15.0 OTHER CEQA-REQUIRED SECTIONS

15.1 ALTERNATIVES

This chapter provides a description of alternatives to the proposed project, including alternatives that were considered and eliminated from further consideration. Alternatives may be eliminated from detailed consideration in the EIR if they fail to meet most of the basic project objectives, are infeasible, or do not avoid any significant environmental effects (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[c]). Lead agencies are guided by the general definition of feasibility found in CEQA: "capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, legal, social, and technological factors" (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15364). Based on these guidelines, one alternative has been eliminated from further consideration. This alternative is briefly described below.

This chapter also provides a comparative analysis of four alternatives—the No Project Alternative, the Single-Track Trails Alternative, the Dispersed Recreation Alternative, and the Reduced Access Alternative—pursuant to Section 15126.6 of the State CEQA Guidelines. These alternatives are examined at a lesser level of detail than the analysis of the proposed project in Chapters 4.0 through 14.0 of this EIR (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[d]). The purpose of this chapter is to provide decision-makers with an assessment of the comparative effects of the project alternatives, focusing on the significant impacts and on mitigation of such impacts. An "environmentally superior" alternative is identified pursuant to Section 15126.6(e)(2) of the State CEQA Guidelines.

15.1.1 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND ELIMINATED FROM DETAILED ANALYSIS

The Burnett Road Access Alternative, as well as alternative locations for the Park, was considered in the planning stages of the proposed project; however, because these alternatives were determined to be infeasible, they are not considered further in this EIR.

Under the Burnett Road Access Alternative, access would have been provided to the Park via Burnett Road, which is south of the Park. All project facilities would have been the same under this alternative as under the proposed project, and Garden Bar Road would have continued to be used for maintenance and emergency access only. Under this alternative, Burnett Road would have been extended through private property and paved. This alternative would have had more severe impacts on soils, geology, and seismicity; hydrology and water quality; biological resources; air quality; and noise than the proposed project because of the additional construction associated with building a new road. In addition, the owner(s) whose property would have been affected by extension of Burnett Road were not willing to sell all or a portion of this property or to allow for an access easement. In the case of extending Burnett Road, there were not willing sellers, which made this alternative infeasible in keeping with the Placer Legacy Program's goal of only pursuing willing seller acquisitions.

In addition to the Burnett Road Alternative, other alternative locations were considered for the proposed Park. Criteria used for choosing a location for the proposed project included goals of the Placer Legacy Program and objectives of the project. A goal of the Placer Legacy Program is to conserve natural features for outdoor recreation in Placer County. To be consistent with this goal, properties outside of Placer County were eliminated from further consideration. The Placer Legacy Program also requires that properties purchased under this program have a willing seller, which eliminated consideration of properties without a willing seller. The Spears Ranch location was also chosen for its contiguous size and habitat value including blue oak woodland and riparian areas along Coon and Deadman Creeks.

15.1.2 ALTERNATIVES SELECTED FOR MORE DETAILED ANALYSIS

In accordance with Section 15126(f) and Section 15126.6 of the State CEQA Guidelines, this EIR includes an analysis of three project alternatives, as well as the required review of the No Project Alternative.

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(a) calls for an evaluation of "… a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives." Section 15126.6(f) specifies that the range of alternatives is governed by the "rule of reason," requiring evaluation of only those alternatives "necessary to permit a reasoned choice." Alternatives shall be "limited to ones that avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects" of the proposed project.

Section 15126.6(e) of the State CEQA Guidelines requires that, among other alternatives, a "no project" alternative be evaluated in comparison to the proposed project. It states that the purpose of the "no project" alternative is to "allow decision-makers to compare the impacts of approving the proposed project with the impact of not approving the proposed project." It also states that the "no project" analysis shall "discuss the existing conditions…, as well as what would be reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the project were not approved…" Accordingly, this section provides an analysis of the "no project" alternative.

The environmentally superior alternative is also identified, as required by the State CEQA Guidelines. Section 15126(e)(2) states that "[i]f the environmentally superior alternative is the 'no project' alternative, the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives."

NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE (ALTERNATIVE 1)

The No Project Alternative assumes that the proposed natural-surface trails and related recreational amenities would not be constructed and that the Spears Ranch portion of the Park would not be open to the public. The surrounding area would continue to be grazed and access would be limited to County maintenance staff and emergency vehicles. The Spears Ranch portion of the Park would be managed by the County without public access, and the Didion Ranch portion of the Park would be managed by the County and would remain open to the public.

This alternative would not meet the demands for recreational opportunities within Placer County, specifically hiking, biking, and equestrian trails, and would not meet the goals of the Placer Legacy Program for which the property was purchased. Because no trails or related facilities would be constructed under this alternative, the impacts associated with the proposed project on biological resources; cultural resources; transportation and circulation; air quality; noise; soils, geology, and seismicity; hydrology and water quality; public services and utilities; visual resources, and hazardous materials and hazards would not occur. Because the proposed project would have little to no impact on land use and agriculture; population, employment, and housing; and mineral resources, impacts on these resources under the No Project Alternative would be similar to those under the proposed project. This alternative would not have the beneficial effects on recreation compared to the proposed project.

SINGLE-TRACK TRAILS ALTERNATIVE (ALTERNATIVE 2)

Under the Single-Track Trails Alternative, the proposed natural-surface trails and related recreational amenities would be constructed as described for the proposed project; however, the trails would be designed as hiking trails, not multiple-use trails. There would be no equestrian facilities (e.g., water troughs, tie rails) within the Spears Ranch portion of the property, and the parking areas constructed on the Spears Ranch portion of the property would be smaller and would not include larger parking spaces or an overflow gravel area for trucks and trailers. Automobile access would be provided via Garden Bar Road and Mears Drive; however, Garden Bar Road would not be used for horse trailer access. Large events requiring multiple buses for transportation would not be allowed

under this alternative; however, class-room sized groups would be allowed under this alternative at the discretion of the County. The existing trails and parking areas on the Didion Ranch portion of the Park would continue to be multiple-use. Improvements would be made to Garden Bar Road to allow access by automobiles; however, no additional road improvements would be made to accommodate horse trailers. Garden Bar Road would continue to be used by County staff for maintenance and for emergency vehicle access. Impacts of the Single-Track Trails Alternative are described below by resource topic.

Land Use and Agricultural Resources

The Single-Track Trails Alternative would be consistent with the *Placer County General Plan* (General Plan) and the Placer County Zoning Ordinance. This alternative would not divide an established community, nor would it affect timber resources or operations. Grazing would be allowed to continue on the property, but no other agricultural uses would be allowed. This alternative would not interfere with surrounding land uses. This alternative would also be consistent with the *Draft Placer County Conservation Plan: Western Placer County*. Because the Single-Track Trails Alternative would not conflict with any land use plans in the project area and grazing would be allowed to continue, it would have a less-than-significant impact on land use, planning, and agricultural resources. The impacts of the Single-Track Trails Alternative on land use, planning, and agricultural resources would be similar to those of the proposed project.

Population, Employment, and Housing

The Single-Track Trails Alternative would not involve construction of new homes or businesses. This alternative would not displace any existing housing, nor would it result in disruption or division of an established community. The proposed trails and facilities would be constructed primarily with mechanized construction techniques and only one permanent job would be created by this alternative. Therefore, construction and operation of this alternative would require few workers and would have very little effect on the local workforce. This alternative would have no effect on population, employment, or housing. The impacts of the Single-Track Trails Alternative on population, employment, and housing would be similar to those of the proposed project.

Biological Resources

With implementation of mitigation, the Single-Track Trails Alternative would not substantially affect any threatened or endangered species. This alternative would have minor effects on Coon Creek, Deadman Creek, and other unnamed drainages within the Park. The Single-Track Trails Alternative would require the removal of vegetation, including some trees. This alternative would have less potential than the proposed project to introduce invasive weeds because horses would not introduce them under this alternative; however, invasive weeds currently exist throughout much of the Park. Because this alternative would not include additional improvements along Garden Bar Road to accommodate horse trailers, there would be less of an impact on biological resources, including less tree removal, along Garden Bar Road than under the proposed project. In addition, less vegetation would be removed for larger parking areas and trails because the single-track trails would be narrower than the multiple-use trails and the parking areas would not accommodate horse trailers. This alternative would include mitigation to reduce impacts on special-status species, oak woodlands, and waters of the United States. For these reasons, the impacts of the Single-Track Trails Alternative on biological resources would be less than those associated with the proposed project.

Cultural Resources

Nine potentially significant cultural resources and one significant cultural resource are located within the Spears Ranch portion of the Park. The Single-Track Trails Alternative would include mitigation measures to reduce impacts on known and yet-to-be-discovered cultural resources. With implementation of these mitigation measures, this alternative would have a less-than-significant impact on cultural resources. The impacts of the Single-Track Trails Alternative on cultural resources would be similar to those of the proposed project.

Visual Resources

The Single-Track Trails Alternative would introduce new physical elements into the landscape; however, views of the trail system and recreational facilities from off-site locations would be limited. There would be changes to the visual character of Garden Bar Road under this alternative; however, the changes would be less substantial than those under the proposed project because additional widening to accommodate horse trailers would not be needed. Construction of the project facilities under this alternative would minimize the removal of trees greater than 6 inches in diameter at breast height (dbh), thus minimizing visible canopy reduction, and would incorporate the use of natural colors and materials into Park facilities to be consistent with the natural character of the Park. In addition, less vegetation would be removed for trails and parking areas than under the proposed project, and Park facilities would be of a smaller scale. New security lighting similar to that used under the proposed project and used by previous residents would be included as part of this alternative. The Single-Track Trails Alternative would not affect any scenic vistas. Although this alternative would have less of an impact on visual resources than the proposed project, it would still result in a significant and unavoidable visual impact.

Transportation and Circulation

Construction of trails and recreational facilities under the Single-Track Trails Alternative would temporarily increase traffic on Garden Bar Road and Mears Drive during construction. Maintenance traffic on Garden Bar Road would increase slightly after the Spears Ranch portion of the Park was opened to the public. Automobile traffic associated with operation of the Park would also increase on both Garden Bar Road and Mears Drive; however, horse trailer and bus traffic on Garden Bar Road would not increase under this alternative. With implementation of road improvements described in the *Traffic Safety Study for Garden Bar Road* (Placer County 2007a) (Appendix C), traffic hazards on Garden Bar Road would be reduced to a less-than-significant level. Increases in traffic on Garden Bar Road under this alternative would be less than under the proposed project; however, neither alternative would result in the exceedance of a level of service (LOS) standard on any roadways in the project vicinity. The County would also pay a traffic impact fee to further reduce the impact of this alternative on area roadways. Adequate parking would be provided for Park users under this alternative with construction of the western parking area and expansion of the Didion Ranch parking area. Therefore, the Single-Track Trails Alternative would have a less-than-significant impact on transportation and circulation. For these reasons, the impacts of the Single-Track Trails Alternative on transportation and circulation would be slightly less than those of the proposed project.

Air Quality

Construction of trails and recreational facilities under the Single-Track Trails Alternative would temporarily increase concentrations of reactive organic gases (ROG), oxides of nitrogen (NO_X), and respirable particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 10 micrometers or less (PM_{10}) in the project area. Construction under this alternative would also have the potential to temporarily increase the amount of diesel exhaust and fuel vapors in the project area. In addition, long-term operation (use and maintenance) of the Park as part of this alternative would cause an increase in ROG, NO_X, or PM_{10}. There is a slight possibility that ground-disturbing activities under this alternative would also expose areas containing asbestos. Mitigation would be included to address this issue, as necessary. However, this alternative would include fewer construction-related emissions associated with improvements to Garden Bar Road, larger parking areas, and wider trails. The Single-Track Trails Alternative would have a less-than-significant impact on air quality with implementation of mitigation. For these reasons, the impacts of the Single-Track Trails Alternative on air quality would be slightly less than those of the proposed project.

Noise

Construction of trails and recreational facilities under the Single-Track Trails Alternative would temporarily increase noise levels in the project area. Construction activities associated with this alternative would comply with

the requirements of the Placer County Noise Ordinance. The closest noise-sensitive receptors are approximately 800 feet away. There would be less construction-related noise impacts from construction of additional improvements along Garden Bar Road, larger parking areas, and wider trails under this alternative than under the proposed project. Long-term operation (use and maintenance) of the Park under the Single-Track Trails Alternative would result in noise impacts similar to the proposed project and would not cause a significant increase in noise levels in the project area. Therefore, this alternative would have a less-than-significant impact on noise levels in the project area. For these reasons, the Single-Track Trails Alternative would have slightly less of an impact than the proposed project on noise levels.

Soils, Geology, and Seismicity

Construction of recreational facilities under the Single-Track Trails Alternative would require some removal of vegetation and would result in soil disturbance and minor alterations to surface topography, which could result in erosion. However, this alternative would involve less removal of vegetation and a lesser amount of earthmoving activity for additional improvements to Garden Bar Road, larger parking areas, and wider trails. This alternative would include renovation of existing buildings on-site for human occupancy or use as a nature center, construction of bunkhouses, and construction of bridges that could be subject to ground shaking, liquefaction, and landslides. However, the project area is not located within an earthquake fault zone, and no structures for human occupancy would be placed across any fault traces. The County would obtain authorization for construction and operation activities from the Central Valley RWQCB and implement erosion and sediment control measures obtain to reduce impacts on geology, soils, and seismicity to a less-than-significant level. In addition, the Single-Track Trails Alternative would cause less long-term erosion along the trails associated with horses and mountain bikes. Impacts of this alternative on soils, geology, and seismicity would be less than significant. For these reasons, the Single-Track Trails Alternative would have slightly less of an impact on soils, geology, and seismicity than the proposed project.

Mineral Resources

The Single-Track Trails Alternative would not result in the loss of any known mineral resources, nor would it impede or interfere with the establishment or continuation of existing mineral extraction operations. It would not result in the loss of available known mineral resources of value to the region or residents of the state, and the area is not delineated as a locally important recovery site. The Single-Track Trails Alternative would not have an impact on mineral resources; therefore, the impacts of this alternative on mineral resources would be similar to those of the proposed project.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Implementation of the Single-Track Trails Alternative would include construction of up to two groundwater wells and septic system that could affect groundwater. Potential erosion from vegetation removal and construction could also affect water quality in the project area; however, this alternative would not include removal of vegetation and earthmoving activities for additional improvements to Garden Bar Road, larger parking areas, and wider trails. This alternative would comply with policies pertaining to water quality in the General Plan and would implement best management practices (BMPs). This alternative would also cause less long-term erosion along the trails associated with horses and mountain bikes. A grading and drainage plan would be prepared and implemented and the County would obtain a Transient Non-community Water System Permit to reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, the Single-Track Trails Alternative would have a less-than-significant impact on water quality and hydrology in the project area. For these reasons, the Single-Track Trails Alternative would have slightly less of an impact on hydrology and water quality than the proposed project.

Recreation

The Single-Track Trails Alternative would provide new recreational opportunities in response to existing demand for more recreational opportunities in Placer County. However, because this alternative would not accommodate

equestrians and mountain bikes within the Spears Ranch portion of the Park, it would provide additional recreational opportunities only for hikers, which would result in substantially less benefit than the proposed project. This alternative would not increase the demand for parks or facilities, nor would it negatively affect existing recreational opportunities. The Single-Track Trails Alternative would have a beneficial impact on recreation, but it would provide substantially less of a benefit than the proposed project.

Public Services and Utilities

Implementation of the Single-Track Trails Alternative would not result in the need for a substantial increase in fire protection, police protection, schools, or other public facilities. The public services currently provided to the project area would be sufficient to accommodate use of the Park under this alternative. The Single-Track Trails Alternative would have components that would require electricity and communication, wastewater treatment, septic, and water supply systems. A septic system would be constructed under this alternative as under the proposed project. Under this alternative solid waste would be collected and disposed of by Auburn Placer Disposal Service. Because this alternative would not increase demand for public services and adequate services and utilities would be provided to accommodate Park users, the Single-Track Trails Alternative would have a less-than-significant impact on public services and utilities. The impacts of the Single-Track Trails Alternative on public services and utilities would be similar to those of the proposed project.

Hazardous Materials and Hazards

The Single-Track Trails Alternative would be located in an area of medium fire danger, as rated by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) (2007). There is the potential for fire to be caused by construction equipment or by Park users after construction (e.g., from discarded cigarette butts or campfires). The potential also exists for small amounts of hazardous materials to be released from construction equipment or during maintenance of the Park under this alternative. In addition, there is the potential for the public and/or construction workers to be exposed to hazardous materials and vector-borne diseases under this alternative. Because there would be less construction required under this Alterative, there would be fewer potential hazards related to construction compared to the proposed project. The Single-Track Trails Alternative would be constructed and operated consistent with the *Hidden Falls Regional Park Vegetation, Fuels, and Range Management Plan* (Placer County 2007b), and an accidental-spill prevention and response plan would be developed to reduce these impacts. The County would also coordinate with the Placer Mosquito and Vector Control District (Vector Control District), create a safety hazard plan, and conduct soil sampling as necessary to reduce these impacts. Because these measures would be taken, this alternative would have a less-than-significant impact on hazards and hazardous materials. For these reasons, the impacts of the Single-Track Trails Alternative on hazards and hazardous materials would be slightly less than those of the proposed project.

DISPERSED RECREATION ALTERNATIVE (ALTERNATIVE 3)

Under the Dispersed Recreation Alternative no recreational facilities would be constructed in the Spears Ranch portion of the Park, but the entire Park would be open to the public. The Park would be multiple-use under this alternative with hiking, biking, and equestrian uses allowed, but recreation would be dispersed throughout the Park and would not be limited to designated trails and recreational facilities. Under this alternative a gravel parking area would be provided in the Spears Ranch portion of the Park and the paved parking area would be expanded on the Didion Ranch portion of the Park. No motorized access would be provided beyond designated parking areas. Access to the Park for automobiles and horse trailers would be provided via Garden Bar Road and Mears Drive and associated road improvements would be implemented along Garden Bar Road.

Land Use and Agricultural Resources

The Dispersed Recreation Alternative would be consistent with the General Plan and the Placer County Zoning Ordinance. This alternative would not divide an established community, nor would it affect timber resources or

operations. Grazing on the property would be allowed to continue, and the property is not currently used for any other agricultural uses. This alternative would not interfere with any surrounding land uses. This alternative would also be consistent with the *Draft Placer County Conservation Plan: Western Placer County*. Because the Dispersed Recreation Alternative would not conflict with any land use plans in the project area and grazing would be allowed to continue on the property, it would have a less-than-significant impact on land use, planning, and agricultural resources. The impacts of the Dispersed Recreation Alternative on land use, planning, and agricultural resources would be similar to those of the proposed project.

Population, Employment, and Housing

The Dispersed Recreation Alternative would not involve construction of new homes or businesses. This alternative would not displace any existing housing, nor would it result in the disruption or division of an established community. No recreational facilities would be constructed as part of this alternative, and no new permanent jobs would be created. Therefore, this alternative would require fewer workers than the proposed project and would have no effect on the local workforce. This alternative would have no effect on population, employment, or housing. The impacts of the Dispersed Recreation Alternative on population, employment, and housing would be similar to those of the proposed project.

Biological Resources

With implementation of mitigation, the Dispersed Recreation Alternative would not substantially affect any threatened or endangered species. This alternative would have minor effects on Coon Creek, Deadman Creek, and other unnamed drainages within the Park. The Dispersed Recreation Alternative may require removal of a few large trees at the parking areas and would have the potential to introduce invasive weeds. The potential for introducing invasive weeds would be higher under this alternative than under the proposed project because horses and trail users would access a larger area of the Park and would not be limited to trail corridors. However, invasive weeds currently exist throughout much of the Park. The biological impacts related to trail construction would be avoided under this alternative; however, there would be more dispersed impacts on biological resources because there would be no formal trails for Park users to follow. As a result, a considerable number of informal, volunteer trails could be created by Park users. Such trails would be uncontrolled and could encroach into sensitive areas. In addition, similar to the proposed project, this alternative would include impacts on trees and drainages from improvements to Garden Bar Road to accommodate additional automobiles and horse trailers. This alternative would include mitigation to reduce impacts on special-status species, oak woodland, and waters of the United States; however, it would be more difficult to mitigate effects under this alternative because of the dispersed nature of the impacts. For these reasons, the impacts of the Dispersed Recreation Alternative on biological resources would be greater than those of the proposed project.

Cultural Resources

There are nine potentially significant cultural resources and one significant cultural resource within the Spears Ranch portion of the Park. The Dispersed Recreation Alternative would include mitigation measures to reduce impacts on known and yet-to-be-discovered cultural resources. Implementation of mitigation measures would reduce impacts on yet-to-discovered cultural resources; however, impacts on known cultural resources would be greater under this alternative because Park users would access more of the Park and may come into contact with cultural resources more frequently. For these reasons, the impacts of the Dispersed Recreation Alternative on cultural resources would be greater than those of the proposed project.

Visual Resources

The Dispersed Recreation Alternative would not introduce new facilities into the landscape. This alternative would also avoid removing trees more than 6 inches dbh to the extent possible, thus minimizing visible canopy reduction. New security lighting similar to that used under the proposed project and similar to lighting used by previous residents would be included under this alternative. Improvements would result in temporary and

permanent changes to the visual character of Garden Bar Road similar to the proposed project. These changes would alter the visual character of the road. Although the Dispersed Recreation Alternative would not affect any scenic vistas, this alternative would have a significant impact on the visual character of Garden Bar Road. Revegetating and restoring disturbed areas to minimize visual quality and protecting oak woodlands would reduce the visual impact, but not to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, the Dispersed Recreation Alternative would have a significant and unavoidable visual impact. For these reasons, the impacts of the Dispersed Recreation Alternative on visual resources would be similar to those of the proposed project would be less than significant.

Transportation and Circulation

The Dispersed Recreation Alternative would not include traffic associated with construction of recreational facilities, but it would include construction traffic related to Garden Bar Road improvements and the Didion Ranch parking area expansion. This alternative would cause an increase in traffic on Garden Bar Road and Mears Drive as a result of operation of the Park; however, because no formal facilities would be provided in the Spears Ranch portion of the Park, this alterative is expected to generate less demand and less traffic than the proposed project. Road improvements described in the *Traffic Safety Study for Garden Bar Road* (Placer County 2007a) (Appendix C) would be constructed under this alternative. A gravel parking area would be provided for Park users under this alternative, but paved parking would not be provided in the Spears Ranch portion of the Park. For these reasons, the impacts of the Dispersed Recreation Alternative on transportation and circulation would be slightly less than those of the proposed project.

Air Quality

The Dispersed Recreation Alternative would include improvements to Garden Bar Road but not construction of recreational facilities within the Park. Therefore, this alternative would temporarily increase concentrations of ROG, NO_X, PM_{10}, diesel exhaust, and fuel vapors in the project area, but construction-related emissions would be less under this alternative than under the proposed project. Long-term operation (use and maintenance) of the Park as part of this alternative would also cause an increase in ROG, NO_X, or PM_{10}. Construction of road improvements under this alternative could expose areas containing asbestos. Mitigation would be included to address this issue, as necessary. With implementation of this mitigation, this alternative would have a less-than-significant impact on air quality. For these reasons, the impacts of the Dispersed Recreation Alternative on air quality would be less than those of the proposed project.

Noise

Construction of road improvements along Garden Bar Road would temporarily increase noise levels in the project area; however, there would be no noise associated with construction of trails or other recreational facilities under this alternative. Construction activities would comply with the requirements of the Placer County Noise Ordinance, and the closest noise-sensitive receptor is approximately 800 feet away. Long-term operation (use and maintenance) of the Park under the Dispersed Recreation Alternative would cause a significant increase in noise levels in the project area; however, limiting project-related traffic to less sensitive hours would reduce this impact to less than significant. The Dispersed Recreation Alternative would have a similar impact on noise compared to the proposed project on noise levels.

Soils, Geology, and Seismicity

Construction of road improvements under the Dispersed Recreation Alternative would require removal of vegetation and would result in soil disturbance and minor alterations to surface topography that could result in erosion. This alternative would include vegetation removal and earthmoving activities for improvements to Garden Bar Road, but not vegetation removal for construction of trails and other recreational facilities. Construction-related impacts of the Dispersed Recreation Alternative on geology and soils would be less than those of the proposed project. However, operation-related impacts on geology and soils under this alternative would be greater because volunteer trails and foot traffic would occur over a larger area of the Park causing more

widespread erosion. In addition, volunteer trails could be created in steep areas or areas of high erosion, which would cause more long-term erosion than with the proposed project. The project area is not located within an earthquake fault zone, and no structures for human occupancy would be placed across any fault traces. Impacts of the Dispersed Recreation Alternative on soils, geology, and seismicity would be potentially significant. The County would obtain authorization for construction and operation activities from the Central Valley RWQCB, implement erosion and sediment control measures, and obtain and implement seismic engineering design recommendations to reduce impacts on geology, soils, and seismicity to a less-than-significant level. The Dispersed Recreation Alternative would have more of an impact on soils, geology, and seismicity than the proposed project.

Mineral Resources

The Dispersed Recreation Alternative would not result in the loss of any known mineral resources, nor would it impede or interfere with the establishment or continuation of existing mineral extraction operations. It would not result in the loss of available known mineral resources that would be of value to the region or residents of the state, and the area is not delineated as a locally important recovery site. The impacts of the Dispersed Recreation Alternative on mineral resources would be similar to those of the proposed project.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Implementation of the Dispersed Recreation Alternative would not include construction of any groundwater wells or septic systems that could affect groundwater. Potential erosion from vegetation removal and construction could affect water quality in the project area; however, this alternative would avoid vegetation removal and earthmoving activities associated with construction of trails and other facilities. Although construction-related erosion would be less under this alternative, operation-related erosion would be greater and more widespread. The Dispersed Recreation Alternative would comply with General Plan policies pertaining to water quality, and BMPs would be implemented to reduce these impacts. However, because of the dispersed nature of the impacts, it would be more difficult to minimize erosion under this alternative. Therefore, the Dispersed Recreation Alternative would have a potentially significant impact on hydrology and water quality and would have more of an impact on hydrology and water quality than the proposed project.

Public Services and Utilities

Implementation of the Dispersed Recreation Alternative would not result in the need for a substantial increase in fire protection, police protection, schools, or other public facilities. The public services currently provided to the project area would be sufficient to accommodate the proposed Park. The Dispersed Recreation Alternative would not include components that would require electricity and communication, wastewater treatment, or water supply systems, and a septic system would not be constructed under this alternative. Under the Dispersed Recreation Alternative solid waste would be collected and disposed of by Auburn Placer Disposal Service. Therefore, this alternative would have a less-than-significant impact on public services and utilities. For these reasons, the impacts of the Dispersed Recreation Alternative on public services and utilities would be less than those of the proposed project.

Recreation

The Dispersed Recreation Alternative would provide new recreational opportunities in response to existing demand for more recreational opportunities in Placer County. Like the proposed project, this alternative would accommodate hikers, equestrians, and mountain bikers. However, the lack of preconstructed trails would make the Park less accessible to Park users, including those with disabilities, and less attractive to many users. Without new facilities, users would not be able to easily reach much of the Spears Ranch portion of the Park that is more distant from the trails within the Didion Ranch portion of the Park. Therefore, this alternative would provide substantially fewer recreational opportunities than the proposed project. This alternative would not increase demand for more parks or facilities, nor would it negatively affect existing recreational opportunities. The

Dispersed Recreation Alternative would have a beneficial impact on recreation, but it would provide substantially less of a benefit than the proposed project.

Hazardous Materials and Hazards

The Dispersed Recreation Alternative would be located in an area of medium fire danger, as rated by CalFire (2007). There is the potential for fire to be caused by construction equipment or by Park users after construction (e.g., from discarded cigarette butts). Under this alternative the potential for wildfire, compared to the proposed project, would be slightly less during construction but slightly greater during operation because Park users would access more of the Park in areas where vegetation has not been maintained. The potential also exists for small amounts of hazardous materials to be released from construction equipment under this alternative or during maintenance of the Park under this alternative. In addition, there is the potential for the public and/or construction workers to be exposed to hazardous materials and vector-borne diseases under this alternative. Because there would be less construction required under this Alternative, there would be fewer potential hazards related to construction compared to the proposed project. The Dispersed Recreation Alternative would be constructed and operated consistent with the *Hidden Falls Regional Park Vegetation, Fuels, and Range Management Plan* (Placer County 2007b), and an accidental-spill prevention and response plan would be developed to reduce these impacts. The County would also coordinate with the Vector Control District, create a safety hazard plan, and conduct soils sampling as necessary to reduce these impacts. Because these measures would be taken, this alternative would have a less-than-significant impact on hazards and hazardous materials. The impacts of the Dispersed Recreation Alternative on hazards and hazardous materials would be similar to those of the proposed project.

REDUCED ACCESS ALTERNATIVE (ALTERNATIVE 4)

Under the Reduced Access Alternative, the proposed natural-surface multiple-use trails and related recreational amenities would be constructed as described for the proposed project; however, no public access to the Park would be provided via Garden Bar Road. Automobile, equestrian, and bus access would continue to be provided via Mears Drive and the existing Didion Ranch parking area would be expanded to accommodate increased use. Garden Bar Road would continue to be used by County staff for maintenance and for emergency vehicle access. Impacts of the Reduced Access Alternative are described below by resource topic.

Land Use and Agricultural Resources

The Reduced Access Alternative would be consistent with the General Plan and the Placer County Zoning Ordinance. This alternative would not divide an established community, nor would it affect timber resources or operations. Grazing would be allowed to continue on the property, but no other agricultural uses would be allowed. This alternative would not interfere with surrounding land uses. This alternative would also be consistent with the *Draft Placer County Conservation Plan: Western Placer County*. Because the Reduced Access Alternative would not conflict with any land use plans in the project area and grazing would be allowed to continue, it would have a less-than-significant impact on land use, planning, and agricultural resources. The impacts of the Reduced Access Alternative on land use, planning, and agricultural resources would be similar to those of the proposed project.

Population, Employment, and Housing

The Reduced Access Alternative would not involve construction of new homes or businesses. This alternative would not displace any existing housing, nor would it result in disruption or division of an established community. The proposed trails and facilities would be constructed primarily with mechanized construction techniques and only one permanent job would be created by this alternative. Therefore, construction and operation of this alternative would require few workers and would have very little effect on the local workforce.
This alternative would have no effect on population, employment, or housing. The impacts of the Reduced Access Alternative on population, employment, and housing would be similar to those of the proposed project.

Biological Resources

With implementation of mitigation, the Reduced Access Alternative would not substantially affect any threatened or endangered species. This alternative would have minor effects on Coon Creek, Deadman Creek, and other unnamed drainages within the Park. The Reduced Access Alternative would require the removal of vegetation, including some trees. Because this alternative would not require improvements along Garden Bar Road to accommodate public access, there would be no tree removal or impacts to biological resources along Garden Bar Road. Less vegetation would be removed for construction of a parking area at the western end of the Park; however, some additional vegetation would be removed with expansion of the Didion Ranch parking area. If access is only provided via Mears Drive, the Didion Ranch parking area would need to be expanded beyond the proposed expansion under the proposed project to accommodate the increase in use. This alternative would include mitigation to reduce impacts on special-status species, oak woodlands, and waters of the United States to a less-than-significant level. For these reasons, the impacts of the Reduced Access Alternative on biological resources would be less than those associated with the proposed project.

Cultural Resources

Nine potentially significant cultural resources and one significant cultural resource are located within the Spears Ranch portion of the Park. The Reduced Access Alternative would include mitigation measures to reduce impacts on known and yet-to-be-discovered cultural resources. With implementation of these mitigation measures, this alternative would have a less-than-significant impact on cultural resources. The impacts of the Reduced Access Alternative on cultural resources would be similar to those of the proposed project.

Visual Resources

The Reduced Access Alternative would introduce new physical elements into the landscape; however, there would be limited views of the trail system and recreational facilities from off-site locations. For this alternative, no changes would be made to Garden Bar Road. Construction of the project facilities under this alternative would minimize the removal of trees greater than 6 inches in dbh, thus minimizing visible canopy reduction, and would incorporate the use of natural colors and materials into Park facilities to be consistent with the natural character of the Park. In addition, no vegetation would be removed for construction of a parking area at the western end of the Park and the Garden Bar Road improvements as there would be for the proposed project. New security lighting similar to that used under the proposed project and by previous residents would be included as part of this alternative. The Reduced Access Alternative would not affect any scenic vistas. Therefore, this alternative would have a less-than-significant impact on visual resources. For these reasons, the impacts of the Reduced Access Alternative on visual resources would be less than those of the proposed project.

Transportation and Circulation

Construction of trails and recreational facilities under the Reduced Access Alternative would temporarily increase traffic on Garden Bar Road during construction. Maintenance traffic on Garden Bar Road would also increase slightly after the Spears Ranch portion of the Park is opened to the public. However, no public access for automobile, equestrian, or bus traffic would be allowed via Garden Bar Road under this alternative. Therefore, the only increase in traffic on Garden Bar Road under this alternative would be a result of construction vehicles and increased maintenance traffic. No road improvements would be made on Garden Bar Road for this alternative. Access to both the Didion Ranch and Spears Ranch portions of the Park would be provided via the Mears Drive entrance, which would result in an increase in traffic on Mears Drive. Although the traffic would increase on Mears Drive, it is not expected that this increase would result in an exceedance of a LOS standard. The western parking area would not be constructed for this alternative; however, the Didion Ranch parking area would be expanded beyond the expansion proposed under the proposed project. Although this alternative would result in less traffic on Garden Bar Road, it would result in increased traffic on Mears Drive. Therefore, overall traffic

impacts of the Reduced Access Alternative on transportation and circulation would be on different roadways, but would be similar in volume to those of the proposed project.

Air Quality

Construction of trails and recreational facilities under the Reduced Access Alternative would temporarily increase concentrations of ROG, NO_X, PM_{10}, diesel exhaust, and fuel vapors in the project area. In addition, long-term operation (use and maintenance) of the Park as part of this alternative would cause an increase in ROG, NO_X, or PM_{10}. There is a slight possibility that ground-disturbing activities under this alternative would also expose areas containing asbestos. Mitigation would be included to address this issue, as necessary. However, this alternative would include fewer construction-related emissions associated with improvements to Garden Bar Road and the western parking area. The Reduced Access Alternative would have a less-than-significant impact on air quality with implementation of mitigation. For these reasons, the impacts of the Reduced Access Alternative on air quality would be less than those of the proposed project.

Noise

Construction of trails and recreational facilities under the Reduced Access Alternative would temporarily increase noise levels in the project area. Construction activities associated with this alternative would comply with the requirements of the Placer County Noise Ordinance. The closest noise-sensitive receptors are approximately 800 feet away. There would be less severe noise impacts from construction of improvements along Garden Bar Road and construction of the western parking area for this alternative than for the proposed project. Long-term operation (use and maintenance) of the Park under the Reduced Access Alternative would be similar to the proposed project and would not cause a significant increase in noise levels in the project area. Therefore, this alternative would have a less-than-significant impact on noise levels in the project area. For these reasons, the Reduced Access Alternative would have less of an impact than the proposed project on noise levels.

Soils, Geology, and Seismicity

Construction of recreational facilities under the Reduced Access Alternative would require some removal of vegetation and would result in soil disturbance and minor alterations to surface topography, which could result in erosion. However, this alternative would involve less removal of vegetation and a lesser amount of earthmoving activity for improvements to Garden Bar Road and the western parking area. This alternative would include renovation of existing buildings on-site for human occupancy or use as a nature center and construction of bridges and bunkhouses that could be subject to ground shaking, liquefaction, and landslides. However, the project area is not located within an earthquake fault zone, and no structures for human occupancy would be placed across any fault traces. The County would obtain authorization for construction and operation activities from the Central Valley RWQCB, implement erosion and sediment control measures, and obtain and implement seismic engineering design recommendations to reduce impacts on geology, soils, and seismicity to a less-than-significant level. Impacts of this alternative on soils, geology, and seismicity would be less than significant. For these reasons, the Reduced Access Alternative would have slightly less of an impact on soils, geology, and seismicity than the proposed project.

Mineral Resources

The Reduced Access Alternative would not result in the loss of any known mineral resources, nor would it impede or interfere with the establishment or continuation of existing mineral extraction operations. It would not result in the loss of available known mineral resources of value to the region or residents of the state, and the area is not delineated as a locally important recovery site. The Reduced Access Alternative would not have an impact on mineral resources; therefore, the impacts of this alternative on mineral resources would be similar to those of the proposed project.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Implementation of the Reduced Access Alternative would include construction of up to two groundwater wells and septic system that could affect groundwater. Potential erosion from vegetation removal and construction could also affect water quality in the project area; however, this alternative would not include removal of vegetation and earthmoving activities for improvements to Garden Bar Road or the western parking area. This alternative would comply with policies pertaining to water quality in the General Plan and would implement best management practices. A grading and drainage plan would be prepared and implemented and the County would obtain a Transient Non-community Water System Permit to reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, the Reduced Access Alternative would have a less-than-significant impact on water quality and hydrology in the project area. For these reasons, the Reduced Access Alternative would have slightly less of an impact on hydrology and water quality than the proposed project.

Recreation

The Reduced Access Alternative would provide new recreational opportunities in response to existing demand for more recreational opportunities in Placer County similar to the proposed project. However, this alternative would provide no public automobile, horse trailer, or bus access to the western side of the Park for Park users, which would substantially reduce the new opportunities for recreation use of the Spears Ranch portion of the Park. Recreation users would be forced to access the Spears Ranch portion of the Park from the existing parking area and trails on the Didion Ranch portion of the Park. This alternative would not increase the demand for parks or facilities; however, the increased visitation could negatively affect existing recreational opportunities within the Didion Ranch portion of the Park. Without automobile access to the western portion of the Park, new recreation opportunities would be substantially reduced compared to the proposed project. The Reduced Access Alternative would have a beneficial impact on recreation, but it would provide substantially less of a benefit than the proposed project because of reduced access.

Public Services and Utilities

Implementation of the Reduced Access Alternative would not result in the need for a substantial increase in fire protection, police protection, schools, or other public facilities. The public services currently provided to the project area would be sufficient to accommodate use of the Park under this alternative. The Reduced Access Alternative would have components that would require electricity and communication, wastewater treatment, septic, and water supply systems. A septic system would be constructed under this alternative as for the proposed project. For this alternative solid waste would be collected and disposed of by Auburn Placer Disposal Service. Because this alternative would not increase demand for public services and adequate utilities would be provided to accommodate Park users, the Reduced Access Alternative would have a less-than-significant impact on public services and utilities. The impacts of the Reduced Access Alternative on public services and utilities would be similar to those of the proposed project.

Hazardous Materials and Hazards

The Reduced Access Alternative would be located in an area of medium fire danger, as rated by the California CalFire (2007). There is the potential for fire to be caused by construction equipment or by Park users after construction (e.g., from discarded cigarette butts or campfires). The potential also exists for small amounts of hazardous materials to be released from construction equipment or during maintenance of the Park under this alternative. In addition, there is the potential for the public and/or construction workers to be exposed to hazardous materials and vector-borne diseases under this alternative. Because there would be less construction required under this alterative for Garden Bar Road improvements, there would be fewer potential hazards related to construction compared to the proposed project. The Reduced Access Alternative would be constructed and operated consistent with the *Hidden Falls Regional Park Vegetation, Fuels, and Range Management Plan* (Placer County 2007b), and an accidental-spill prevention and response plan would be developed to reduce these impacts.

The County would also coordinate with the Vector Control District and create a safety hazard plan to reduce these impacts. Because these measures would be taken, this alternative would have a less-than-significant impact on hazards and hazardous materials. For these reasons, the impacts of the Reduced Access Alternative on hazards and hazardous materials would be slightly less than those of the proposed project.

15.1.3 SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

A comparison of the proposed project, the No Project Alternative, the Single-Track Trails Alternative, the Dispersed Recreation Alternative, and the Reduced Access Alternative is presented in Table 15-1 below. This table shows the advantages and disadvantages of these alternatives relative to the proposed project.

ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

The environmentally superior alternative would be the No Project Alternative; however, according to the State CEQA Guidelines, if the environmentally superior alternative is the No Project Alternative, an environmentally superior alternative must be selected from the other alternatives. The environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives is the Reduced Access Alternative. The Reduced Access Alternative would be environmentally superior to the proposed project with regard to biological resources; visual resources; air quality; noise; soils, geology, and seismicity; hydrology and water quality; and hazardous materials and hazards. The Reduced Access Alternative would be superior to the Single-Track Trails Alternative with regard to visual resources, and the Dispersed Recreation Alterative with regard to visual resources; biological resources; cultural resources; soils, geology, and seismicity; and hydrology and water quality.

15.2 SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS THAT CANNOT BE AVOIDED

CEQA Section 21100(b)(2)(A) provides that an EIR shall include a detailed statement setting forth "[i]n a separate section…[a]ny significant effect on the environment that cannot be avoided if the project is implemented." Section 15126.2(b) of the State CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR describe any significant impacts, including those that can be mitigated but not reduced to a level of insignificance. Chapters 4.0 through 14.0 of this EIR provide descriptions of the potential environmental effects of the proposed project for all applicable environmental topic areas, as well as mitigation measures to mitigate project effects to the extent feasible. Cumulative impacts of the proposed project are discussed in Section 15.5 below. Implementation of the proposed mitigation measures would reduce all of the identified project-related significant impacts to less-than-significant levels, except for Impact 7-3: Long-Term Changes in Visual Resources Associated with the Improvements to Garden Bar Road. Mitigation Measure 7-1: Revegetate and Restore All Disturbed Areas to Minimize Visual Quality Impacts, would reduce this impact, but not to a less-than-significant level. Because of the number of trees that could be removed and the time required for tree plantings to reach a similar size and screening ability to existing trees, there is no feasible mitigation available to fully mitigate this impact to visual resources. Therefore, the proposed project would result in a significant and unavoidable effect on visual resources.

Table 15-1
Summary of Alternatives Analysis

Issue Area	Proposed Project	No Project (Alternative 1)		Single-Track Trails (Alternative 2)		Dispersed Recreation Alternative (Alternative 3)		Reduced Access Alternative (Alternative 4)	
Land Use and Agricultural Resources	Less than significant	No impact	❑	Less than significant	★	Less than significant	★	Less than significant	★
Population, Employment, and Housing	No impact	No impact	★	No impact	★	No impact	★	No impact	★
Biological Resources	Less than significant	No impact	❑	Less than significant	❑	Less than significant	■	Less than significant	❑
Cultural Resources	Less than significant	No impact	❑	Less than significant	★	Less than significant	■	Less than significant	★
Visual Resources	Significant and Unavoidable	No impact	❑	Significant and Unavoidable	❑	Significant and Unavoidable	★	Less than significant	❑
Transportation and Circulation	Less than significant	No impact	❑	Less than significant	❑	Less than significant	❑	Less than significant	★
Air Quality	Less than significant	No impact	❑	Less than significant	❑	Less than significant	❑	Less than significant	❑
Noise	Less than significant	No impact	❑	Less than significant	❑	Less than significant	★	Less than significant	❑
Soils, Geology, and Seismicity	Less than significant	No impact	❑	Less than significant	❑	Less than significant	■	Less than significant	❑
Mineral Resources	No impact	No impact	★	No impact	★	No impact	★	No impact	★
Hydrology and Water Quality	Less than significant	No impact	❑	Less than significant	❑	Less than significant	■	Less than significant	❑
Public Services and Utilities	Less than significant	No impact	❑	Less than significant	★	Less than significant	❑	Less than significant	★
Recreation	Beneficial impact	Less than significant	■	Beneficial impact, but substantially reduced	■	Beneficial impact, but substantially reduced	■	Beneficial impact, but substantially reduced	■
Hazardous Materials and Hazards	Less than significant	No impact	❑	Less than significant	❑	Less than significant	★	Less than significant	❑

Key:
■ Proposed project environmentally advantageous over the alternative
❑ Alternative is environmentally advantageous compared to the proposed project
★ No clear environmental advantage exists between the alternative and the proposed project
Source: Data provided by EDAW in 2008

15.3 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

CEQA Section 21100(b)(2)(B) provides that an EIR shall include a detailed statement setting forth "[i]n a separate section… [a]ny significant effect on the environment that would be irreversible if the project is implemented." State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(c) provides the following guidance for an analysis of significant irreversible changes of a project:

> Uses of nonrenewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the project may be irreversible because a large commitment of such resources makes removal or nonuse thereafter unlikely. Primary impacts and, particularly, secondary impacts (such as highway improvement that provides access to a previously inaccessible area) generally commit future generations to similar uses. Also irreversible damage can result from environmental accidents associated with the project. Irretrievable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified.

Mechanical construction techniques would be used to construct the proposed trail system and recreational facilities such as parking areas, picnic areas, restrooms, and bridges across Coon Creek and other drainages. In addition, the proposed project would commit future generations to similar uses to some extent. The proposed project would provide access to a rural area that has been inaccessible to recreational users and other members of the public. This could be considered a secondary effect of the proposed project. However, all potential effects of the proposed project for all applicable environmental issue areas are analyzed in this EIR. Therefore, this analysis assumes that no additional effects related to project development would occur that are not evaluated in other sections of this EIR.

Implementing any of the alternatives would require irretrievable commitments of both renewable and nonrenewable energy and material resources for construction of the proposed trail system and related project facilities. As described in Chapter 3.0, "Project Description," these activities would require use of construction equipment that use petroleum fuels, such as gasoline and diesel. This temporary expenditure of energy would occur over the short term and would not substantially increase the overall demand for petroleum fuels, electricity, or natural gas. Therefore, none of the alternatives would result in a commitment of a significant amount of nonrenewable resources.

Resources in the form of construction materials and labor, fuels, and other energy sources for vehicles and equipment would also be committed with the implementation of all the other alternatives except the No Project Alternative.

15.4 GROWTH-INDUCING EFFECTS

CEQA Section 21100(b)(5) specifies that the growth-inducing impacts of a project must be addressed in an EIR. Section 15126.2(d) of the State CEQA Guidelines states that a proposed project is growth-inducing if it could "foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment." Direct growth inducement would result if a project involved (for example) the construction of new housing. Indirect growth inducement would result if a project established substantial new permanent employment opportunities (e.g., new commercial, industrial, or governmental enterprises), involved a construction effort with substantial short-term employment opportunities that would indirectly stimulate the need for additional housing and services, or removed an obstacle to housing development. Examples of growth-inducing actions include extending water, wastewater, fire, or other types of services in areas not previously served; extending transportation routes into previously undeveloped areas; and establishing major new employment opportunities.

The proposed project would involve construction of a multiple-use trail system and other recreational facilities within the undeveloped, open space, recreational setting of Placer County. Implementation of the proposed project would occur in phases (see Chapter 3.0, "Project Description"), and the work would be performed by one or more crews from the California Conservation Corps, licensed contractors, volunteers, and/or County staff. These activities would generate short-term employment opportunities; however, the work would be temporary and would occur over several years, with certain activities starting and stopping for shorter durations within that time period. Because of the limited number and type of new jobs that would be generated and the temporary nature of those jobs, it is anticipated that the new jobs would be filled using the existing local employment pool. Existing available housing in the region would easily accommodate any workers who relocate from outside the area, if needed. Existing County staff members would manage the Park and trail uses with assistance from local volunteers and organized recreation groups. Therefore, this alternative would require few permanent workers and would have very little effect on the local workforce. For these reasons, indirect growth-inducing impacts resulting from implementation of the proposed project would be less than significant.

The Spears Ranch portion of the Park was purchased by the Placer Legacy Program to create a regional park with an emphasis on passive and outdoor recreation uses. This property would be managed by the County for open space, natural resources values, and outdoor recreational uses. The proposed project would be consistent with the zoning of the project area. Construction and operation (i.e., use and maintenance) of the proposed Park would not involve construction of housing. The status of the property as a contiguous natural preserve extinguishes the potential of up to 20 divisible residential parcels under current zoning. Some of the public and private services and utilities that currently serve the property would need to be altered to accommodate the Park facilities; however, no new services or utilities would be constructed with more capacity than needed for uses currently being proposed. The proposed project would also include improvements to the existing access road within the Park and to Garden Bar Road, which would improve access to the project area. However, many additional road improvements would need to occur and other requirements (e.g., water and wastewater facilities and capacity, compliance with the General Plan and Placer County Zoning Ordinance) would need to be met for any further development to occur along Garden Bar Road. Therefore, the project would not result in direct growth-inducing effects, and this impact would be less than significant.

A slight increase in economic growth may be realized from the proposed project. Construction of the proposed Park would increase the number and capacity of regional parks in Placer County, which could draw people to recreate in the project area from elsewhere in the county and region. By stimulating visitation for recreational activities, the proposed Park is also expected to result in a slight increase in related recreational spending levels. This is anticipated to lead to a minor, long-term increase in local economic activity. Such economic benefits would likely be concentrated in the sectors of the local business community that serve recreationists, specifically trail users. However, there would be no entrance fee to the Park, so no direct economic growth would result from the project. Effects on the local economy would be minimal, resulting in no significant indirect growth-inducing effects.

15.5 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Section 15130 of the State CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR discuss cumulative impacts of a project when the project's incremental effect is "cumulatively considerable." According to Section 15065, "Cumulatively considerable means that the incremental effects of an individual project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, other current projects, and probable future projects as defined in Section 15130." Sections 15130 and 15355 of the State CEQA Guidelines both stress cumulative impacts in the context of closely related projects and from projects causing related impacts.

The term "considerable" is subject to interpretation. The standards used herein to determine whether an effect is considerable are that either the impact of the proposed project would contribute in any manner to the existing significant cumulative impact, or the cumulative impact would exceed an established threshold of significance when the proposed project's incremental effects are combined with similar effects from other projects.

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b) directs the crafting of an adequate discussion of cumulative impacts:

> The discussion of cumulative impacts shall reflect the severity of the impacts and their likelihood of occurrence, but the discussion need not provide as great detail as is provided for the effects attributable to the project alone. The discussion should be guided by standards of practicality and reasonableness, and should focus on the cumulative impact to which the identified other projects contribute rather than the attributes of other projects which do not contribute to the cumulative impact.

A cumulative analysis may employ either of two methods for evaluating cumulative impacts; this EIR uses the list method in accordance with Section 15130(b)(1)(A) of the State CEQA Guidelines, which allows the lead agency to consider "past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts…."
The environmental influences of past projects and present projects that have been implemented already exist as a part of current conditions in the project area. Therefore, the contributions of past and present projects to environmental conditions are adequately captured in the description of the existing settings within each resource chapter (Chapters 4.0 through 14.0) and need not be specifically listed here. This cumulative impact analysis focuses on the potential cumulative physical changes to the existing setting that could occur as a result of a combination of this proposed trail project and probable future projects.

15.5.1 OTHER RELEVANT PROJECTS

POTENTIAL ADJOINING PROJECTS

Didion Ranch Portion of Hidden Falls Regional Park (Existing Project)

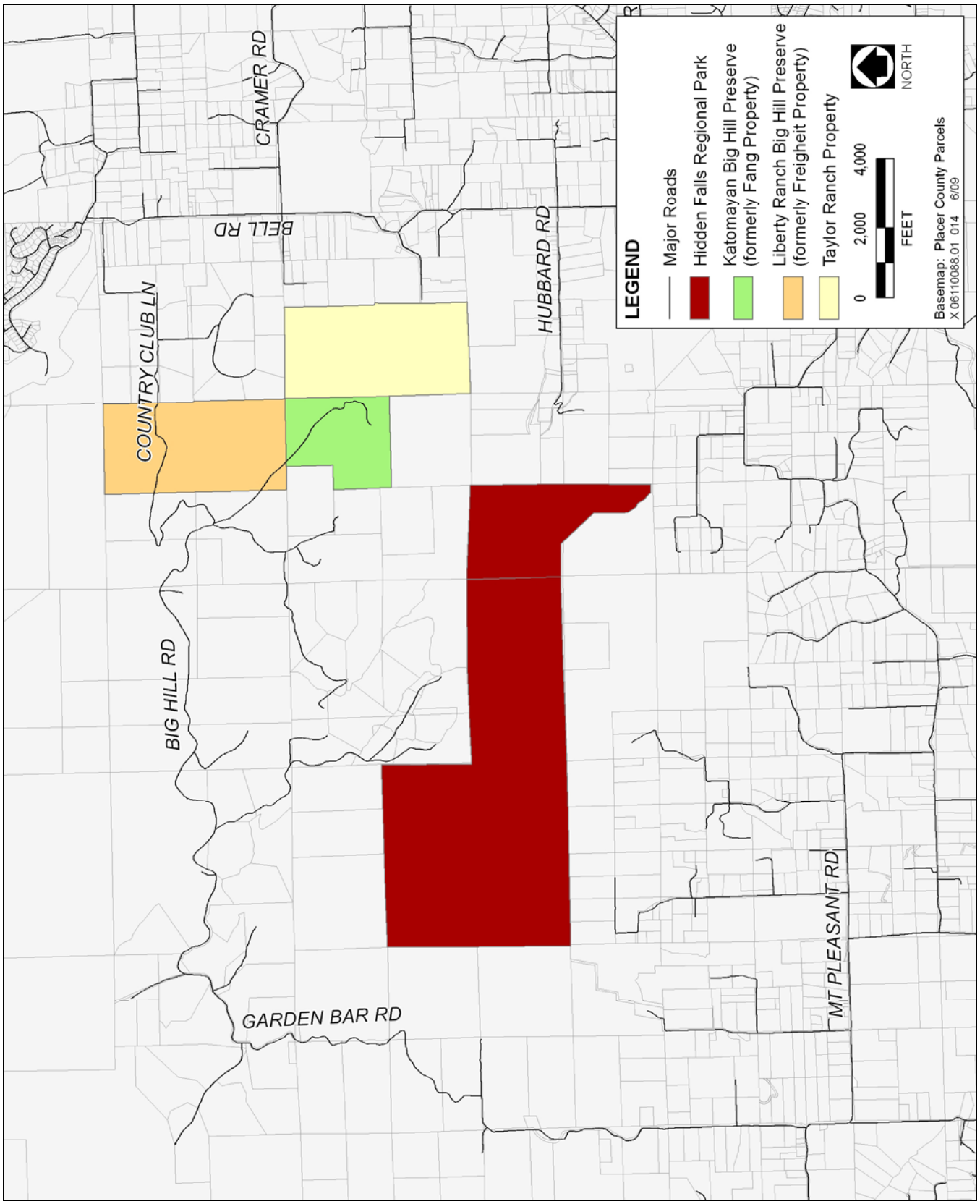
The Placer Legacy Program purchased the Didion Ranch portion of the Park in November 2004. The Didion Ranch property is approximately 221 acres and is adjacent to the Spears Ranch portion of the Park that is the subject of this EIR. An initial study/mitigated negative declaration was adopted for the Didion Ranch portion of the Park in 2004. This portion of the Park is now open to the general public from sunrise to sunset year-round. Used for passive recreation, it includes approximately 7 miles of multiple-use trails, a small picnic area, and a parking area. There is parking for approximately 50 cars and five trucks and trailers. Access to this portion of the Park is provided via Mears Drive. If the proposed project is implemented, access between the Spears Ranch and Didion Ranch portions of the Park would be provided via trail.

Liberty Ranch Big Hill Preserve (formerly Freiheit Property) (Future Project)

The approximately 320-acre Freiheit property is located approximately 2 miles northeast of the Park (Exhibit 15-1). The Placer Land Trust has acquired a conservation easement across this property. Terms of the conservation easement stipulate the offer of dedication of a public trail easement generally running from the southeast to the northwest corners of the property, and the potential exists to connect it to the proposed Park via trail in the future. Identification and recordation of the trail easement must be completed by 2012. However, there is no timeline for accommodation of a public access connection to the trail easement. General public vehicle staging is not anticipated at the Liberty Ranch Big Hill Preserve property. It is unknown when trail construction would begin on the Liberty Ranch Big Hill Preserve; however, a separate environmental analysis would need to be conducted for those facilities prior to construction.

Katomayan Big Hill Preserve (formerly Fang Property) (Future Project)

The Katomayan Big Hill Preserve is located approximately 0.7 mile northeast of the proposed Park (Exhibit 15-1). This 160-acre property borders the southern boundary of the Liberty Ranch Big Hill Preserve and the western border of the Taylor Ranch property (described below). This property was purchased by Placer Land Trust, and



Source: Data provided by Placer County in 2007

Potential Adjoining Projects WP **Exhibit 15-1**

the potential exists to connect it to the proposed Park and the Liberty Ranch Big Hill Preserve via trail in the future. General public staging facilities are not anticipated for the Katomayan Big Hill Preserve property. Park amenities such as bench rests, picnic areas, and/or a restroom facility may be located within the property in conjunction with the trail. It is unknown when construction of trails or recreational facilities would begin on this property; a separate environmental analysis would need to be conducted for such facilities.

Taylor Ranch Property (Future Project)

Similar to the Katomayan Big Hill Preserve, the Taylor Ranch property has been purchased by Placer Land Trust (Exhibit 15-1). This 320-acre parcel is located approximately 1 mile northeast of the Park. The potential exists to connect this property to the Park and other surrounding properties via trail in the future. General public staging facilities are not anticipated for the Taylor Ranch property. Park amenities such as bench rests, picnic areas, and/or a restroom facility may be located within the property in conjunction with the trail. It is unknown when construction on trails or recreational facilities would begin on this property; a separate environmental analysis would need to be conducted for such facilities.

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant #G0733008 (Action Leading to a Potential Future Project)

On March 13, 2008, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy authorized Grant #G0733008 to Placer County to facilitate the development of a public trail connection between the Park and the Taylor Ranch property. Specifically, the grant will fund physical reconnaissance and flagging of potential trail alignments across intermediate parcels and the detailed design and cost estimation of trail, bridges, and associated amenities. The grant does not fund acquisition of property either in easement or fee.

OTHER PROJECTS IN PLACER COUNTY

Traylor Ranch Bird Sanctuary and Nature Reserve (Existing Project)

The Traylor Ranch Bird Sanctuary and Nature Reserve is a passive recreation park that offers nature study and interpretation, trail use, and family picnic areas. This reserve is approximately 90 acres and is located in Penryn, approximately 12 miles from the project area (Placer County 2006). This reserve is open to the public.

Griffith Quarry Park (Existing Project)

Griffith Quarry Park is a passive recreation park in Penryn, approximately 14 miles from the project area. Griffith Park provides picnic areas, trails, and a county museum and is open to the public (Placer County 2006).

15.5.2 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative impacts of the proposed project are evaluated separately for each environmental topic area addressed in this EIR. Within each topic area, the cumulative impact analysis focuses on the potential cumulative physical changes to the existing conditions that could occur as a result of a combination of the proposed project and probable future projects described above.

LAND USE AND AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Chapter 4.0 identifies the effects of the proposed project on land use, planning, and agricultural resources. The proposed project would be consistent with the land uses and zoning of the project area, including the goals and policies of the General Plan. Trail construction is being considered for the Liberty Ranch Big Hill Preserve, Katomayan Big Hill Preserve, and Taylor properties northeast of the Park, and the proposed project would be consistent with the future land uses of those surrounding properties. In addition, grazing would be allowed to continue as part of the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project, either alone or combined with other

projects, would not have a significant cumulative effect on land use, planning, or agricultural resources. The proposed project would not contribute to a significant cumulative effect on land use, planning, or agricultural resources.

SOILS, GEOLOGY, AND SEISMICITY

Chapter 5.0 identifies the effects of the proposed project on soils, geology, and seismicity. Disturbance of topsoil and removal of vegetation during construction of the proposed project would increase the potential for wind and water erosion. The proposed project could include renovation of existing buildings on-site for human occupancy and construction of bridges and bunkhouses that could be subject to ground shaking, liquefaction, and landslides. Disturbance of naturally occurring asbestos fibers could also create a health hazard. These impacts on soils, geology, and seismicity in the project area are considered potentially significant and could be cumulatively considerable.

Mitigation of impacts of the proposed project would consist of obtaining authorization for construction and operation with the Central Valley RWQCB and implementing erosion and sediment control measures, obtaining and implementing seismic engineering design recommendations, and preparing and implementing an asbestos dust control plan, if needed. Because the proposed project would implement site-specific mitigation consistent with the Central Valley RWQCB program, the incremental effect of the proposed project is not cumulatively considerable when considered with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects. The proposed project would not contribute to a significant cumulative effect on soils, geology, or seismicity.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Chapter 6.0 identifies the effects of the proposed project on cultural resources. The proposed project has the potential to affect known cultural resources and yet-to-be-discovered subsurface cultural remains or human interments. The impacts of the proposed project on cultural resources in the project area are considered potentially significant and could be cumulatively considerable.

Mitigation of impacts of the proposed project includes modifying construction plans to avoid potentially significant cultural resources, and halting construction immediately and notifying a qualified professional archaeologist of any discovery of cultural materials or human interments. The archaeologist would determine whether the resource is potentially significant as per the California Register of Historical Resources and would develop appropriate mitigation. If a Native American burial is discovered, Sections 7050.5 and 7052 of the California Health and Safety Code and Section 5097 of the California Public Resources Code would be complied with to ensure that the site is properly protected.

Because the proposed project would implement site-specific mitigation consistent with the California Health and Safety Code and the California Public Resources Code, the incremental effect of the proposed project would not be cumulatively considerable when considered with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects. Therefore, the proposed project would not contribute to a significant cumulative effect on cultural resources.

VISUAL RESOURCES

Chapter 7.0 identifies the effects of the proposed project on visual resources. The proposed project would not be visible from any scenic vistas or scenic highways. Project features would incorporate the use of natural colors and materials to the extent possible so that they would blend with the surrounding environment. Views of trails and recreational facilities from the surrounding areas would be limited. The proposed project would introduce some new security lighting on the buildings on-site; however, the lighting would be similar to lighting that has been used by the previous resident and low-wattage lighting would be used. Road improvements along Garden Bar Road would be visible to nearby residents and would change the visual character of the road. The impacts of the proposed project on visual resources along Garden Bar Road are considered significant and would be cumulatively considerable.

Revegetating temporarily disturbed areas to minimize visual quality impacts and protecting oak woodlands would reduce the visual impact, but not to a less-than-significant level. Because the project's effects would not be reduced to a less-than-significant level, the proposed project's contribution to a cumulative effect on visual resources would be considerable. Therefore, the proposed project would contribute to a significant and unavoidable cumulative effect on visual resources.

TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

Chapter 8.0 identifies the effects of the proposed project on transportation and circulation. The impacts of developing the proposed project have also been considered within the context of long-term future traffic conditions in this area of the county. This analysis accounts for future regional traffic growth, as projected from review of historic traffic count records on roadways in the project vicinity.

The County Department of Public Works has collected daily traffic volume counts for rural roads, including Garden Bar Road and Mt. Pleasant Road, since 1971. Table 15-2 provides a general indication of changes in traffic volumes between 1971 and 2007. These data, along with the new traffic counts made for the proposed project, have been used through regression analysis to estimate the volume of traffic likely to occur on roads in the project vicinity in the year 2027 (Table 15-2).

Table 15-2
Background Traffic Growth

Road	Post Mile	Location	Weekday Daily Volume			
			1971	1978	2007	2027
Garden Bar Road	2.42	North of Mt. Pleasant Road	191	–	285	500
	1.14	South of Mt. Pleasant Road	–	632	885	1,110
Mt. Pleasant Road	0.002	West of Garden Bar Road	–	266	385	540
	2.10	East of Garden Bar Road	–	361	910	1,125

Source: Data provided by KD Anderson & Associates in 2008

These daily traffic volumes have been employed to interpolate future weekend traffic volumes and weekday peak-hour intersection turning volumes without the proposed project, as shown in Exhibit 15-2.

As noted in Table 15-3, with and without the proposed project, the volume of traffic on most county roads would remain within the LOS C threshold identified in the General Plan. Current peak-hour volumes for intersections were adjusted to future intersection volumes based on the relative growth rates implied by daily traffic volumes using methods described in the Transportation Research Board's National Cooperative Highway Research Program Report 255, *Highway Traffic Data for Urbanized Area Project Planning and Design*. Exhibit 15-3 presents "Year 2027 plus Project" traffic volumes that were developed by superimposing project trips onto the existing traffic volumes. As noted in Table 15-4, all intersections would continue to operate at a LOS that meets the County's minimum standards (i.e., LOS C or better). In addition, the County would pay a traffic impact fee to the Capital Improvement Program in accordance with Section 15.28.010 of the Placer County Code to further off-set any impacts of the project on area roadways.

Table 15-3
Year 2027 Cumulative Daily Traffic Volumes and Levels of Service

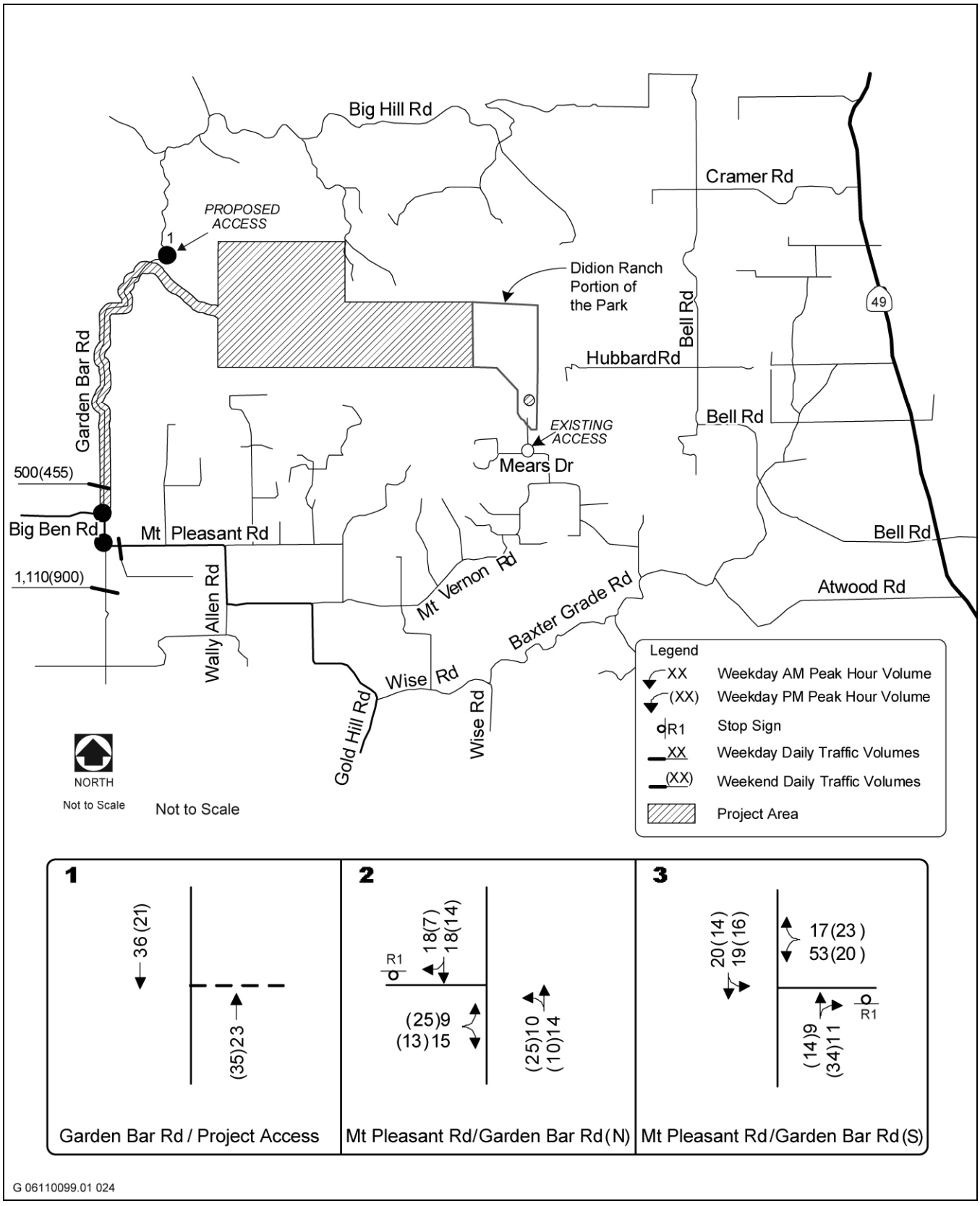
Road	From	To	Class	Weekday					Weekend				
				2027		2027 Plus Project			2027		2027 Plus Project		
				Daily Volume	LOS	Daily Volume		LOS	Daily Volume	LOS	Daily Volume		LOS
						Project	Total				Project	Total	
Garden Bar Road (N)	Mt. Pleasant Road	Park Entrance	Mountainous Rural	500	A	256	756	B	455	A	460	915	B
Mt. Pleasant Road	Big Bend Road	Garden Bar Road (N)	Mountainous Rural	540	A	82	622	B	435	A	148	583	B
Mt. Pleasant Road	Garden Bar Road (S)	Wally Allen Road	Mountainous Rural	1,125	B	90	1,215	C	880	B	162	1,042	B
Garden Bar Road (S)	Mt. Pleasant Road	Wise Road	Mountainous Rural	1,110	B	84	1,194	B–C	900	B	152	1,052	B

Notes: LOS = level of service; N = north; S = south
Source: Data provided by KD Anderson & Associates in 2008

Table 15-4
Cumulative (Year 2027) Intersection LOS

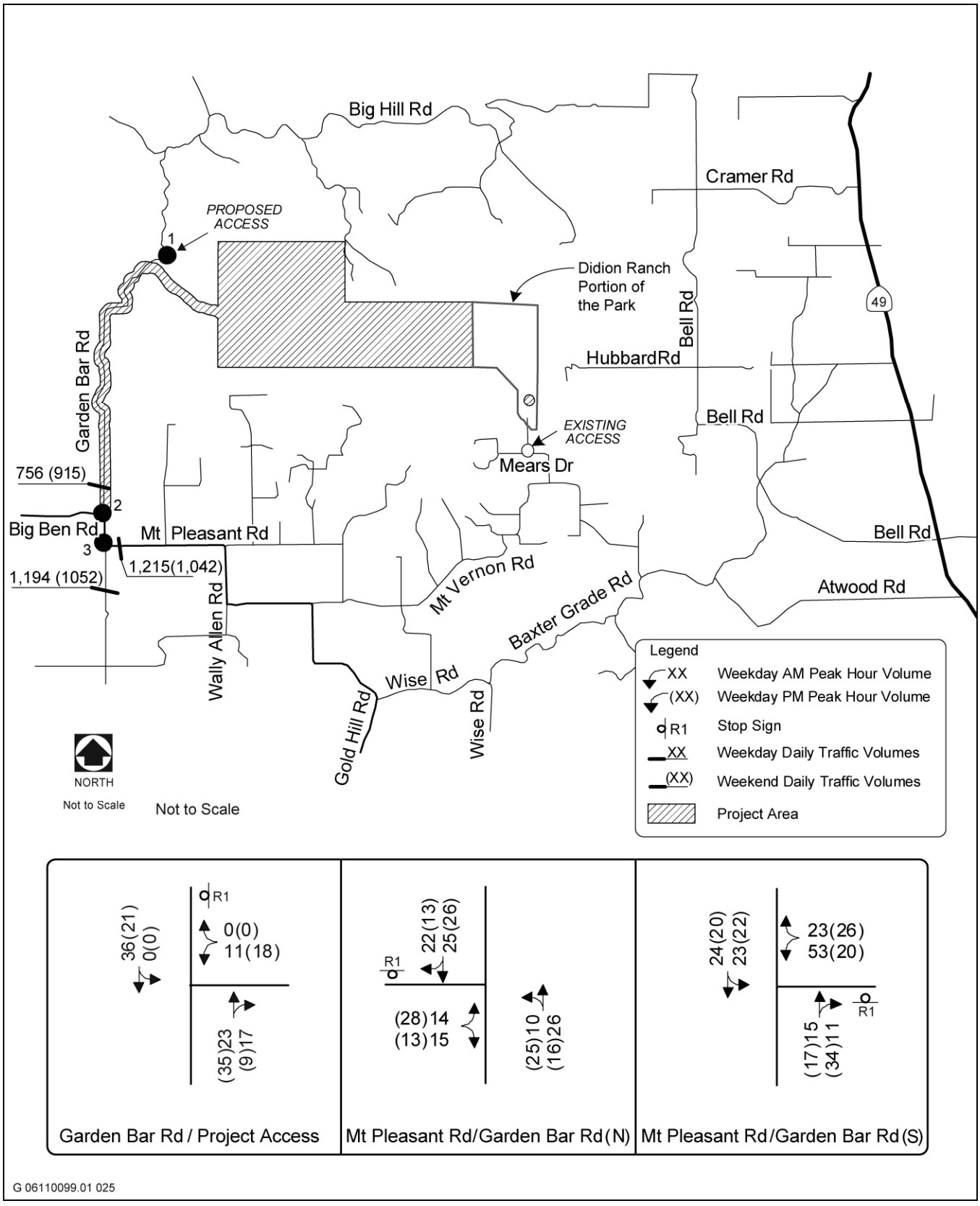
Intersection	Control	Weekday								Traffic Signal Warrants Met?	
		A.M. Peak Hour (7–9 a.m.)				P.M. Peak Hour (4–6 p.m.)					
		Existing		Existing Plus Project		Existing		Existing Plus Project			
		LOS	Average Delay (seconds per vehicle)	LOS	Average Delay (seconds per vehicle)	LOS	Average Delay (seconds per vehicle)	LOS	Average Delay (seconds per vehicle)	A.M. Peak Hour	P.M. Peak Hour
Garden Bar Road/ Access	WB Stop	–		–	–	–		–	–	No	No
SB left turn											
WB left+right turn				A	9.0			A	8.9		
Mt Pleasant Road/ Garden Bar Road (N)	SB Stop							A	7.4	No*	No
EB left turn		A	7.3	A	7.3	A	7.4	A	9.1		
SB left+right turn		A	8.8	A	8.9	A	9.0				
Mt Pleasant Road/ Garden Bar Road (S)	NB Stop							A	7.4		
EB left turn		A	7.4	A	7.4	A	7.3	A	8.9	No*	No
NB left+right turn		A	9.1	A	9.3	A	8.8				

Notes: EB = eastbound; LOS = level of service; N = north; NB = northbound; S = south; SB = southbound; WB = westbound
Source: Data provided by KD Anderson & Associates in 2008



Source: KD Anderson & Associates in 2008

Daily Traffic Volumes without Proposed Project **Exhibit 15-2**



Source: KD Anderson & Associates in 2008

Daily Traffic Volumes Year 2027 Plus Proposed Project **Exhibit 15-3**

As shown above, the proposed project would not have a cumulatively considerable effect on transportation and circulation when considered with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects. The proposed project would not contribute to a significant cumulative effect on transportation or circulation.

AIR QUALITY

Chapter 9.0 identifies the effects of the proposed project on air quality. The proposed project would result in construction-related effects on air quality because construction of project facilities would generate criteria pollutants such as NO_X, ROG, and PM_{10}. All construction activities within the air basin would contribute to current air quality violations similar to those of the proposed project. Based on air quality modeling conducted, emissions of ROG and NO_X associated with project operation would not exceed PCAPCD's cumulative significance threshold of 10 lb/day. In addition, PCAPCD relies, to a certain degree, on land use designations contained in general plan documents applicable to its jurisdiction. PCAPCD refers to the contents of approved general plans to forecast, inventory, and allocate regional emissions from land use and development–related sources. These emissions budgets are used in statewide air quality attainment planning efforts. Because the proposed project is consistent with the land use designations contained in the General Plan, emissions associated with the proposed land uses would have been accounted for in regional air quality planning efforts.

The air basin is in nonattainment status; however, the air quality effects of the proposed project would be minimal and temporary. Because air quality impacts associated with the proposed project would be minimal and it is assumed that other projects in the area would use mitigation as necessary to reduce their impact on air quality, the project's incremental contribution to the significant cumulative effect is not cumulatively considerable.

GHG emissions generated during construction and operation of the proposed project would be primarily in the form of CO_2. CO_2 and other GHGs persist in the atmosphere for a much longer period of time than criteria air pollutants. New long-term emissions of GHGs associated with operation of the expanded Park would be generated by vehicle trips by Park visitors. No stationary sources of GHG emissions would be associated with the project.

For several reasons, it would be too speculative to determine whether the total operational GHG emissions generated by the proposed project would be new emissions. It is unknown whether anticipated visitors to the Park would otherwise seek similar recreational opportunities at other existing parks in the region if the new trails and Park facilities were not to be developed. Also, if the same individuals would use other parks, it is unknown whether they would travel to more-distant recreation areas, resulting in increased vehicle miles traveled and associated GHG emissions. It is conceivable that construction of the trail and the recreational facilities at the Park would reduce recreational-related vehicle miles traveled, given that it is less than 10 miles from Auburn and 15 miles from Lincoln, two major population centers in the region. Furthermore, it is also unknown whether Park visitors generate more or less GHG emissions than when they are engaged in nonrecreational activities (e.g., staying at home, shopping). Thus, it is not certain whether the long-term net change in GHG emissions associated with the proposed project would be negative or positive. Nonetheless, the amount of the net change would be nominal because the project would not directly represent an increase in the state's population by providing additional permanent residences, nor would it represent an expansion of the state's economy by providing a considerable number of new jobs. Additionally, Park features such as multiple access points, use of low-flow toilets, low-maintenance trail and recreation areas, and revegetation projects would serve to reduce GHG emissions. Therefore, any contribution by the proposed project to a net increase in GHG emissions would be less than considerable. This cumulative impact would be less than significant.

NOISE

Short-Term Construction-Generated Noise

Chapter 10.0 identifies the effects of the proposed project on noise. Noise is a localized occurrence and attenuates with distance. Therefore, only cumulative development projects in the direct project vicinity would have the potential to add to anticipated project-generated noise.

As discussed in Impact 10-1 in Chapter 10.0, depending on the operations conducted for the project's construction, individual equipment noise levels could range from 79 A-weighted decibels (dBA) to 91 dBA at a distance of 50 feet. Construction operations that occur between the hours of 6 a.m. and 8 p.m., Monday through Friday, during daylight savings time and between 7 a.m. and 8 p.m. during standard time are exempt from the applicable standards. However, noise levels caused by construction activities that occur during more sensitive night and evening hours may result in speech interference and increased sleep disruption to occupants of the nearby residences. Furthermore, if other nearby projects were to be constructed at the same time as the project, the proposed project and other related projects could combine to result in a short-term, significant cumulative impact.

Construction of the proposed project and nearby related projects would result in a short-term increase in traffic on the local area's roadway network, assuming that construction schedules are coincident. Residences along these roadways would be most affected by construction traffic noise because these roads provide immediate access to the project area. Daily off-site construction traffic related directly to the proposed project would include approximately four vans and 10–15 other worker/delivery vehicles related to construction.

Project-related construction activities and increases in traffic would be temporary, and according to the project description (see Chapter 3.0, "Project Description"), noise-generating construction activities would not occur during the more noise-sensitive hours (i.e., before 6 a.m. and after 8 p.m.) and therefore would be exempt from applicable noise standards. Thus, the project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to the short-term ambient noise level.

Long-Term Stationary-Source and Area-Source Noise

As discussed in Chapter 10.0, Impact 10-2, the proposed project would not include new or expanded stationary on-site noise sources. Nearby land uses do not include stationary and area sources that would generate a substantial amount of operational noise. Area noise related to maintenance activities and recreational use would occur under the proposed project. However, no exceedance of noise standards would occur. Occasional noise from overnight camping and hunting would be temporary and would not exceed any noise standards. Furthermore, no new or potential area noise sources are adjacent to the project area. Therefore, the project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to area-source noise.

Long-Term Transportation Noise

As discussed in Chapter 10.0, Impact 10-3, the proposed project would increase traffic noise levels on affected roadways. The Federal Highway Administration traffic noise prediction model was used to calculate traffic noise levels along affected roadways for traffic conditions in the year 2027 with implementation of the proposed project (refer to Table 15-5). The modeling is based on the trip distribution estimates presented in Chapter 8.0, "Transportation and Circulation." Input data used in the model included average daily traffic levels for nearby area roadways, fleet mixes (percentages of automobiles, medium-duty trucks, and heavy-duty trucks during daytime, evening, and nighttime hours), vehicle speeds, ground attenuation factors, roadway grades, and roadway widths.

Table 15-5 summarizes the net change in average daily traffic volumes and in modeled traffic noise levels from cumulative no-project to plus-project conditions to determine the contribution of the proposed project. Implementation of the proposed project would result in noise level increases of less than 3 dBA along Garden Bar Road and 1.3 dBA along Mt. Pleasant Road (refer to Table 15-5), which may be perceptible to the human ear.

However, with implementation of Mitigation Measure 10-1, traffic noise levels would be reduced below 3 dBA and therefore below significance thresholds identified in Chapter 10.0, "Noise," (60 dBA, 3-dBA increase). Thus, traffic associated with the long-term operation of the proposed project would not result in a perceptible (e.g., 3-dBA or greater) increase in noise levels along affected local roadways or highways or an exceedance of Placer County standards for transportation noise sources (60 dBA). Therefore, the proposed project and related projects would not contribute significantly to cumulative traffic noise.

Table 15-5
Comparison of Modeled Cumulative and Cumulative Plus Project Vehicular Traffic Noise Levels

Roadway Segment and Location	CNEL (dBA) 50 Feet from Centerline of Near Travel Lane		
	Cumulative	Cumulative Plus Project	Net Change
Weekday			
Garden Bar Road, north of Mt. Pleasant Road	54.6	56.4	1.8
Garden Bar Road, south of Mt. Pleasant Road	59.1	59.4	0.3
Mt. Pleasant Road, west of Garden Bar Road	57.6	58.2	0.6
Mt. Pleasant Road, east of Garden Bar Road	60.8	61.1	0.3
Weekend			
Garden Bar Road, north of Mt. Pleasant Road	54.2	57.2	3.0
Garden Bar Road, south of Mt. Pleasant Road	58.1	58.8	0.7
Mt. Pleasant Road, west of Garden Bar Road	56.7	58.0	1.3
Mt. Pleasant Road, east of Garden Bar Road	59.7	60.5	0.8

Notes: CNEL = community noise equivalent level; dBA = A-weighted decibels. Traffic noise levels were modeled using the Federal Highway Administration traffic noise model (FHWA 1988) based on traffic volumes obtained from the traffic report prepared for this project (Chapter 8.0, "Transportation and Circulation"). Calculated noise levels do not consider any shielding or reflection of noise by existing structures, vegetation, or terrain features; or noise contribution from other sources. See modeling results in Appendix E for further detail.
Source: Modeling performed by EDAW in 2008.

HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Chapter 11.0 identifies the effects of the proposed project on hydrology and water quality. The proposed project could result in temporary discharges of sediment and other contaminants into ephemeral drainages and Coon Creek in the project area. Installation of an on-site septic system could cause a change in the quality of the groundwater in the project area, and implementation of the proposed project could cause impacts on groundwater supply because of the installation of up to two groundwater wells to be used as a source for drinking water and restrooms. These impacts on water quality and hydrology are considered potentially significant. The contribution of the proposed project to cumulative effects on water quality and hydrology in the project area could be cumulatively considerable.

As mentioned above under "Soils, Geology, and Seismicity," mitigation of impacts of the proposed project would include obtaining authorization for construction and operation with the Central Valley RWQCB and implementing erosion and sediment control measures. Mitigation would also include preparing and implementing a grading and drainage plan and the County will obtain a Transient Non-community Water System Permit. Because the proposed project would implement site-specific mitigation consistent with the Central Valley RWQCB program and County permits, the incremental effect of the proposed project is not cumulatively considerable when considered with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects. The proposed project would not contribute to a significant cumulative effect on water quality or hydrology.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Chapter 12.0 identifies the effects of the proposed project on biological resources. Other known cumulative projects in the project vicinity are future parks in which the greatest potential for adverse effects on special-status species would consist of habitat disturbance related to construction and passive recreation. These impacts on biological resources are considered potentially significant. The contribution of the proposed project to cumulative effects on biological resources in the project area would be cumulatively considerable.

Mitigation of impacts of the proposed project consist of establishing buffers around sensitive resources, conducting preconstruction surveys, preserving oak woodland habitat within the project area, paying in-lieu fees for oak woodland preservation consistent with the Placer County Tree Ordinance, and obtaining and complying with terms of applicable permits. The proposed project would implement site-specific mitigation consistent with regulations of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that would reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, the incremental effect of the proposed project would not be cumulatively considerable when considered with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects. This impact would be less than significant.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND UTILITIES

Chapter 13.0 identifies the effects of the proposed project on public services and utilities. Use of the proposed Park could increase the demand for emergency services in the project area; however, this increased demand would be small and would not result in the need for a significant increase in emergency services. The proposed project would include installation of up to two groundwater wells and septic system within the Park. Although soils in the project area exhibit limitations for the installation of a septic system, soil testing has identified suitable soils for a septic system. Therefore, the proposed project, either alone or combined with other projects, would not have a significant cumulative effect on public services or utilities. The proposed project would not contribute to a significant cumulative effect on public services or utilities.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AND HAZARDS

Chapter 14.0 identifies the effects of the proposed project on hazardous materials and hazards. Sparks from construction and maintenance equipment could generate fire risks in the project area, which has been identified as a medium fire hazard area (CalFire 2007), and Park users could generate fire risks (e.g., from discarded cigarette butts, campfires). The proposed project also has the potential to expose people to vector-related hazards and expose workers to hazardous materials during facility construction or maintenance. These impacts are potentially significant and could be cumulatively considerable.

However, the County would continue to use the *Hidden Falls Regional Park Vegetation, Fuels and Range Management Plan* as a working guide to reduce the risk of fire in the project area and would continue to work with CalFire to reduce the fire hazard within the Park. Fire reduction measures may include grazing, creating fuel breaks, and manual removal of excess vegetation. An accidental-spill prevention and response plan would be implemented, employees handling hazardous materials would be trained in safety measures, and hazardous materials would be stored in a designated staging area. A safety hazard plan would also be prepared and implemented to ensure construction workers are not exposed to hazards. In addition, as mentioned above under "Soils, Geology, and Seismicity" and "Hydrology and Water Quality," the project would obtain authorization for construction and operation with the Central Valley RWQCB and implement erosion and sediment control measures. Because the proposed project would implement this site-specific mitigation, the incremental effect of the proposed project is not cumulatively considerable when considered with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects. The proposed project would not contribute to a significant cumulative effect on hazardous materials and hazards.