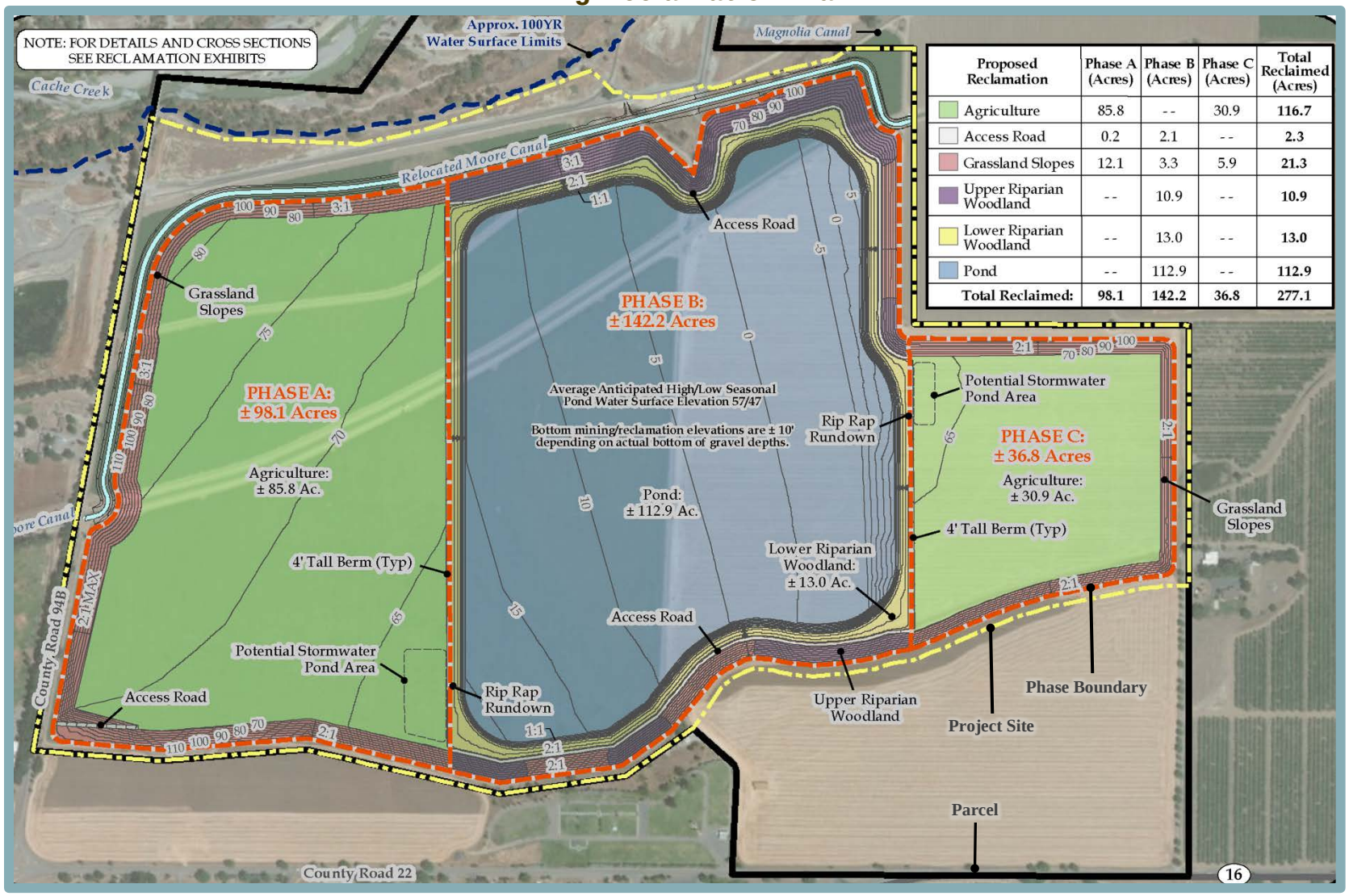
Years	Mining Activity	Reclamation Activity	Farming Activity
1 to 10	Mining in Phase A	Begin Reclamation in Phase A	Farming in Phase B until disturbance and in Phase C
11 to 20	Mining in Phase B	Continue Reclamation in Phase A, Start Reclamation in Phase B	Continue Farming in Phase B until disturbance
21 to 30	Mining in Phase B	Complete Reclamation in Phase A, Continue Reclamation in Phase B, Begin Reclamation in Phase C	Begin Farming in reclaimed Phase A
2 years Post Mining	None	Complete Reclamation in Phase B and Phase C	Continue Farming in reclaimed Phase A and Begin Farming in reclaimed Phase C

As shown in Figure 4.2-2 and summarized in Table 4.2-4, over the course of mining, the proposed project would result in impacts to the following Farmland categories:

- 267.50 acres of Prime Farmland;
- 0.50 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance;
- 8.25 acres of Unique Farmland; and
- 5.85 acres of Farmland of Local Importance.

In order to mitigate for the permanent loss of the Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance, the proposed project must adhere to Section 10-5.525 of the SMRO, which establishes requirements to compensate for the permanent loss of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance that are equivalent to the countywide requirements identified in Section 8-2.404 of the County Code, but modified to reflect the unique requirements and outcomes of the CCAP.

Figure 4.2-5
Mining Reclamation Plan



Proposed Reclamation	Phase A (Acres)	Phase B (Acres)	Phase C (Acres)	Total Reclaimed (Acres)
Agriculture	85.8	--	30.9	**116.7**
Access Road	0.2	2.1	--	**2.3**
Grassland Slopes	12.1	3.3	5.9	**21.3**
Upper Riparian Woodland	--	10.9	--	**10.9**
Lower Riparian Woodland	--	13.0	--	**13.0**
Pond	--	112.9	--	**112.9**
Total Reclaimed:	**98.1**	**142.2**	**36.8**	**277.1**

The SMRO requirement generally applies the same 3:1 and 2:1 mitigation ratio requirements from Section 8-2.404 that apply elsewhere throughout the County, but allows new mining applications to demonstrate equivalency (down to a minimum 1:1 base mitigation ratio) based on several options that are identified in Section 10-5.525 (Farmland Conversion). These options include improvements to farmland quality, permanent easements, dedication of additional net gain lands beyond those already required under the CCAP program, and/or other benefits consistent with the Cache Creek Parkway that would not otherwise already be achieved through agreements and obligations that are already a component of the program. The intent behind the concept of equivalency is not to focus solely on an equal number of acres, but to focus instead on comparability in terms of public value/benefit. Meaning a smaller but more beneficial "net gain" that goes beyond the additional public benefits the CCAP already requires could be accepted by the County as equivalent to the additional agricultural mitigation otherwise required under Section 8-2.404. Essentially, this change recognizes the benefits of the CCAP that are unique to the program and allows the operator and the County to factor those benefits into the agricultural mitigation calculation.

The applicant proposes to offset the permanent loss of Prime Farmland by purchasing agricultural conservation easements on existing Prime Farmland in Yolo County. This would satisfy the minimum required mitigation for the Prime Farmland category, provided it meets the requirements specified in Section 10-5.525 and includes the required improvements. Permanent impacts to other identified farmland categories, including the 5.85 acres of impacts to Farmland of Local Importance, would not trigger separate mitigation requirements from those set forth within Mitigation Measure 4.2-1 below.

An NOP comment was received related to reclamation of the project site to farmland and the health of the topsoil post-reclamation. According to SMARA Performance Standards for Prime Agricultural Land Reclamation (§3707), reclamation shall be deemed complete when productive capability of the affected land is equivalent to or exceeds, for two consecutive crop years, that of the pre-mining condition or similar crop production in the area. In addition, pursuant to Section 10-5.532 of the SMRO, land reclaimed to a subsequent use that includes planting of vegetation (e.g., agriculture, habitat) shall be provided an adequate soil profile (i.e., depth and texture of soil) to ensure successful reclamation. Section 10-5.532 of the SMRO also notes that overburden and processing fines may be used to support reclamation activities provided that the operator can demonstrate that detrimental sediment toxicity does not exist. Compliance with the applicable regulations would ensure that the post-reclamation soils would be of good health, supporting earthworm populations and microbial health, such that the soils can support equivalent agriculture production.

In summary, impacts related to the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural uses would be ***significant.***

Mitigation Measure(s)

Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce the above impact but not to a less-than-significant level. Due to the net loss of Farmland, the impact would remain *significant and unavoidable*:

4.2-1 *The applicant shall complete the following, subject to approval by the County. Item a) shall be completed in accordance with the approved reclamation plan and conditions of approval. Items b) and c) shall be completed prior to the commencement of mining activity on any Prime Farmlands, Unique Farmlands, or Farmland of Statewide Importance:*

a) Reclaim 116.7 acres of Prime Farmland onsite, equivalent in quality and capacity to existing Prime Farmland permanently converted as a result of the project.

b) Establish a permanent agricultural conservation easement on 452.4 acres (267.50 disturbed acres – 116.7 reclaimed acres, at a 3:1 ratio) of equivalent or better (in quality and capability) Prime Farmland compliant with the requirements in County Code Sections 8-2.404(d) and Section 8-2.404(e), (f) and (g). The total acreage placed in permanent easement may be reduced to a minimum of 150.8 acres (267.50 disturbed acres – 116.7 reclaimed acres at a 1:1 ratio) in accordance with Sections 8-2404(d) or 10-5.525(a), (b), (c), or (d), provided the total acreage is determined to be equivalent to the applicable ratio and acreage required under Section 8-2.404. The proposal and the substantiation in support of finding equivalency shall be provided in writing by the applicant, for review by staff and acceptance by the Board of Supervisors. The County may in its discretion approve phasing of the required easement so long as mitigation is satisfied prior to or coincident with impacts to Prime Farmland.

c) Establish a permanent agricultural conservation easement on 17.5 acres (0.5 acres + 8.25 acres, at a 2:1 ratio) of equivalent or (in quality and capability) better Farmland of Statewide Importance and Unique Farmland compliant with the requirements in County Code Sections 8-2.404(d) and 8-2.404(e), (f), and (g). The total acreage placed in permanent easement may be reduced to a minimum of 8.75 acres (0.50 acres + 8.25 acres, at a 1:1 ratio) in accordance with Sections 8-2.404(d) or 10-5.525(a), (b), (c), or (d), provided the total acreage is determined to be equivalent to the applicable ratio and acreage required under Section 8-2.404. The proposal and the substantiation in support of finding equivalency shall be provided in writing by the applicant, for review by staff and acceptance by the Board of Supervisors. The County may in its discretion approve phasing of the required easement so long as mitigation is satisfied prior to or coincident with impacts to Farmland of Statewide Importance and Unique Farmland.

4.2-2 Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use. The impact would be *less than significant*.

As discussed in detail under Impact 4.2-1 above, the proposed project would result in the net loss of Farmland to non-agricultural use. Other than what has been discussed above, the proposed project does not involve other changes in the existing environment which could result in further conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use beyond what is already addressed above. With respect to the properties proposed for dedication, future recreation, trails, and public open space uses and activities would not occur on lands currently used for or proposed to be reclaimed to agricultural use. Therefore, a ***less-than-significant*** impact would occur related to involving other changes in the existing environment that could result in the conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use.

Mitigation Measure(s)
None required.

4.2-3 Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any applicable plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating impacts to agricultural resources. The impact would be *less than significant*.

Table 4.2-6 below provides an analysis of the proposed project's consistency with applicable policies and regulations that have been adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating environmental effects related to agricultural resources.

As shown in the table below, the proposed project is anticipated to be generally consistent with applicable standards related to agricultural resources. Thus, a ***less-than-significant*** impact would occur.

Mitigation Measure(s)
None required.

Table 4.2-6
Consistency with Applicable Standards

Policy / Regulation	Consistency Discussion
Yolo County General Plan	
Policy LU-1.1 [excerpt] Assign the following range of land use designations throughout the County, as presented in detail in Table LU-4 (Land Use Designations): **Open Space (OS)** includes public open space lands, major natural water bodies, agricultural buffer areas, and habitat. The primary land use is	The Yolo County General Plan designates the site as Agriculture (AG), with approximately 107 acres within the northern portion of the project site also designated MRO. The proposed project includes a General Plan Amendment to extend the MRO designation over an additional 212 acres to cover the remaining area of the project site. Therefore, the project would be consistent with this policy.

(Continued on next page)

Table 4.2-6
Consistency with Applicable Standards

Policy / Regulation	Consistency Discussion
characterized by "passive" and/or very low-intensity management, as distinguished from AG or PR land use designations, which involve more intense management of the land. Detention basins are allowed as an ancillary use when designed with naturalized features and native landscaping, compatible with the open space primary use. **Agriculture (AG)** includes the full range of cultivated agriculture, such as row crops, orchards, vineyards, dryland farming, livestock grazing, forest products, horticulture, floriculture, apiaries, confined animal facilities and equestrian facilities. It also includes agricultural industrial uses (e.g. agricultural research, processing and storage; supply; service; crop dusting; agricultural chemical and equipment sales; surface mining; etc.) as well as agricultural commercial uses (e.g. road side stands, "Yolo Stores," wineries, farm-based tourism (e.g. u-pick, dude ranches, lodging), horseshows, rodeos, crop-based seasonal events, ancillary restaurants and/or stores) serving rural areas. Agriculture also includes farmworker housing, surface mining, and incidental habitat. **Residential Rural (RR)** includes large lot rural homes with primarily detached single-family units, although attached and/or detached second units or duplexes are allowed. Density range: 1du/5ac to <1 du/ac. **Public and Quasi-Public (PQ)** includes public/governmental offices, places of worship, schools, libraries, and other community and/or civic uses. Also includes public airports, including related visitor services, and infrastructure including wastewater treatment facilities, municipal wells, landfills, and stormwater detention basins. May include agricultural buffer areas. **Agricultural District Overlay (ADO)** applies to designated agricultural districts. Land uses consistent with the base designation and the district specifications are allowed. **Mineral Resource Overlay (MRO)** applies to State designated mineral resource zones (MRZ-2) containing critical geological deposits needed for economic use, as well as existing mining operations.	

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Table 4.2-6
Consistency with Applicable Standards

Policy / Regulation	Consistency Discussion
Policy LU-2.4 Vigorously conserve, preserve, and enhance the productivity of the agricultural lands in areas outside of adopted community growth boundaries and outside of the city soils.	Please see Impact 4.2-1. Mitigation Measure 4.2-1 would ensure that converted Prime Farmland would be reclaimed to agricultural land or mitigated at required ratios. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy AG-1.4 Prohibit land use activities that are not compatible within agriculturally designated areas.	The Agricultural land use designation allows for surface mining. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy AG-1.6 Continue to mitigate at a ratio of no less than 1:1 the conversion of farmland and/or the conversion of land designated or zoned for agriculture, to other uses.	Please see Impact 4.2-1. Mitigation Measure 4.2-1 would ensure that converted Prime Farmland would be reclaimed to agricultural land or mitigated at required ratios. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy CO-3.1 Encourage the production and conservation of mineral resources, balanced by the consideration of important social values, including recreation, water, wildlife, agriculture, aesthetics, flood control, and other environmental factors.	The project is a proposed new aggregate mining site. Proposed reclamation result in new prime farmland, wildlife habitat, open water lake, recreation, and other future benefits. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with this policy.
Action CO-A47 Ensure that mined areas are reclaimed to a usable condition that is readily adaptable for alternative land uses, such as agriculture, wildlife habitat, recreation, and groundwater management facilities.	The project would include reclamation of the proposed mining area to agriculture and habitat uses. Thus, the proposed project would be consistent with this goal.
Policy ED-1.2 Support the continued operation of existing aggregate mining activities within the county as well as new aggregate mining in appropriate areas, to meet the long-range construction needs of the region.	The project is a proposed new aggregate mining site that would comply with the policies and regulations of the OCMP. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy ED-1.8 Retain and encourage growth in important economic export sectors, including mining, natural gas, tourism and manufacturing.	The proposed project would allow for important economic mining extraction to occur on the site. In addition, the proposed project would extend the life of the Woodland Plant. Thus, the proposed project would be consistent with this policy.
Off-Channel Mining Plan	
Goal 2.2-2 Encourage the production and conservation of mineral resources, balanced by the consideration of important social values, including recreation, watershed, wildlife, agriculture, aesthetics, flood control, and other environmental factors.	The proposed project would involve active mining and production of mineral resources on the project site. In addition, the project includes reclamation of the proposed mining area to agriculture and habitat uses. Thus, the proposed project would be consistent with this goal.
Goal 2.2-5 Ensure that mined areas are reclaimed to a usable condition which are readily adaptable for alternative land uses, such as agriculture, wildlife habitat, recreation, and groundwater management facilities.	The project would include reclamation of the proposed mining area to agriculture and habitat uses. Thus, the proposed project would be consistent with this goal.

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Table 4.2-6
Consistency with Applicable Standards

Policy / Regulation	Consistency Discussion
Objective 5.3-1 Encourage the preservation of prime and important farmland along Cache Creek, while giving consideration to other compatible beneficial uses, such as groundwater storage and recharge facilities, surface mining operations, riparian habitat, and public recreation. Reclamation of agricultural lands to other uses; however, is discouraged wherever agricultural reclamation is feasible.	Please see Impact 4.2-1. Mitigation Measure 4.2-1 would ensure that converted Prime Farmland would be reclaimed to agricultural land or mitigated at required ratios. The proposed relocated alignment of the Moore Canal would be setback a minimum of 200 feet from the top of bank, and the nearest proposed mining activities would be located approximately 300 feet from Cache Creek. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with this policy.
Objective 5.3-2 Ensure the use of appropriate agricultural management practices in reclaiming mined areas to productive farmland.	The proposed project would reclaim the mined land to agriculture and a mix of habitat uses, including a lake, grassland, riparian woodland, and native landscape, in accordance with the requirements of the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA), the OCMP, OCSMO, and SMRO. Reclamation in compliance with the standards set forth in the aforementioned regulations would ensure appropriate agricultural management practices are applied during reclamation of the mining areas. Thus, the proposed project would be consistent with this objective.
Action 5.4-1 Maintain the existing A-N (Agricultural Intensive) or A-X (Agricultural Extensive) base zoning within the off-channel planning area, except where it serves as a holding area for growth within the community spheres of Capay, Madison, Esparto, and Yolo, so as to preserve the agricultural character of the region.	The proposed project would retain the project site's current Agricultural Intensive (A-N) zoning designation, with the addition of the Sand and Gravel Overlay Zone (SG-O) to allow for mining. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with this action.
Action 5.4-3 Provide for the protection of farmland within the planning area, including mined and reclaimed farmland, through the use of agricultural preserves and/or conservation easements.	Pursuant to SMRO Section 10-5.520.2, upon completion of reclamation within each phase of the project, for land that will not be dedicated or deeded to the County, the operator is required to enroll each parcel reclaimed to agriculture in Williamson Act contract, or other equivalent long-term easements or deed restriction satisfactory to the County, for the purpose of protecting the agricultural use of the reclaimed land in perpetuity. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with this action.
Action 5.4-4 Ensure that all proposed surface mining operations that include reclamation to agricultural uses comply with the requirements of the Land Conservation (Williamson) Act and the State Mining and Geology Board Reclamation Regulations.	Compliance with the CCAP and required review of the proposed reclamation plan Financial Assurance Cost Estimate (FACE) by the County staff and State Division of Mine Reclamation pursuant to SMARA would ensure compliance with these requirements. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with this action.

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Table 4.2-6
Consistency with Applicable Standards

Policy / Regulation	Consistency Discussion
Action 5.4-6 Encourage off-channel excavation operations to access additional aggregate reserves through the use of wet pits, in order to minimize the amount of agricultural land disturbed by mining.	The project site has been identified in the CCAP for future mining. The project proposes to mine to a maximum depth of approximately 70 feet below existing ground surface in the southwestern corner of the project area. The site would be reclaimed in phases as soon as possible, and would, thus, minimize the amount of agricultural land disturbed. Therefore, the project would be consistent with this action.
Action 5.4-7 Ensure maximum public benefit from reclaimed uses by establishing the following priority to be used to assess the adequacy of proposed reclamation plans: 1. Reclamation to viable agricultural uses; 2. Reclamation to native habitat; 3. Reclamation to recreation/ open space uses; 4. Reclamation to other uses.	The project proposes to reclaim approximately 116.7 acres to agriculture, approximately 113 acres to open water lake, and approximately 45 acres to habitat, with the remainder in access roads. Therefore, the project would be consistent with this action.
Action 6.4-3 Mitigate for short-term and long-term loss of agricultural land and habitat pursuant to applicable County requirements and CEQA. Comply with the Yolo HCP/NCCP for species covered by that Plan. For non-covered species for which impacts may occur, ensure compliance with appropriate measures in site-specific biological assessments required under the OCMP and CCRMP, in compliance with the State Fish and Wildlife Code, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and other applicable regulations, plans and programs, as appropriate.	As discussed in Chapter 4.4 of this EIR, Mitigation Measure 4.4-1(a) requires the project applicant to obtain coverage under the Yolo HCP/NCCP and pay all applicable HCP/NCCP fees. The fees are used to mitigate for the loss of habitat for covered species. For all plant and wildlife species potentially affected by the proposed project, including non-covered species, this EIR includes mitigation to ensure that impacts are reduced to less-than-significant levels. Please see Impact 4.2-1. Mitigation Measure 4.2-1 would ensure that converted Prime Farmland would be reclaimed to agricultural land or mitigated at required ratios. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with this action.
Land Development and Zoning (Yolo County Code of Ordinances, Title 8)	
Section 8-2.404[1] (a) Purpose The purpose of this section is to implement the agricultural land conservation policies contained in the Yolo County General Plan with a program designed to permanently protect agricultural land located within the unincorporated area. (c) Mitigation Requirements	In order to mitigate for the permanent loss of the Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance, the proposed project must adhere to Section 10-5.525 of the SMRO, which establishes requirements to compensate for the permanent loss of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance that are equivalent to the countywide requirements identified in Section 8-2.404 of the County Code,

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Table 4.2-6
Consistency with Applicable Standards

Policy / Regulation	Consistency Discussion
(1) Agricultural mitigation shall be required for conversion or change from agricultural use to a predominantly non-agricultural use prior to, or concurrent with, approval of a zone change from agricultural to urban zoning, permit, or other discretionary or ministerial approval by the County Agricultural mitigation shall be required for conversion or change from agricultural use to a predominantly non-agricultural use prior to, or concurrent with, approval of a zone change from agricultural to urban zoning, permit, or other discretionary or ministerial approval by the County (2) The following uses and activities shall be exempt from, and are not covered by, the Agricultural Conservation and Mitigation Program: (i) Affordable housing projects, where a majority of the units are affordable to very low or low income households, as defined in Title 8, Chapter 8 of the Yolo County Code (Inclusionary Housing Requirements); (ii) Public uses such as parks, schools, cultural institutions, and other public agency facilities and infrastructure that do not generate revenue. The applicability of this exemption to public facilities and infrastructure that generate revenue shall be evaluated by the approving authority on a case-by-case basis. The approving authority may partly or entirely deny the exemption if the approving authority determines the additional cost of complying with this program does not jeopardize project feasibility and no other circumstances warrant application of the exemption; (iii) Gravel mining projects regulated under Title 10, Chapters 3-5 of the Yolo County Code, pending completion of a comprehensive	but modified to reflect the unique requirements and outcomes of the CCAP. The project would include mitigation for the loss of Unique Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance. The same ratio of 1:1 replacement would be applied to the loss of Unique Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance. In particular, Mitigation Measure 4.2-1 brings forward and applies specific requirements from this section, including the specifications in Section 8-2.404(c)(d)(e)(f) and (g) Additionally, as discussed in Chapter 3, Project Description, of this EIR, the benefits of the project, described as "net gains," would include land dedication and reclamation pursuant to the County's requirements. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with this regulation

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Table 4.2-6
Consistency with Applicable Standards

Policy / Regulation	Consistency Discussion
update of the gravel mining program (anticipated in January 2017); and (iv) Projects covered by an approved specific plan which includes an agricultural mitigation program. (d) Agricultural Mitigation Implementation. Agricultural mitigation required by this section shall be implemented as follows (1) Location, Generally. Mitigation lands shall be located within two (2) miles of sphere of influence of a city or within two (2) miles of the General Plan urban growth boundary of the town of Esparto ("Esparto Urban Growth Boundary"). Mitigation may also occur in any other area designated by the Board of Supervisors based on substantial evidence demonstrating that the parcel at issue consists predominantly of prime farmland and/or is subject to conversion to non-agricultural use in the foreseeable future. Any such designation shall be made by resolution and shall specify whether the designated area is a priority conservation area subject to a 1:1 mitigation ratio. For all other designated areas, the resolution shall specify the mitigation ratio for any mitigation occurring in the covered area, which may exceed the applicable base ratio. (2) Adjustment Factors. The following adjustment factors shall be applied, where relevant, to modify the base ratio: (i) Priority Conservation Areas. Mitigation occurring within a priority conservation area shall occur at a reduced 1:1 ratio unless otherwise specified below. The following areas shall be deemed priority conservation areas for purposes of this section: (A) Parcels partly or entirely within one-quarter (0.25) mile of the sphere of influence of a city or the Esparto Urban Growth Boundary, or, for projects that convert primarily non-prime farmland, one (1) mile of the sphere of influence of a city or the Esparto Urban	

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Table 4.2-6
Consistency with Applicable Standards

Policy / Regulation	Consistency Discussion
Growth Boundary. For the purposes of this subsection, the word "primarily" shall mean greater than fifty (50) percent (B) Parcels lying partly or entirely within the area bounded by County Roads 98 and 102 on the west and east, respectively, and by County Roads 29 and 27 on the north and south, respectively. For mitigation of impacts to prime farmland, the ratio shall be 2:1 within this area. (3) Other Factors (i) If the area to be converted is twenty (20) acres or more in size, subject to the exception in (iii), below, by granting, in perpetuity, a farmland conservation easement to a qualifying entity with the County as a third party beneficiary, together with the provision of funds sufficient to compensate for all administrative costs incurred by the qualifying entity and the County as well as funds needed to establish an endowment to provide for monitoring, enforcement, and all other services necessary to ensure that the conservation purposes of the easement or other restriction are maintained in perpetuity. (ii) If the area to be converted is a small project less than twenty (20) acres in size, by granting a farmland conservation easement as described in subsection (i), above, or payment of the in-lieu fee established by the County to purchase a farmland conservation easement consistent with the provisions of this section; and the payment of fees in an amount established by the County to compensate for all administrative costs incurred by the County inclusive of endowment funds for the purposes set forth in subsection (i), above. The in-lieu fee, paid to the County, shall be used for agricultural mitigation	

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Table 4.2-6
Consistency with Applicable Standards

Policy / Regulation	Consistency Discussion
purposes only (i.e. purchases of conservation easements and related transaction and administrative costs). (iii) If Yolo County or a qualifying entity establishes a local farmland mitigation bank and sufficient credits are available at a total cost not exceeding the in lieu fee (and all related transactional and similar costs), small projects shall satisfy their farmland mitigation requirement by purchasing credits from the mitigation bank in a quantity sufficient to discharge the mitigation obligations of the project under this section. Other local projects converting twenty (20) or more acres of farmland may also purchase credits to discharge their farmland mitigation requirements, in lieu of providing an easement under subsection (i), above. A farmland mitigation bank must be approved by the Board of Supervisors for local (i.e., within Yolo County) mitigation needs based upon a determination that it satisfies all of the farmland mitigation requirements of this section. Landowners and project applicants that conserve more farmland than necessary to satisfy their mitigation obligations may seek approval of a farmland mitigation bank through an application process to be developed by the Planning, Public Works, and Environmental Services Department. (iv) Agricultural mitigation shall be completed as a condition of approval prior to the acceptance of a final parcel or subdivision map, or prior to the issuance of any building permit or other final approval for development projects that do not involve a map. (e) Eligible lands. Land shall meet all of the following criteria in sections (1) through (6), below, to qualify as agricultural mitigation:	

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Table 4.2-6
Consistency with Applicable Standards

Policy / Regulation	Consistency Discussion
(1) Agricultural conservation easements resulting from this program shall be acquired from willing sellers only; (2) The property is of adequate size, configuration and location to be viable for continued agricultural use; (3) The equivalent class of soil, based on the revised Storie index or NRCS soil survey maps, for the agricultural mitigation land shall be comparable to, or better than, the land which is converted; (4) The land shall have an adequate water supply to maintain the purposes of the easement, i.e., to irrigate farmland if the converted farmland is irrigated or capable of irrigation. The water supply shall be sufficient to support ongoing agricultural uses; (5) The mitigation land shall be located within the County of Yolo in a location identified for mitigation in accordance with this section; (6) It is the intent of this program to work in a coordinated fashion with the habitat conservation objectives of the Yolo Habitat Conservancy joint powers agency and the developing Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Communities Conservation Plan. The mitigation land may not overlap with existing habitat conservation easement areas; the intent is to not allow "stacking" of easements, except for habitat conservation easements protecting riparian corridors, raptor nesting habitat, wildlife-friendly hedgerows, or other restored or enhanced habitat areas so long as such areas do not exceed five percent (5%) of the total area of any particular agricultural conservation easement. (f) Ineligible lands. A property is ineligible to serve as agricultural mitigation land if any of the circumstances below apply: (1) The property is currently encumbered by a conservation, flood, or other type of easement or deed restriction that legally or practicably prevents converting the property to a nonagricultural use; or (2) The property is currently under public ownership and will remain so in the future,	

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Table 4.2-6
Consistency with Applicable Standards

Policy / Regulation	Consistency Discussion
except to the extent it is included within a mitigation bank that may subsequently be established by the County or other public agency; or (3) The property is subject to physical conditions that legally or practicably prevent converting the property to a nonagricultural use. (g) Minimum conservation requirements. The following minimum requirements shall be incorporated into all conservation easements recorded to satisfy the requirements of this mitigation program. Nothing in this subsection is intended to prevent the inclusion of requirements that require a higher level of performance from the parties to a conservation easement or other instrument to ensure that the goals of this mitigation program are achieved. (1) It is the intent of the County to transfer most, if not all, of the easements that are received from this program to a qualifying entity, as defined above, for the purpose of monitoring compliance with easement terms and taking any necessary enforcement and related actions. Estimated costs of any such transfer may be recovered from the applicant at the time of easement acceptance by the County. (2) All farmland conservation easements shall be acceptable to County Counsel and the qualifying entity that will receive the easement, and signed by all owners with an interest in the mitigation land. (3) The instrument shall prohibit any uses or activities which substantially impair or diminish the agricultural productivity of the mitigation land, except for the restoration or conversion to habitat uses of up to five percent (5%) of the total easement land, or that are otherwise inconsistent with the conservation purposes of this mitigation program. The instrument shall protect the existing water rights and retain them with the agricultural mitigation land; however, the instrument shall not preclude the limited transfer of water rights on a temporary basis (i.e., not to exceed two (2) years in any ten (10) year period) to other agricultural uses within the County, so long as sufficient water remains available to	

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Table 4.2-6
Consistency with Applicable Standards

Policy / Regulation	Consistency Discussion
continue reasonable and customary agricultural use of the mitigation land. (4) The instrument shall prohibit the presence, construction, or reconstruction of homes or other non-agricultural uses except within a development envelope designated in an exhibit accompanying the easement. Any such development envelope(s) shall not count toward the acreage totals of the conservation easement for mitigation purposes. The easement shall specify that ancillary uses must be clearly subordinate to the primary agricultural use. (5) Conservation easements held by a qualifying entity shall name the County as a third party beneficiary with full enforcement rights. (6) Interests in agricultural mitigation land shall be held in trust by a qualifying entity and/or the County in perpetuity. The qualifying entity or the County shall not sell, lease, or convey any interest in agricultural mitigation land which it shall acquire except in accordance with the terms of the conservation easement. (7) The conservation easement can only be terminated by judicial proceedings. Termination shall not be effective until the proceeds from the sale of the public's interest in the agricultural mitigation land is received and used or otherwise dedicated to acquire interests in other agricultural mitigation land in Yolo County, as approved by the County and provided in this chapter. (8) If any qualifying entity owning an interest in agricultural mitigation land ceases to exist, the duty to hold, administer, monitor and enforce the interest shall pass to the County or other qualifying entity as acceptable and approved by the County.	
Off-Channel Surface Mining Ordinance	
None applicable.	
Surface Mining Reclamation Ordinance	
Section 10-5.103 The purposes of this chapter are as follows:	Reclamation Plan for the project site includes reclamation of the approximately 277-acre mining area to agricultural and habitat uses as shown in

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Table 4.2-6
Consistency with Applicable Standards

Policy / Regulation	Consistency Discussion
(a) The reclamation of mined lands is necessary to prevent or minimize the adverse effects of mining on the environment and to protect the public health and safety; (b) The reclamation of mined lands shall provide for the protection and subsequent beneficial use of mined lands. However, mining takes place in diverse areas, with significantly different geologic, topographic, climatic, biological, and social conditions, so that the methods and operations of reclamation plans may vary accordingly to provide for the most beneficial reclamation of mined lands; (c) In order to provide for reclamation plans that are specifically adapted to the requirements of particular mined lands; and to ensure that mined land is reclaimed to end uses such as agriculture, habitat, groundwater recharge, flood control, and channel stabilization in a consistent manner to maximize their overall management; this chapter imposes performance standards by which reclamation methods and operations shall be measured; (d) The continued protection of agriculture and open-space uses is essential. As such, all off-channel, prime agricultural land and/or off-channel lands zoned Agricultural Preserve (A-P) and within a Williamson Act contract at the time that mining commences shall be reclaimed to an agriculturally productive state equal to or greater than that which existed before mining commenced. Prime agricultural land that is within the A-P Zone and is not within a Williamson Act contract shall be reclaimed to those uses which are declared by the County to be compatible with agricultural activities. Such uses include, but are not limited to, the following: (1) Agriculture and range land; (2) Groundwater storage and recharge areas;	Figure 3-14 of the Project Description Chapter of this Draft EIR. Approximately 116 acres of the mining area would be reclaimed to agricultural use, while the remainder of the mining area would be reclaimed to a lake with riparian woodland along the fringes/shoreline. Slopes would be reclaimed to grassland. Although the reclamation plan does not include aspects that would support recreational uses, the project would support continued agricultural use of the project site, while also supporting habitat uses. Consequently, the Reclamation Plan included in the project would comply with this Section of the SMRO.

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Table 4.2-6
Consistency with Applicable Standards

Policy / Regulation	Consistency Discussion
(3) Native fish, wildlife, invertebrate, and plant habitat; (4) Watercourses and flood control basins; and, (5) Recreational or open space lands. (e) Non-prime agricultural land shall be similarly reclaimed to one of the alternate uses described above; and (f) Reclamation plans shall be designed to integrate with the long-term goals of encouraging agriculture and recreation while protecting, habitat, recreation, and protecting the riparian corridor. Provisions shall be made to continue monitoring and maintenance activities after reclamation is completed, where appropriate, in order to ensure that reclaimed uses remain compatible with and enhance local resource management.	
Section 10-5.221 "Prime agricultural land" shall mean all land which meets the definition of prime agricultural land set forth in Section 51201 of the Government Code of the State as administered by the County in the administration of its agricultural preserve program.	The definition of Prime Farmland used in this chapter meets the definition of "Prime agricultural land" used in Section 10-5.221. Thus, the project complies with this section.
Section 10-5.509 Where fence row or field margin habitat previously existed, reestablish similar habitat as part of reclamation to agricultural use to replace and improve the wildlife habitat value of agricultural lands, allowing for the reestablishment of scattered native trees, shrubs, and ground covers along the margins of reclaimed fields. Reestablished habitat can be located in areas other than where it occurred originally. Restoration plans shall specify ultimate fence row or field margin locations, identify planting densities for trees and shrubs, and include provisions for monitoring and maintenance to ensure establishment. Restoration plans should be reviewed and approved by the TAC.	The project site does not currently contain significant fence rows; however, existing visual landscape buffers have been planted along the south and southwestern boundaries of the project site. As part of the proposed project, the northern section of the western perimeter would be planted with native tree and shrub species prior to commencement of mining activities. Oak woodland habitat exists in the northern portion of the project site, and would be removed during mining activity. Reclamation of the project site would include planting of lower and upper riparian woodlands, which would act to replace the oak woodland habitat removed during project implementation. The Reclamation Plan identifies locations and planting densities for habitat to be restored. The project would comply with this Section.
Section 10-5.512 The operator shall retain a Licensed Land Surveyor or Registered Civil Engineer to resurvey any areas reclaimed to agricultural usage after the first two (2) crop seasons have been completed.	Section 6.1 of the Reclamation Plan states the following "After the first two crop seasons have been completed on the reclaimed agricultural fields, Teichert shall retain a Licensed Land Surveyor or Registered Civil Engineer to resurvey

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Table 4.2-6
Consistency with Applicable Standards

Policy / Regulation	Consistency Discussion
Any areas where settling has occurred shall be releveled to the field grade specified in the approved reclamation plan.	the fields; any areas where settling has occurred shall be releveled to the field grade specified in the approved reclamation plan." Thus, the project would comply with this Section.
Section 10-5.516 The final distance between lowered surfaces reclaimed to agriculture and the average high groundwater shall not be less than five (5) feet. The average high groundwater level shall be established for each proposed mining area. The degree of groundwater level fluctuation varies with location throughout the basin and within relatively small areas (proposed mining sites). The determination of the average high groundwater level shall be conducted by a Registered Civil Engineer or Certified Hydrogeologist and shall be based on wet season water level elevation data collected at the proposed site or adjacent areas with similar hydrogeological conditions. Water level records prior to 1977 shall not be used since they would reflect conditions prior to the installation of the Indian Valley Dam. The dam caused a significant change in hydrology of the basin and data collected before its installation shall not be used in estimating current average high groundwater levels. The wells shall be adequately distributed throughout the proposed mining site to reflect spatial variation in groundwater levels and fluctuations.	Agricultural reclamation would require the use of overburden and processing fines to raise the pit floor elevation above the average high groundwater level followed by the placement of a minimum of four feet of salvaged reclamation soils (stockpiled topsoil and upper layers of overburden) on the created land. Consistent with this Section, the Reclamation Plan proposes reclaimed agricultural field elevations of a minimum of five feet above the average high groundwater elevations. Therefore, the proposed project would comply with requirement.
Section 10-5.520.2 Upon completion of reclamation within each phase of the project, for land that will not be dedicated or deeded to the County, the operator shall enroll each parcel reclaimed to agriculture in Williamson Act contract, or other equivalent long-term easement or deed restriction satisfactory to the County, for the purpose of protecting the agricultural use of the reclaimed land in perpetuity.	All reclaimed agricultural land will be dedicated in accordance with this requirement as part of project net gains described in the Development Agreement. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with this requirement.
Section 10-5.522 Phasing Plans. All proposed mining and reclamation plans shall present a phasing plan for mining and reclamation activities. The phasing plan shall be structured to minimize the area of disturbed agricultural lands during each mining phase, and encourage the early completion of the reclamation of agricultural land.	The proposed phasing plan for mining and reclamation is provided in Table 3-4, and Figures 3-14 and 3-15 of Chapter 3, Project Description (also included as Table 4.2-5 and Figure 4.2-5 above). Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with this requirement.
Section 10-5.523 Site-specific planting plans shall be developed by a qualified biologist for proposed habitat	Section 8.4, Plant Procurement and Installation, of the Reclamation Plan, provides a plan for planting in reclaimed areas. Per the Reclamation Plan, a

(Continued on next page)

Table 4.2-6
Consistency with Applicable Standards

Policy / Regulation	Consistency Discussion
reclamation projects. Restoration components of reclamation plans shall include provisions to enhance habitat for special-status species, where feasible. Native-planted hedgerows and other vegetated buffers shall be included between restored habitat areas and adjoining farmland, in order to minimize the potential for riparian areas to serve as harbors for predators and insect pests. These buffers will also reduce the noise, dust, and spraying generated by agricultural operations, in addition to providing valuable pollinator resources that in turn could enhance agricultural production.	buffer between the agricultural areas and the habitat areas would be provided by grassland habitat. The proposed riparian habitat would not be located adjacent to agricultural areas. Separation of the proposed riparian areas from the agricultural operations would comply with the intent of this Section.
Section 10-5.525 All mining permit applications shall identify the location and acreage of prime farmlands, unique farmland, and farmland of statewide significance, as shown on the State Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) which, as a result of reclamation, would be permanently converted to non-agricultural uses. For each acre of farmland in these categories that would be converted to non-agricultural use, the reclamation plan shall present provisions to offset the conversion of these lands, at a ratio consistent with Section 8-2.404 (Agricultural Conservation and Mitigation Program) of the County Code. This mitigation requirement may be satisfied using a variety of flexible options identified below so long as the total acreage of benefit is found to be equivalent to the applicable ratio and acreage required under Section 8-2.404 of the County Code, by type and amount of farmland being impacted, and so long as a minimum ratio of 1:1 of permanently protected agriculture land of equivalent or better quality/capability is achieved. (a) Implementation of improvements, identified by a qualified soil scientist, to the agricultural capability of non-prime lands within the project site or outside the project site but within the OCMP area, that convert non-prime to prime agricultural conditions. These improvements can include permanent improvement of soil capability through soil amendments, reduction of soil limitations (such as excessive levels of toxins), or improvements in drainage for areas limited by flooding or low permeability soils.	With updates to the SMRO, the County included Unique Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance in the protection and mitigation of the conversion of agricultural land. As discussed throughout this chapter, the project would include mitigation for the loss of Unique Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance. The same ratio of 1:1 replacement would be applied to the loss of Unique Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance. Additionally, as discussed in Chapter 3, Project Description, of this EIR, the benefits of the project, described as "net gains," would include land dedication and reclamation pursuant to the County's requirements. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with this regulation.

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Table 4.2-6
Consistency with Applicable Standards

Policy / Regulation	Consistency Discussion
(b) Placement of permanent conservation easements on land of equal or better quality/capability. The operator shall be encouraged to target property "at risk" of conversion to non-agricultural uses in selecting areas for permanent protection. Prior to approval of the conservation easement, the operator shall consult with the County and/or an appropriate non-profit agency to determine the relative risk of conversion, to which the proposed property might otherwise be subject. A minimum ratio of 1:1 is required in this category (c) Dedication of land, funding, or equivalent improvements, consistent with the County's net gains goals, above and beyond the net gains benefits otherwise required under the CCAP program. (d) Dedication of land, funding, or equivalent improvements, consistent with the Parkway Plan, above and beyond net gains benefits otherwise required under the CCAP program.	
Section 10-5.531 Where areas are to be reclaimed to agricultural usage, all A and B horizon soil shall be ripped to a depth of three (3) feet after every two (2) foot layer of soil is laid down, in order to minimize compaction.	Page 14 of the Reclamation Plan states, "In order to minimize compaction of the reclaimed agricultural fields, each 2-foot layer of soil laid down will be ripped to a depth of at least 3 feet." The project would comply with this Section
Section 10-5.532 Sediment fines associated with processed in-channel aggregate deposits (excavated as a result of maintenance activities performed in compliance with the CCIP) may be used in the backfill or reclamation of off-channel permanent lakes, for in-channel reshaping or habitat restoration, and/or as a soil amendment in agricultural fields provided the operator can demonstrate that no detrimental sediment toxicity exists (consistent with the state's Stream Pollution Trends Monitoring Program protocols) and fine-grained soil (<63 micron) do not exceed 0.4 mg/kg total mercury. The operator shall use overburden and processing fines whenever possible to support reclamation activities for pit lakes. If topsoil (A-horizon soil), formerly in agricultural production, is proposed for use within a pit lake or its drainage area, the	Section 6.1 of the Reclamation Plan presents the method of resoiling that would be used during reclamation. The method of resoiling the site has been designed to achieve compliance with this section.

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Table 4.2-6
Consistency with Applicable Standards

Policy / Regulation	Consistency Discussion
operator must sample the soils prior to placement and analyze them for pesticides and herbicides (EPA Methods 8141B and 8151A, or equivalent) as well as for total mercury (EPA Method 7471B, or equivalent). The operator shall collect and analyze samples in accordance with EPA Test Methods for Evaluating Solid Waste Physical/Chemical Methods, SW-846 (as updated). Topsoil that contains pesticides or herbicides above the Maximum Contaminant Levels for primary drinking water (California Code of Regulations), or that contains fine-grained soils exceeding on average 0.4 mg/kg total mercury shall not be placed in areas that drain to the pit lakes. Land reclaimed to a subsequent use that includes planting of vegetation (e.g., agriculture, habitat) shall be provided an adequate soil profile (i.e., depth and texture of soil) to ensure successful reclamation. At the discretion of the Director and at the operator's sole expense, the proposed reclamation plan for the project may be peer reviewed by an appropriate expert/professional, and recommendations, if any, shall be incorporated into the project as conditions of approval.	

Note:
[1] Due to the length of Section 8-2.404 of the Yolo County Code, only the pertinent parts are reproduced within this table.