4 LAND USE AND FOREST RESOURCES

This chapter evaluates the environmental impacts from implementation of the proposed project on existing land uses and forest resources. A description of the existing site characteristics and setting is followed by an analysis focused on the relationship between the proposed project and existing plans and policies, and the relationship with proposed onsite and existing adjacent land uses. Excerpts from the relevant County planning documents and ordinances are presented below; complete copies of the documents and ordinances may be obtained by contacting the Placer County Planning Department.

4.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The study area is comprised of four parcels owned by Placer County (see Exhibit 3-2) totaling 290 acres, located at 900 Cabin Creek Road, in unincorporated Placer County. The study area is approximately three miles south of the Town of Truckee and two miles south of I-80 and is located off of SR 89 at the end of Cabin Creek Road. The project site is located at the southern end of the study area.

4.1.1 EXISTING LAND USES

Portions of the 290-acre study area were previously operated as a sanitary landfill, which was closed in 1995 and on which the Eastern Regional MRF and Transfer Station began operation at that time. The 66-acre closed landfill and a 32-acre reclaimed area occupy the center of the study area. The southern portion of the study area contains the Tahoe Area Regional Transit (TART) facilities, the Eastern Regional MRF and Transfer Station building, scale house, the buy-back area, and the household hazardous waste receiving and storage building. Two temporary caretaker residences provided by Placer County for ERSL staff, are located in the study area; one residence is on the project site and one is located approximately 775 feet northwest of the project site (Exhibit 4-1). The northern portion of the study area contains the wood and inert materials processing and storage area. Approximately one-third of the study area is coniferous forest.

The 3.7-acre project site is located on the southern edge of the 290-acre study area, east of the Eastern Regional MRF building and Cabin Creek Road, and on the south side of the TART and DPW access road (Exhibit 3-2). Except for the existing temporary caretaker's residence located at the west end of the site and a cell tower located at the east end of the site, the project site is undeveloped and contains forested land.

4.1.2 ADJACENT LAND USES

The project site is bound on its southern and eastern sides by National Forest System (NFS) land, which is managed by the United States Forest Service (USFS). Cabin Creek Road is adjacent to the western project site boundary and the TART/DPW access road is adjacent to the northern site boundary. Land immediately north and west of these roads includes the Eastern Regional MRF and Transfer Station property. TART facilities and DPW maintenance shop are located northeast of the project site. The other temporary caretaker's residence within the study area is located approximately 775 feet northwest of the project site. SR 89 is located below the project site in the Truckee River Canyon, which is approximately 1,000 feet to the east of the project site (Exhibit 3-2).

The entire study area is bound by Tahoe National Forest. The closest off-site residence is located 1, 500 feet southeast of the project site situated between SR 89 and the Truckee River. A campground (Granite Flat) is located approximately 2,000 feet northeast of the project site situated between SR 89 and the Truckee River.



Source: Data received from Placer County 2011; adapted by Ascent Environmental 2012





4.2 REGULATORY SETTING

4.2.1 FEDERAL

USFS FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN, TAHOE NATIONAL FOREST

The National Forest Management Act (NFMA) calls for the management of renewable resources on national forest lands. The NFMA requires the USFS to assess forest lands, develop a management program based on multiple-use, sustained-yield principles, and implement a resource management plan for each unit of the National Forest System. It is the primary statute governing the administration of national forests. NFMA regulations require that each forest prepare a plan that provides the strategic direction for managing the land and its resources over the next 10 to 15 years.

The 1990 Tahoe National Forest (TNF) Management Plan sets forth two types of standards and guidelines: forest-wide standards and guidelines and management prescriptions and management area standards and guidelines. Forest-wide standards and guidelines apply to the entire national forest, whereas management prescriptions and management area standards and guidelines are narrower in scope applying only to specific resources, activities, or areas within the forest. The TNF has management area standards and guidelines in addition to the forest-wide standards and guidelines and management prescriptions. Management area standards and guidelines define specific management actions within a management area.

The NFMA was in the process of being amended through the *Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment*, which would have amended the land management plans of all national forests in the Sierra Nevada. The final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) was released on January 21, 2004 and adopted the preferred alternative in the plan (USFS 2012). However, in February 2012, the 9th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals overturned the 2004 SEIS for failure to properly consider some of the alternatives as required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (Modesto Bee 2012).

USFS, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit

The USFS, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU) manages 75 percent of lands within the Lake Tahoe Basin. Management of USFS lands is guided by the LTBMU Forest Plan (USFS 1988). Specific standards and guidelines for biological and other resources are also described in detail in the *Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment* (USFS 2004) and the resulting Record of Decision. LTBMU is in the process of revising the forest plan. According to the forest plan, USFS will do all of the following, in order of priority:

- protect and enhance water clarity and quality,
- protect threatened and endangered plant and animal species native to the area,
- preserve significant cultural resources,
- achieve air quality standards for health and visibility and prevent the adverse impacts of atmospheric deposition upon water quality,
- maintain viable populations of wildlife,
- achieve diverse vegetation communities, and
- enhance outdoor recreational opportunities.

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4.2.2 **STATE**

CALIFORNIA FOREST PRACTICE RULES

The California Forest Practice Rules of 2012 define the timber harvest activities that are regulated under Title 14, California Code of Regulations (CCR), Chapters 4, 4.5, and 10, and under the Z'Berg-Nejedly Forest Practice Act, Division 4, Chapter 8, Public Resources Code (PRC). The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) is the enforcing agency responsible for ensuring that logging and other forest harvesting activities are conducted in a manner that preserves and protects fish, wildlife, forests, and streams.

Prior to any harvesting activities occurring, landowners must prepare a Timber Harvest Plan (THP), which outlines the timber proposed for harvesting, the methods of harvesting, and the steps that will be taken to prevent damage to the environment. THPs are required to be prepared by Registered Professional Foresters (RPFs). When a timberland owner proposes to carry out a project that would result in timberland being converted to a non-timber growing use, the owner must secure a Timberland Conversion Permit from CAL FIRE. Projects that would result in the conversion of less than three acres of timberland may qualify for an exemption from this provision.

TITLE 27, CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS (CCR), SECTION 21190, POSTCLOSURE LAND USE

The project site is located within 1,000 feet of the closed Eastern Regional Landfill. Title 27 of the CCR, Section 21190(c) states in part that the California Department of Resources Recovery and Recycling (CalRecycle) as enforcing agency shall review and approve proposed postclosure land uses if the project involves structures within 1,000 feet of the disposal area, structures on top of waste, modification of the low permeability layer, or irrigation over waste. Section 21190(a) requires that postclosure land uses shall be designed and maintained to 1) protect public health and safety and prevent damage to structures, roads, utilities and gas monitoring and control systems; 2) prevent public contact with waste, landfill gas and leachate; and 3) prevent landfill gas explosions.

Furthermore, under 21190(d), the regulations state that the owner shall demonstrate to the satisfaction of the EA that the activities will not pose a threat to public health and safety and the environment (refer to Chapter 16, Hazardous Materials and Hazards).

4.2.3 LOCAL

PLACER COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

The general plan provides an overall framework for the development of the County and protection of its natural and cultural resources. The goals and policies contained in the general plan are applicable throughout the County, except to the extent that County authority is preempted by cities within. The proposed project is located within unincorporated Placer County.

GENERAL PLAN LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

The land use designation for the project area in the Placer County General Plan (Placer County 1994) is Agricultural/Timberland – 80 Acre Minimum. The Agricultural designation encompasses areas identified for the production of food and fiber, including areas of prime agricultural soils, and other productive and potentially productive lands where commercial agricultural uses can exist without creating conflicts with other land uses, or where potential conflicts can be mitigated. Typical land uses allowed include: crop production, orchards and

vineyards, grazing, pasture and rangeland, hobby farms; other resource extraction activities; facilities that directly support agricultural operations, such as agricultural products processing; and necessary public utility and safety facilities. Allowable residential development in areas designated Agriculture includes one principal dwelling and one secondary dwelling per lot, caretaker/employee housing, and farmworker housing.

The Timberland designation is applied to mountainous areas of the County where the primary land uses relate to the growing and harvesting of timber and other forest products, together with limited, low-intensity public and commercial recreational uses. Typical land uses allowed include: all commercial timber production operations and facilities; agricultural operations where soil and slope conditions permit; mineral and other resource extraction operations; recreation uses such as incidental camping, private, institutional and commercial campgrounds (but not recreational vehicle parks); and necessary public utility and safety facilities. Allowable residential development in areas designated Timberland includes one principal dwelling and one secondary dwelling per lot and caretaker/employee housing.

APPLICABLE POLICIES

The Placer County General Plan (1994) contains a Land Use Element, which provides goals, policies, standards, and implementation programs for various types of land uses. The policies contained in the Land Use Element, which are relevant to the project, include those listed below. Refer to Table 4-1 in for a discussion of the project's consistency with the policies.

- Policy 1.A.1. The County will promote the efficient use of land and natural resources.
- Policy 1.E.1. The County shall only approve new industrial development that has the following characteristics:
 - a. Adequate infrastructure and services;
 - b. Convenient connections to the regional transportation network, including connections to existing transit and other non-automobile transportation;
 - c. Sufficient buffering from residential areas to avoid impacts associated with noise, odors and the potential release of hazardous materials;
 - d. Minimal significant adverse environmental impacts; and
 - e. Minimal adverse effects on scenic routes, recreation areas, and public vistas.
- Policy 7.E.1. The County shall encourage the sustained productive use of forest land as a means of providing open space and conserving other natural resources.
- Policy 7.E.2. The County shall discourage development that conflicts with timberland management.
- Policy 7.E.6. The County shall encourage and promote the productive use of wood waste generated in the County.

Table 4-1 Placer County General Plan Goals and Policies Consistency Analysis	
General Plan Goals and Policies	Consistency Analysis
Land Use	
Policy 1.A.1. The County will promote the efficient use of land and natural resources.	The project is located in a rural portion of Placer County directly adjacent to the existing Eastern Regional Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) and Transfer Station currently used to handle municipal recyclable materials. The project would be compatible with existing adjacent land uses and would locate related County services at one site within a primarily developed or disturbed area. The project would be consistent with this policy.

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Table 4-1 Placer County General Plan Goals and Policies Consistency Analysis	
General Plan Goals and Policies	Consistency Analysis
 Policy 1.E.1. The County shall only approve new industrial development that has the following characteristics: a. Adequate infrastructure and services; b. Convenient connections to the regional transportation network, including connections to existing transit and other non-automobile transportation; c. Sufficient buffering from residential areas to avoid impacts associated with noise, odors and the potential release of hazardous materials; d. Minimal significant adverse environmental impacts; and e. Minimal adverse effects on scenic routes, recreation areas, and public vistas. 	As described in Chapter 7, Visual Resources, Chapter 8, Traffic and Transportation, and Chapter 15, Public Services and Utilities, the proposed industrial development would include extension of utilities to provide adequate services and infrastructure to support operation of the biomass facility. The project is located adjacent to the closed Eastern Regional Landfill and existing MRF facility with access off Cabin Creek Road. The project is not visible from any scenic routes, recreation areas, or public vistas. No residential neighborhoods are in close proximity to the project. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Visual Resources	
Policy 1.K.3. The County shall require that new development in rural areas incorporates landscaping that provides a transition between the vegetation in developed areas and adjacent open space or undeveloped areas.	The project would be located within a primarily developed area within the Eastern Region MRF and Transfer Station site. While some trees would be removed from the project site, the Eastern Regional MRF and Transfer Station site sit within a developed/deforested area that quickly transitions to a forested area once outside the property. The project would not change this transition. Further, views of the project site would be limited from offsite areas. The project would be consistent with this policy.
 Policy 1.K.4. The County shall require that new development incorporates sound soil conservation practices and minimizes land alterations. Land alterations should comply with the following guidelines: a. Limit cuts and fills; b. Limit grading to the smallest practical area of land; c. Limit land exposure to the shortest practical amount of time; d. Replant graded areas to ensure establishment of plant cover before the next rainy season; and e. Create grading contours that blend with the natural contours on site or with contours on property immediately adjacent to the area of development. 	The project site is located on a sloping bench, therefore grading would not involve extensive cut and fill (Refer to Chapter 12, Geology, Soils and Seismicity). Further, a detailed geotechnical and soils report would be prepared for the site (see Mitigation Measure 12-1) which would identify appropriate grading, soil stabilization, and seismic standards for the site consistent with County policies and requirements The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy 1.K.5. The County shall require that new roads, parking, and utilities be designed to minimize visual impacts. Unless limited by geological or engineering constraints, utilities should be installed underground and roadways and parking areas should be designed to fit the natural terrain.	The project site is not in a visually sensitive area and public views of the site are limited. Grading and cut and fill slopes would not be extensive on the project site. Parking for the project would be located adjacent to the biomass building. Water, wastewater, and electrical utilities would be installed underground. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Forest Resources	
Policy 7.E.1. The County shall encourage the sustained productive use of forest land as a means of providing open space and conserving other natural resources.	The use of the project site as a wood-to-energy biomass facility would support healthy forest management practices in the region (e.g. improve watershed health and wildlife habitat through planned forest thinning operations designed to reduce catastrophic wildfire risks) and increase ecosystem diversity. The project would be consistent with this policy.

Table 4-1 Placer County General Plan Goals and Policies Consistency Analysis	
General Plan Goals and Policies	Consistency Analysis
Policy 7.E.2. The County shall discourage development that conflicts with timberland management.	See analysis for Policy 7.E.1 above. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy 7.E.6. The County shall encourage and promote the productive use of wood waste generated in the County.	The project involves the construction and operation of a biomass energy generation facility. The facility would be used to dispose of woody biomass as a result of forest thinning and fuel management projects conducted for fire safety throughout the region. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Public Services and Utilities	
Policy 4.C.1. The County shall require proponents of new development to demonstrate the availability of a long-term, reliable water supply. The County shall require written certification from the service provider that either existing services are available or needed improvements will be made prior to occupancy. Where the County will approve groundwater as the domestic water source, test wells, appropriate testing, and/or report(s) from qualified professionals will be required substantiating the long-term availability of suitable groundwater.	As described in Chapter 15, Public Services and Utilities, water would be provided by an existing onsite groundwater well, and the project includes construction of a second well to provide redundant supply and reliability in the remote event that the existing well would fail. The Applicant would comply with all Placer County conditions of approval for construction of new groundwater wells. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy 4.D.5. The County shall encourage pretreatment of commercial and industrial wastes prior to entering community collection and treatment systems.	As described in Chapter 13, Hydrology and Water Quality, proper BMPs would be in place to ensure that all water discharge would meet applicable County standards. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy 4.D.8. The County shall require that the on-site treatment, development, operation, and maintenance of disposal systems complies with the requirements and standards of the County Division of Environmental Health.	See analysis for Policy 4.D.5 above. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy 4.G.2. The County shall promote maximum use of solid waste source reduction, recycling, composting, and environmentally-safe transformation of wastes.	The project is a biomass energy facility that would use forest material and other urban wood waste materials to generate energy. Implementation of the project would further the County's objectives for environmentally-safe transformation of waste materials. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	
Policy 8.C.1. The County shall ensure that development in high-fire-hazard areas is designed and constructed in a manner that minimizes the risk from fire hazards and meets all applicable state and county fire standards.	The project would include fire suppression equipment (including a sprinkler system within the building and three fire hydrants) and would comply with all state and county fire standards. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy 8.C.2. The County shall require that discretionary permits for new development in fire hazard areas be conditioned to include requirements for fire-resistant vegetation, cleared fire breaks, or a long-term comprehensive fuel management program. Fire hazard reduction measures shall be incorporated into the design of development projects in fire hazard areas.	The project would be designed with a minimum 50-foot setback from adjacent properties and surrounding forested land to create a buffer of defensible space between the biomass building and the surrounding high risk fire area. Further, the County would coordinate with NFS regarding fuel management activities for lands immediately surrounding the project site. The project would be consistent with this policy.

Table 4-1 Placer County General Plan Goals and Policies Consistency Analysis	
General Plan Goals and Policies	Consistency Analysis
Policy 8.C.3. The County shall require that new development meets state, County, and local fire district standards for fire protection.	See analysis for Policy 8.C.1 above. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy 8.C.4. The County shall refer development proposals in the unincorporated County to the appropriate local fire agencies for review for compliance with fire safety standards. If dual responsibility exists, then both agencies shall review and comment relative to their area of responsibility. If standards are different or conflicting, the more stringent standards shall be applied.	The project site is located in the service area of the Truckee Fire Protection District (TFPD), which would review the development proposal as part of the environmental review process. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy 8.G.1. The County shall ensure that the use and disposal of hazardous materials in the county complies with local, state, and federal safety standards.	As discussed in Chapter 16 Hazards and Hazardous Materials, the transport, storage, use, and disposal of all waste materials and potentially hazardous materials would comply with all federal, State, and local laws and regulations (see Impacts 16-2 and 16-3). The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy 8.G.3. The County shall review all proposed development projects that manufacture, use, or transport hazardous materials for compliance with the County's Hazardous Waste Management Plan (CHWMP).	See analysis for Policy 8.G.1 above. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy 8.G.6. The County shall require secondary containment and periodic examination for all storage of toxic materials.	See analysis for Policy 8.G.1 above. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy 8.G.7. The County shall ensure that industrial facilities are constructed and operated in accordance with current safety and environmental protection standards.	See analysis for Policy 8.G.1 above. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy 8.G.9. The County shall require that applications for discretionary development projects that will generate hazardous wastes or utilize hazardous materials include detailed information on hazardous waste reduction, recycling, and storage.	See analysis for Policy 8.G.1 above. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy 8.G.10. The County shall require that any business that handles a hazardous material prepare a plan for emergency response to a release or threatened release of a hazardous material.	See analysis for Policy 8.G.1 above. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Noise	
Policy 9.A.2. The County shall require that noise created by new non-transportation noise sources be mitigated so as not to exceed the noise level standards of Table 6 (in Noise Element of the Placer County General Plan) as measured immediately within the property line of lands designated for noise-sensitive uses.	The project would add a new industrial land use that would be a new stationary noise source. However, project-related noise levels would not exceed applicable county standards at the nearest sensitive receptor. No mitigation would be necessary. The project would be consistent with this policy.

Table 4-1 Placer County General Plan Goals and Policies Consistency Analysis	
General Plan Goals and Policies	Consistency Analysis
Policy 9.A.5. Where proposed non-residential land uses are likely to produce noise levels exceeding the performance standards of Table11- 6 at existing or planned noise-sensitive uses, the County shall require submission of an acoustical analysis as part of the environmental review process so that noise mitigation may be included in the project design.	See analysis for Policy 9.A.2 above. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy 9.A.9. Noise created by new transportation noise sources, including roadway improvement projects, shall be mitigated so as not to exceed the levels specified in Table 11-7 at outdoor activity areas or interior spaces of existing noise-sensitive land uses.	The project would increase the number of truck trips in the surrounding area. However, estimated increases in traffic noise from project-related truck and employee trips would not exceed applicable county standards at the nearest sensitive receptor. No mitigation would be necessary. This policy would not be applicable to the proposed project
Policy 9.A.11. The County shall implement one or more of the following mitigation measures where existing noise levels significantly impact existing noise-sensitive land uses, or where the cumulative increase in noise levels resulting from new development significantly impacts noise-sensitive land uses:	See analysis for Policy 9.A.9 above. This policy would not be applicable to the proposed project.
 a) Rerouting traffic onto streets that have available traffic capacity and that do not adjoin noise-sensitive land uses; b) Lowering speed limits, if feasible and practical; c) Programs to pay for noise mitigation such as low cost loans to owners of noise-impacted property or establishment of developer fees; d) Acoustical treatment of buildings; or e) Construction of noise barriers. 	
Policy 9.A.12. Where noise mitigation measures are required to achieve the standards of Tables 11-6 and 11-7, the emphasis of such measures shall be placed upon site planning and project design. The use of noise barriers shall be considered as a means of achieving the noise standards only after all other practical design-related noise mitigation measures have been integrated into the project.	As described in Chapter 11, Noise, the project would not result in any significant noise impacts. No mitigation measures would be necessary to achieve Placer County noise standards. This policy would not be applicable to the proposed project.
Policy 9.B.3. Because many industrial activities and processes necessarily produce noise which will likely be objectionable to nearby non-industrial land uses, existing and potential future industrial noise emissions shall be accommodated in all land use decisions.	The project would result in a new industrial land use with associated construction and operational noise. However, as described in Chapter 11, Noise, the estimated project-generated noise levels would comply with Placer County noise standards, which are protective of surrounding land uses. The project would be consistent with this policy.

Table 4-1 Placer County General Plan Goals and Policies Consistency Analysis	
General Plan Goals and Policies	Consistency Analysis
Biological Resources	
Policy 6.C.1. The County shall identify and protect significant ecological resource areas and other unique wildlife habitats critical to protecting and sustaining wildlife populations. Significant ecological resource areas include the following:	The project is not located in a unique wildlife habitat or ecological resource area. The project would be consistent with this policy.
 wetland areas including vernal pools; stream environment zones; any habitat for rare, threatened, or endangered animals or plants; critical deer winter ranges (winter and summer), migratory routes, and fawning habitat; large areas of nonfragment natural habitat, including blue oak woodlands, valley foothill riparian, and vernal pool habitat; identifiable wildlife movement zones, including but not limited to nonfragmented stream environment zones, avian and mammalian migratory routes, and known concentration areas of waterfowl within the Pacific Flyway; and important spawning areas for anadromous fish. 	
Policy 6.C.6. The County shall support preservation of the habitats of rare, threatened, endangered, and/or other special-status species. Federal and state agencies, as well as other resource conservation organizations, shall be encouraged to acquire and manage endangered species' habitats.	No habitats of rare, endangered, threatened, and/or special- status species are located on the project site or within the project vicinity. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy 6.C.7. The County shall support the maintenance of suitable habitats for all indigenous species of wildlife, without preference to game or nongame species, through maintenance of habitat diversity.	As described in Chapter 5, Biological Resources, construction activities would remove approximately 1.87 acres of Jeffrey Pine Forest (approximately 44 trees) which could potentially result in the loss of bird habitat. However, Mitigation Measure 5-1 would require that bird nests identified would be avoided until no longer active. Additionally, the Applicant would be required by Mitigation Measure 5-2b to compensate for removed trees by planting new trees or by payment into the Tree Preservation Fund for off-site conservation. Implementation of these mitigation measures would maintain natural habitat within Placer County. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy 6.D.6. The County shall ensure the conservation of sufficiently large, continuous expanses of native vegetation to provide suitable habitat for maintaining abundant and diverse wildlife.	See analysis for Policy 6.C.7 above.
Policy 6.D.8. The County shall require that new development preserve natural woodlands to the maximum extent possible.	See analysis for 6.C.7 above.

Table 4-1 Placer County General Plan Goals and Policies Consistency Analysis	
General Plan Goals and Policies	Consistency Analysis
Transportation	
Policy 3.A5. Through traffic shall be accommodated in a manner that discourages the use of neighborhood roadways, particularly local streets. This through traffic, including through truck traffic, shall be directed to appropriate routes in order to maintain public safety and local quality of life.	The project would result in additional truck traffic for fuel delivery, waste hauling, and employee trips. All trips would take place on roads that are appropriate for the truck size that would be used and would not travel through established communities All trips would terminate at the project site off Cabin Creek Road. This road is currently used to service the existing MRF site and, therefore, would be appropriate to handle the additional trucks from the project. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy 3.A6. The County shall require all new development to provide off-street parking, either onsite or in consolidated lots or structures.	The project would include eight onsite parking spaces to accommodate employees of the facility. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy 3.A7. The County shall develop and manage its roadway system to maintain the following minimum LOS: > LOS "C" on rural roadways, except within one-half mile of state highways where the standard shall be LOS "D." > LOS "C" on urban/suburban roadways except within one-half mile of state highways where the standard shall be LOS "D." The County may allow exceptions to these LOS standards where it finds that the improvements or other measures required to achieve the LOS standards are unacceptable based on established criteria. In allowing any exception to the standards, the County shall consider the following factors: > The number of hours per day that the intersection or roadway segment would operate at conditions worse than the standard. > The ability of the required improvement to significantly reduce peak hour delay and improve traffic operations. > The right-of-way needs and the physical impacts on surrounding properties. > The visual aesthetics of the required improvement and its impact on community identity and character. > Environmental impacts including air quality and noise impacts. > Construction and right-of-way acquisition costs. > The impacts of general safety. > The impacts of the required construction phasing and traffic maintenance. > The impacts of quality of life as perceived by residents. > Consideration of other environmental, social, or economic factors on which the County may base findings to allow an exceedance of the standards. Exceptions to the standards will only be allowed after all	As described in Chapter 8, Traffic and Transportation Implementation of the project would not result in a change in the LOS on affected intersections. The project would be consistent with all Placer County LOS goals and policies.
 The impacts of quality of life as perceived by residents. Consideration of other environmental, social, or economic factors on which the County may base findings to allow an exceedance of the standards. 	

Table 4-1 Placer County General Plan Goals and Policies Consistency Analysis	
General Plan Goals and Policies	Consistency Analysis
Policy 3.A.12. The County shall require an analysis of the effects of traffic from all land development projects. Each such project shall construct or fund improvements necessary to mitigate the effects of traffic from the project. Such improvements may include a fair share of improvements that provide benefits to others.	As described in Chapter 8, Traffic and Transportation, a project-specific traffic analysis was prepared and determined that the project would result in minimal additional trips on affected roadways within Placer County. Further, the project-generated trips would not result in substantial increases in traffic or reduce the LOS on affected intersections. No significant traffic impacts would occur. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy 3.A.15. Placer County shall participate with other jurisdictions and Caltrans in the planning and programming of improvements to the State Highway system, in accordance with state and federal transportation planning and programming procedures, so as to maintain acceptable levels of service for Placer County residents on all State Highways in the County. Placer County shall participate with Caltrans and others to maintain adopted LOS standards as follows:	See analysis for Policy 3.A.12 above. This policy would not be applicable to the proposed project, since no significant impacts to transportation would occur.
 a. For State Highways 49, 65, and 267, Placer County's participation shall be in proportion to traffic impacts from its locally-generated traffic. b. The funding of capacity-increasing projects on I-80 shall utilize state and federal sources intended for the improvement of the regional and interstate system such as Flexible Congestion Relief (FCR). Placer County and local development shall not be required to participate financially in the upgrading of I-80 to provide additional capacity for through traffic. c. Placer County assumes no responsibility for funding roadway improvements to the street system within other jurisdictions. Each local jurisdiction shall be responsible for improvements necessary to sustain adopted LOS standards within its jurisdiction limits. Placer County may negotiate participation agreements with other jurisdictions for transportation improvement projects that provide mutual benefit. 	
Geology, Soils, and Seismicity	
Policy 8.A.1. The County shall require the preparation of a soils engineering and geologic-seismic analysis prior to permitting development in areas prone to geological or seismic hazards (i.e., groundshaking, landslides, liquefaction, critically expansive soils, avalanche).	As described in Chapter 12, Geology, Soils, Seismicity, Mitigation Measure 12-1 would require that the Applicant prepare a site-specific geotechnical report that would address soil, structural, and seismic issues for the site. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy 8.A.2. The County shall require submission of a preliminary soils report, prepared by a registered civil engineer and based upon adequate test borings, for every major subdivision and for each individual lot where critically expansive soils have been identified or are expected to exist.	See analysis for Policy 8.A.1 above. The project would be consistent with this policy.

Table 4-1 Placer County General Plan Goals and Policies Consistency Analysis	
General Plan Goals and Policies	Consistency Analysis
Policy 8.A.3. The County shall prohibit the placement of habitable structures or individual sewage disposal systems on or in critically expansive soils unless suitable mitigation measures are incorporated to prevent the potential risks of these conditions.	See analysis for Policy 8.A.1 above. No onsite septic wastewater treatment systems are proposed. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy 8.A.4. The County shall ensure that areas of slope instability are adequately investigated and that any development in these areas incorporates appropriate design provisions to prevent landsliding.	See analysis for Policy 8.A.1 above. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy 8.A.5. In landslide hazard areas, the County shall prohibit avoidable alteration of land in a manner that could increase the hazard, including concentration of water through drainage, irrigation, or septic systems; removal of vegetative cover; and steepening of slopes and undercutting the bases of slopes.	See analysis for Policy 8.A.1 above. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy 8.A.6. The County shall require the preparation of drainage plans for development in hillside areas that direct runoff and drainage away from unstable slopes.	As described in Chapter 13, Hydrology and Water Quality, Mitigation Measure 13-1 requires that the Applicant prepare appropriate plans for proposed drainage systems and retention areas and proposed design must meet County requirements. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy 8.A.7. In areas subject to severe groundshaking, the County shall require that new structures intended for human occupancy be designed and constructed to minimize risk to the safety of occupants.	As described in Chapter 12, Geology, Soils, and Seismicity, all projects within the County are required to be designed in accordance with seismic standards of the CBC, which includes regulation of construction to withstand groundshaking and construction on unstable soils. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy 8.A.9. The County shall require that the location and/or design of any new buildings, facilities, or other development in areas subject to earthquake activity minimize exposure to danger from fault rupture or creep.	See analysis for Policy 8.A.1 above. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy 8.A.10. The County shall require that new structures permitted in areas of high liquefaction potential be sited, designed, and constructed to minimize the dangers from damage due to earthquake-induced liquefaction.	See analysis for Policy 8.A.1 above. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy 8.A.11. The County shall limit development in areas of steep or unstable slopes to minimize hazards caused by landslides or liquefaction.	See analysis for Policy 8.A.1 above. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy 8.A.12. The County shall not issue permits for new development in potential avalanche hazard areas (PAHA) as designated in the Placer County Avalanche Management Ordinance unless project proponents can demonstrate that such development will be safe under anticipated snow loads and conditions of an avalanche.	As described in Impact 12-4, the project site is not located in a Potential Avalanche Hazard Area as defined by the County. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy 8.H.2. The County shall require new development in areas of avalanche hazard to be sited, designed, and constructed to minimize avalanche hazards.	As described in Impact 12-4, the project site is not located in a Potential Avalanche Hazard Area as defined by the County. The project would be consistent with this policy.

Table 4-1 Placer County General Plan Goals and Policies Consistency Analysis	
General Plan Goals and Policies	Consistency Analysis
Hydrology and Water Quality	
Policy 6.A.5. The County shall continue to require the use of feasible and practical best management practices (BMPs) to protect streams from the adverse effects of construction activities and urban runoff and to encourage the use of BMPs for agricultural activities.	As described in Chapter 13, Hydrology and Water Quality, with implementation of Mitigation Measures 13-1 a through f, the project would employ construction and operation-related BMPs to protect streams and from adverse effects of construction and operation of the biomass facility. Further, all facilities and BMPs would be implemented in compliance with County design requirements. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy 6.A.7. The County shall discourage grading activities during the rainy season, unless adequately mitigated, to avoid sedimentation of creeks and damage to riparian habitat.	As described in Chapter 13, Hydrology and Water Quality, implementation of Mitigation Measure 13-1 a through f would prohibit grading during the winter months, unless approved by Placer County Community Development Resource Agency and the Lahontan Regional Board. Therefore, the project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy 4.E.4. The County shall ensure that new storm drainage systems are designed in conformance with the Placer County Flood Control and Water Conservation District's Stormwater Management Manual and the County Land Development Manual.	See analysis for Policy 6.A.5. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Cultural Resources	
Policy 5.D.6. The County shall require that discretionary development projects identify and protect from damage, destruction, and abuse, important historical, archaeological, paleontological, and cultural sites and their contributing environment. Such assessments shall be incorporated into a Countywide cultural resource data base, to be maintained by the Department of Museums.	As described in Chapter 6, Cultural Resources, with implementation of Mitigation Measures 6-1 through 6-4, the Applicant would be required to take all necessary precautions to protect potential cultural or paleontological resources if found during construction activities. The project would be consistent with this policy.
Policy 5.D.7. The County shall require that discretionary development projects are designed to avoid potential impacts to significant paleontological or cultural resources whenever possible. Unavoidable impacts, whenever possible, shall be reduced to a less than significant level and/or shall be mitigated by extracting maximum recoverable data. Determinations of impacts, significance, and mitigation shall be made by qualified archaeological (in consultation with recognized local Native American groups), historical, or paleontological consultants, depending on the type of resource in question.	See analysis for Policy 5.D.6. above. The project would be consistent with this policy.

PLACER COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE

The project site is zoned as forestry-special purpose (FOR-SP) (Exhibit 4-2) by the Placer County Zoning Ordinance. The zoning and combining districts are used to address special needs or characteristics of the areas of Placer County to which they are applied, such as potential hazards and/or land use conflicts created by areas in the vicinity of mineral extraction operations, airports, sewage treatment plants, and waste disposal facilities, requiring a discretionary review of the proposed use.

✓ Section 17.12.010 of the Placer County Zoning Ordinance describes the purpose of the Forestry district as follows:

The forestry (FOR) zone is intended to designate portions of the mountainous areas of Placer County where the primary land uses will relate to the growing and harvesting of timber and other forest products, together with public and commercial recreational uses.

Electric generating plants are allowed in the FOR zone subject to a conditional use permit (17.12.010(B), Allowable Land Uses and Permit Requirements).

The maximum allowable height for buildings in the FOR zone district is 36 feet. Although the project proposes a structure that could potentially be constructed up to a height of 50 feet to house the power generating and emissions control equipment and a pole barn that could be approximately 40 feet in height, an exception to allow for this height increase is found in the Zoning Ordinance (17.54.020 (D)(1)) — Exceptions to Height Limits for Public and Quasi-public Buildings.

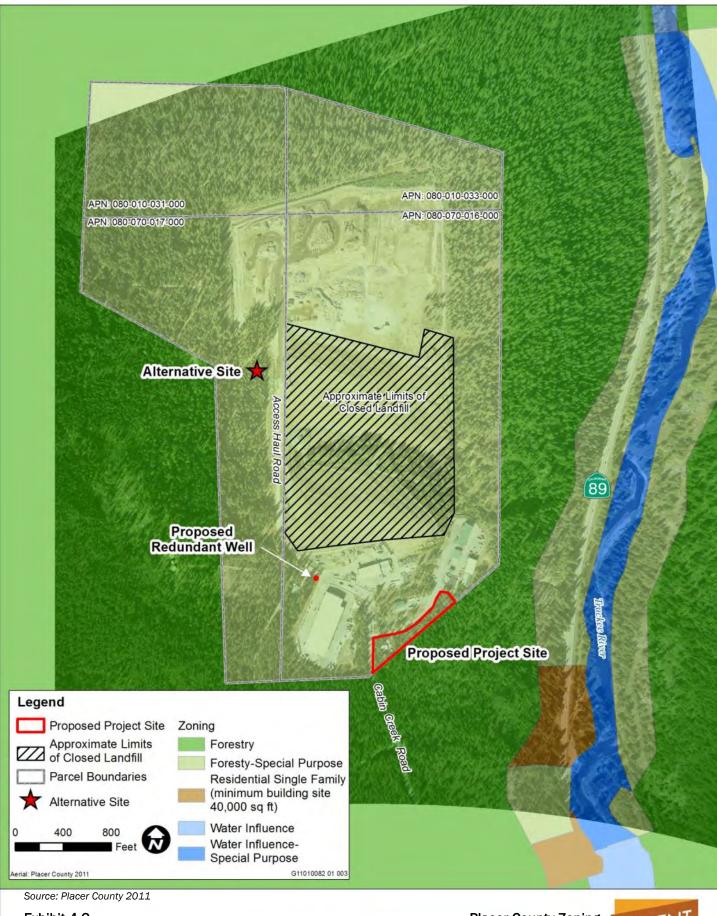
Section 17.52.130 of the Placer County Zoning Ordinance describes the purpose of the special purpose district as follows:

The Board of Supervisors finds that mineral extraction operations, airports, community sewage treatment plants, and waste disposal facilities are of such importance to the health, safety, economy, and general welfare of the public that special consideration of the issue of land use must be afforded such uses. The special purpose combining zone is created to identify specific areas in the vicinity of such uses where land use compatibility issues are of particular importance.

When applied to a particular parcel of land, the purpose of the district is to require a discretionary review of the proposed use of that land and to restrict the use of that land to uses that are determined to be compatible with the special use in the vicinity.

The Board further finds that the above-mentioned special uses occur in diverse areas where the geologic, topographic, biological and socio-economic conditions governing the maintenance of land use compatibility may vary accordingly.

Development standards for proposed land uses shall be set forth in the conditional use permit, minor use permit or administrative review permit, if such permits are required. Otherwise, development standards are as set forth in the zoning district with which the -SP district is combined.





4.3 IMPACTS

4.3.1 SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

The CEQA Guidelines Appendix G and Placer County Environmental Questionnaire have established criteria for evaluating the significance of a project's impact on land use and planning and forestry resources. Impacts would normally be considered significant if the project would:

LAND USE

- Disrupt or divide the physical arrangement of an established community;
- Conflict with adopted environmental plans and goals of the community where it is located;
- ✓ Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect;
- Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan; and
- Conflict with established recreational, educational, religious, or scientific uses of the area.

FORESTRY RESOURCES

- ▲ Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220[g]), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104[g]); or
- Result in the substantial loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use; involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

4.3.2 METHODS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Evaluation of potential land use impacts are based on a review of documents pertaining to the project site, including the Placer County General Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

In determining the level of significance, this analysis assumes that the proposed project would comply with relevant federal, State, and local ordinances and regulations, as well as the County Zoning Ordinance and General Plan objectives presented above.

4.3.3 ISSUES OR POTENTIAL IMPACTS NOT DISCUSSED FURTHER

The project is not located within or adjacent to a community or community plan area and, therefore, would not divide or disrupt an established community or require a rezoning or general plan amendment associated with a community plan. Therefore, this issue is not addressed further in this EIR.

The project's consistency with an applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan is addressed in Chapter 5, Biological Resources.

There are no educational, religious, or scientific uses located within the study area or project site. A campground (Granite Flat) is located approximately 2,000 feet northeast of the project site situated between SR 89 and the Truckee River. However, the proposed project would not result in any conflict with its recreational use. No impact would occur and this issue is not addressed further in this EIR.

Land Use and Forest Resources Ascent Environmental

4.3.4 IMPACT ANALYSIS

Impact 4-1

Conflict with Relevant Plans, Policies, and Zoning. The project is in unincorporated Placer County and is not located within an existing community or community plan. As described in Table 4-1 of the Draft EIR, the project would be consistent with relevant Placer County General Plan policies. Further, the Applicant would apply for a Conditional Use Permit for the project, which would provide for public input and additional discussion, ensuring project development in accordance with zoning regulations. No conflicts with relevant plans and policies would occur and this impact would be less than significant.

The project site is located within the unincorporated area of Placer County and is not located within an adopted community plan area. Therefore, land uses on the project site are regulated by the Placer County General Plan (1994) and Placer County zoning. As shown in Table 4-1, Placer County General Plan Policy Consistency Analysis above, the project would be consistent with all relevant General Plan policies adopted for the purposes of protecting the environment.

Construction and operation of a biomass facility at the project site is an allowable land use under the project site's General Plan land use designation of Agricultural/ Timberland--80-Acre Minimum, pursuant to Land Use Standards for the Timberland (T) land use designation (Placer County 1994: p. 13). In addition, the County determines allowable land uses at a parcel-level according to the requirements of the zoning code. As specified in the forestry-special purpose (FOR-SP) zoning district designation, the proposed land use (electrical generating plant) would be allowable within this zoning district with a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). The County is seeking a CUP for the proposed project; therefore, with the grant of a CUP the project would be consistent with land use and zoning designations for the site.

Because the project site is located less than 1,000 feet from the former Eastern Regional Landfill, the project must comply with Title 27 of the California Code of Regulations, Section 21190, which requires that CalRecycle as the enforcing agency, RWQCB, the local air district, and local land use agency must review and approve proposed post closure land uses within 1,000 feet of a disposal area, and the project must be designed and constructed to prevent accumulation of methane gas inside of buildings on the site. As discussed in Chapter 16, Hazardous Materials and Hazards, the project's design would meet Title 27 design requirements. Because the project would be consistent with all relevant plans and policies, this impact would be **less than significant**.

Impact 4-2

Impacts to Forestry Resources. In the larger context of region-wide and statewide forestry resources, the project would not result in substantial impacts to forestry resources because the project site is small and contains minimal forestry resources and substantial forestry resources are and would continue to be available surrounding the site. In addition, the project would not directly or indirectly affect the use or management of surrounding forestry resources, and the project would continue the purpose and intent of the County's designation for the site to provide facilities that are important to maintain the County's health and welfare. In addition, the project will comply with the requirement to obtain a Timberland Conversion Permit. For these reasons, the project would have a less-than-significant impact on forestry resources.

For a discussion of impacts to off-site forested lands resulting from the removal of woody biomass material for use at the project site, please see Chapter 5, Biological Resources (5.3.4 – Impact Analysis).

The project site is located within the larger 290-acre Eastern Regional MRF and Transfer Station site that is zoned forestry (FOR) with a special purpose (SP) combining district. The FOR zone is intended to designate

portions of the mountainous areas of Placer County where the primary land uses would relate to the growing and harvesting of timber and other forest products. However, the purpose of the SP combining district is to accommodate facilities that are of importance to the health, safety, economy, and general welfare of the public that require special consideration of the issue of land use.

In 1994, Placer County acquired the Eastern Regional Landfill site and an additional 185 acres through a land exchange with the USFS for the continued use as a solid waste landfill (now closed), transfer station, materials recovery facility, and other uses as deemed appropriate (Town of Truckee 1994). Since the completion of the land exchange, the primary use of the land on which the Eastern Regional MRF, TART facilities, and other County-operated facilities are located has been to provide needed facilities related to solid waste management and disposal. The project would continue the purpose and intent of the County's designation for these lands to provide facilities to meet the health and welfare needs of the County through the construction of a biomass facility. The biomass facility is part of the County's larger biomass program intended to combat the threats of catastrophic fires.

The 290-acre Eastern Regional MRF and Transfer Station site, which includes the 3.7 acre project site, is located in a forested area and is surrounded by substantial forested lands (thousands of acres). Within the project site approximately 1.87 acres comprises forested lands and supports approximately 44 trees (see Chapter 5, Biological Resources). The trees would be harvested and the land would be converted to non-forested uses. As a result, the County would secure a Timberland Conversion Permit (TCP) (or an exemption if applicable) and/or receive approval of a Timber Harvest Plan (THP) from CAL FIRE in accordance with the California Forest Practice Rules of 2012.

In the larger context of region-wide and statewide forestry resources, the project would not result in substantial impacts to forestry resources because the project site is small (1.87 acres of forested areas) and contains minimal forestry resources, substantial forestry resources are and would continue to be available surrounding the site, the project would not directly or indirectly affect the use or management of off-site or surrounding resources, and the project would continue the purpose and intent of the County's designation for the site to provide facilities that are important to maintain the County's health and welfare. For these reasons, the project would have a less-than-significant impact on forestry resources.

4.4 MITIGATION MEASURES

No mitigation measures are required.

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