

4.1 Agricultural and Forestry Resources

4.1.1 Methods and Significance Criteria

Methods

Impacts on agricultural and forestry resources were analyzed on the basis of the PCCP alternatives and local general plans. Land use conversions, which were estimated by Placer County, are compared to the amount of overall land in the Plan Area that is designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance by the California Department of Conservation.

Anticipated changes in land cover/land use for each alternative are described in Chapter 2, *Proposed Action and Alternatives*. See Section 4.0, *Environmental Consequences*, for a description of the methodology used across all resource chapters for the analysis of cumulative effects.

Significance Criteria

According to Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, a proposed project would be considered to have a significant effect if it would result in any of the following.

- Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to nonagricultural use.
- Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or conflict with a Williamson Act contract.
- Conflict with existing zoning for or cause rezoning of forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220[g]), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104[g]).
- Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.
- Involve other changes in the existing environment that, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

4.1.2 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Alternative 1—No Action

As described in Section 4.0, *Environmental Consequences*, Alternative 1 includes reasonably foreseeable activities in the Plan Area associated with urbanization and related infrastructure development, operation, and maintenance identified in the various planning documents of the Permit Applicants, as well as future projects of South Placer Regional Transportation Authority (SPRTA) and Placer County Water Agency (PCWA), such as local transportation and water projects.

Impact AG-1: Conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to nonagricultural use (NEPA: significant and unavoidable; CEQA: significant and unavoidable)

Placer County and the City of Lincoln have determined that the implementation of their general plans would allow growth that would result in significant or potentially significant impacts by converting Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to nonagricultural uses. The EIR for the *Placer County General Plan* concluded that up to 840 acres of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance could be converted due to growth to the planning horizon used for projections for the general plan, which was 2010, with an additional amount of conversion continuing through 2040 that was not quantified, which would be significant and unmitigable (Placer County 1994). The EIR for the *City of Lincoln General Plan* concluded that up to 710 acres of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance could be converted due to growth, which would be significant and unavoidable (City of Lincoln 2008).

While the *Placer County General Plan* covers the entire county, nearly all of the Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance in the county are located within the Plan Area. The few small areas of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance located northeast of the Plan Area are in an area largely designated as Agriculture by the *Auburn/Bowman Community Plan*, and they would not be included in the amount of land identified as converted through implementation of Placer County's general plan.

As stated in the general plan EIRs, there are no feasible mitigation measures beyond implementation of the general plan policies that would reduce impacts to less-than-significant levels. Future projects of SPRTA and PCWA could result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to nonagricultural use to the extent that projects take place on Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. Assessment of such impacts would be done on a project level.

NEPA Determination: Implementing the *Placer County General Plan* and the *City of Lincoln General Plan* would result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to nonagricultural use, and future projects of SPRTA and PCWA could result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to nonagricultural use. Accordingly, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

CEQA Determination: Implementing the *Placer County General Plan* and the *City of Lincoln General Plan* would result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to nonagricultural use, and future projects of SPRTA and PCWA could result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to nonagricultural use. Accordingly, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

Impact AG-2: Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or with a Williamson Act contract (NEPA: significant and unavoidable; CEQA: significant and unavoidable)

Placer County and the City of Lincoln's general plans contain policies to support Williamson Act lands. While the general plan EIRs do not specifically reference impacts on Williamson Act lands, they have determined that the implementation of the general plans would result in significant or potentially significant impacts by converting Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to nonagricultural uses (Placer County 1994; City of Lincoln 2008). Future

projects of SPRTA and PCWA would consist of public works projects generally not inconsistent with agricultural zoning or the Williamson Act, unless the project were to result in conversion of Williamson Act-contracted land to non-agricultural use, which would be a significant impact. Assessment of such impacts would be done on a project level.

NEPA Determination: Implementing the *Placer County General Plan* and the *City of Lincoln General Plan* and future projects of SPRTA and PCWA would result in the conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use, which could affect land enrolled in Williamson Act contracts. Accordingly, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

CEQA Determination: Implementing the *Placer County General Plan* and the *City of Lincoln General Plan* and future projects of SPRTA and PCWA would result in the conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use, which could affect land enrolled in Williamson Act contracts. Accordingly, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

Impact AG-3: Conflict with existing zoning of forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production (NEPA: no impact; CEQA: no impact)

No forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production occurs in the Plan Area. All land zoned for Forestry or Timberland Production in Placer County is located in the eastern portion of the county.

NEPA Determination: There is no forest land, timberland, or land zoned for Timberland Production in the Plan Area. There would be no impact.

CEQA Determination: There is no forest land, timberland, or land zoned for Timberland Production in the Plan Area. There would be no impact.

Impact AG-4: Loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use (NEPA: no impact; CEQA: no impact)

As stated above, forest land and timberland are concentrated in the eastern portion of the Plan Area and not located within the Plan Area.

NEPA Determination: There is no forest land in the Plan Area. There would be no impact.

CEQA Determination: There is no forest land in the Plan Area. There would be no impact.

Impact AG-5: Potential to cause other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use (NEPA: significant and unavoidable; CEQA: significant and unavoidable)

As described in Impact AG-1, growth associated with Placer County and the City of Lincoln's general plans, as well as future projects of SPRTA and PCWA, would result in direct conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses. No indirect conversion impacts were identified in the EIRs for those general plans, and both jurisdictions have Right to Farm regulations. However, it is possible that the SPRTA and PCWA projects could result in restrictions on agricultural uses of land in addition to direct conversion. Assessment of such impacts would be done on a project level.

There is no forest land or timberland in the Plan Area.

NEPA Determination: SPRTA and PCWA projects could result in restrictions on agricultural uses of land in addition to direct conversion. Assessment of such impacts would be done on a project level, and such impacts could be significant and unavoidable. There is no forest land or timberland in the Plan Area, and so there would be no impact on forest land or timberland.

CEQA Determination: SPRTA and PCWA projects could result in restrictions on agricultural uses of land in addition to direct conversion. Assessment of such impacts would be done on a project level, and such impacts could be significant and unavoidable. There is no forest land or timberland in the Plan Area, and so there would be no impact on forest land or timberland.

Alternative 2—Proposed Action

Impact AG-1: Conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to nonagricultural use (NEPA: significant and unavoidable; CEQA: significant and unavoidable)

Alternative 2, the proposed action, would serve to streamline the development in the Plan Area envisioned in the *Placer County General Plan*, *City of Lincoln General Plan*, as well as SPRTA and PCWA projects, as these are all part of the Covered Activities. As described under Alternative 1, Placer County and the City of Lincoln have determined that the implementation of their general plans would allow growth that would result in significant or potentially significant impacts by converting Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to nonagricultural uses. As stated in those EIRs, there are no feasible mitigation measures that would reduce impacts to less-than-significant levels. The growth allowed under the general plans could be Covered Activities that would result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. Future projects of SPRTA and PCWA could also result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to nonagricultural use to the extent that projects take place on Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance.

Additional impacts on farmland could occur if implementation of the Plan were to result in the conversion of land designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to nonagricultural use. The following table shows the amount of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance that is located within the Reserve Acquisition Area (RAA).

Table 4.1-1. Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance within the Reserve Acquisition Area (RAA)

Important Farmland Category	Approximate Acreage within the RAA
Prime Farmland	5,846.9
Unique Farmland	14,492.2
Farmland of Statewide Importance	1,531.7
Total	21,870.8

Source: Placer County 2006.

Land acquired for the benefit of species could be converted from agriculture to habitat. Although the specific location of land use acquisitions is not yet determined, the agricultural land to be acquired is

likely designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Figure 3.1-1).

There are approximately 21,870 acres of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance within the RAA. As shown in Table 2-14, up to 10,050 acres of these agricultural lands—which could include lands identified as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance—could be acquired under Alternative 2, the proposed action, to be managed for the benefit of species. Of this land, 2,000 acres of rice land or fresh emergent marsh equivalent would be acquired for giant garter snake habitat yet would remain in agricultural use, managed for the benefit of the species. Portions of the remaining lands could be converted from agricultural uses to habitat uses. Therefore, implementation of Alternative 2 could result in conversion of up to 8,050 acres of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance in addition to lands converted as a result of covered activities.

NEPA Determination: Alternative 2, the proposed action, could result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance that is located within the RAA. Covered Activities associated with public and private development envisioned in the *Placer County General Plan* and the *City of Lincoln General Plan* and with SPRTA and PCWA projects would also result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to nonagricultural use. While the goals, policies, and actions of the general plans as well as SPRTA and PCWA best management practices (BMPs) could reduce impacts on some of the agricultural lands, such impacts would not be reduced to less-than-significant levels. Implementation of the Plan would result in acquisition of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance for habitat protection. Some of this land could remain in agriculture, but a substantial amount of this land could be converted to non-agricultural uses associated with habitat protection. This impact would be significant and unavoidable.

CEQA Determination: Alternative 2, the proposed action, could result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance that is located within the RAA. Covered Activities associated with public and private development envisioned in the *Placer County General Plan* and the *City of Lincoln General Plan* and with SPRTA and PCWA projects would also result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to nonagricultural use. While the goals, policies, and actions of the general plans as well as SPRTA and PCWA BMPs could reduce impacts on some of the agricultural lands in these jurisdictions, such impacts would not be reduced to less-than-significant levels. Implementation of the Plan would result in acquisition of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance for habitat protection. Some of this land could remain in agriculture, but a substantial amount of this land could be converted to non-agricultural uses associated with habitat protection. No additional mitigation is available to reduce this impact. Accordingly, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

Impact AG-2: Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or with a Williamson Act contract (NEPA: significant and unavoidable; CEQA: significant and unavoidable)

In addition to the potential effects that would occur from Covered Activities associated with the *Placer County General Plan*, *City of Lincoln General Plan*, and SPRTA and PCWA projects, most of the lands to be acquired under the Plan would be zoned for agriculture. Although the specific location of land use acquisitions within the RAA would be determined during Plan implementation, some of the agricultural land to be acquired as a part of the conservation strategy or converted as a result of

Covered Activities such as transportation programs, maintenance of water infrastructure, and habitat restoration could be land enrolled in Williamson Act contracts, as most of the Williamson Act lands in the Plan Area (Figure 3.1-2) are located in the areas designated as RAAs. Open space uses are generally considered compatible uses under Williamson Act contracts in Placer County, so impacts directly related to acquisition would be limited.

NEPA Determination: Alternative 2, the proposed action, could result in conflicts with and the acquisition of land zoned for agricultural or land enrolled in Williamson Act contracts located within the RAA as some of the agricultural land to be acquired as a part of the conservation strategy or converted as a result of Covered Activities such as transportation programs, maintenance of water infrastructure, and habitat restoration could be land enrolled in Williamson Act contracts. This impact would be significant and unavoidable.

CEQA Determination: Alternative 2, the proposed action, could result in conflicts with and the acquisition of land zoned for agricultural or land enrolled in Williamson Act contracts located within the RAA as some of the agricultural land to be acquired as a part of the conservation strategy or converted as a result of Covered Activities such as transportation programs, maintenance of water infrastructure, and habitat restoration could be land enrolled in Williamson Act contracts. This impact would be significant and unavoidable.

Impact AG-3: Conflict with existing zoning of forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production (NEPA: no impact; CEQA: no impact)

No forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production occurs in the Plan Area. All of the land zoned for Forestry or Timberland Production in Placer County is located in the eastern portion of the county.

NEPA Determination: There is no land zoned for Forestry or Timberland Production in the Plan Area. There would be no impact.

CEQA Determination: There is no land zoned for Forestry or Timberland Production in the Plan Area. There would be no impact. No mitigation has been identified.

Impact AG-4: Loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use (NEPA: no impact; CEQA: no impact)

As stated above, forest land and timberland are concentrated in the eastern portion of the Plan Area and are not located within the Plan Area.

NEPA Determination: There is no forest land in the Plan Area. There would be no impact.

CEQA Determination: There is no forest land in the Plan Area. There would be no impact. No mitigation has been identified.

Impact AG-5: Potential to cause other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use (NEPA: significant and unavoidable; CEQA: significant and unavoidable)

As described in Impact AG-1, growth associated with Placer County and the City of Lincoln's general plans as well as future projects of SPRTA and PCWA would result in direct conversion of farmland to

non-agricultural uses. No indirect conversion impacts were identified in the EIRs for those general plans, and both jurisdictions have Right to Farm regulations. However, it is possible that the SPRTA and PCWA projects could result in restrictions on agricultural uses of land in addition to direct conversion. Alternative 2, the proposed action, would result in the acquisition of lands that could be located adjacent to farmland and could potentially result in indirect conversion of those adjacent farmlands. This impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level by the following Plan requirement for buffers (Appendix A:Chapter 6).

When the PCA acquires land adjacent to existing or planned development or agriculture that has no buffer zone or an inadequate buffer zone, one must be created on the reserve (see Section 5.3.1.3, *Reserve System Components*). Therefore, the buffers described below will not extend onto private land when the species occurs on PCA reserves.

There is no forest land or timberland in the Plan Area.

NEPA Determination: No indirect conversion impacts were identified in the EIRs for Placer County or the City of Lincoln’s general plans, and both jurisdictions have Right to Farm regulations. Alternative 2, the proposed action, would result in the acquisition of lands that could be located adjacent to farmland and could potentially result in indirect conversion of those adjacent farmlands. This impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level by the Plan requirement for buffers. However, it is possible that SPRTA and PCWA projects could result in restrictions on agricultural uses of land in addition to direct conversion. Accordingly, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

CEQA Determination: No indirect conversion impacts were identified in the EIRs for Placer County or the City of Lincoln’s general plans, and both jurisdictions have Right to Farm regulations. Alternative 2, the proposed action, would result in the acquisition of lands that could be located adjacent to farmland and could potentially result in indirect conversion of those adjacent farmlands. This impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level by the Plan requirement for buffers. However, it is possible that SPRTA and PCWA projects could result in restrictions on agricultural uses of land in addition to direct conversion. Accordingly, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

Alternative 3—Reduced Take/Reduced Fill

Impact AG-1: Conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to nonagricultural use (NEPA: significant and unavoidable; CEQA: significant and unavoidable)

Alternative 3 reduces the vernal pool complex land conversion for the Valley Potential Future Growth Area (PFG). The RAA area would remain the same as in Alternative 2, the proposed action. Because of their physical characteristics, vernal pool complex lands are not Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, and therefore the impacts of Alternative 3 would be the same as for Alternative 2.

NEPA Determination: Alternative 3 could result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance that is located within the RAA. Covered Activities associated with public and private development envisioned in the *Placer County General Plan* and the *City of Lincoln General Plan* and with SPRTA and PCWA projects would also result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to nonagricultural use. While the goals, policies, and actions of the general plans as well as SPRTA and

PCWA BMPs could reduce impacts on some of the agricultural lands, such impacts would not be reduced to less-than-significant levels. Implementation of the Plan would result in acquisition of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance for habitat protection. Some of this land could remain in agriculture, but a substantial amount of this land could be converted to non-agricultural uses associated with habitat protection. This impact would be significant and unavoidable.

CEQA Determination: Alternative 3 could result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance that is located within the RAA. Covered Activities associated with public and private development envisioned in the *Placer County General Plan* and the *City of Lincoln General Plan* and with SPRTA and PCWA projects could also result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to nonagricultural use. While the goals, policies, and actions of the general plans as well as SPRTA and PCWA BMPs could reduce impacts on some of the agricultural lands, such impacts would not be reduced to less-than-significant levels. Implementation of the Plan would result in acquisition of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance for habitat protection. Some of this land could remain in agriculture, but a substantial amount of this land could be converted to non-agricultural uses associated with habitat protection. No additional mitigation is available to reduce this impact. Accordingly, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

Impact AG-2: Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or with a Williamson Act contract (NEPA: significant and unavoidable; CEQA: significant and unavoidable)

In addition to the potential effects that would occur from Covered Activities associated with the *Placer County General Plan*, *City of Lincoln General Plan*, and SPRTA and PCWA projects, most of the lands to be acquired under the Plan would be zoned for agriculture. Although the specific location of land use acquisitions within the RAA would be determined during Plan implementation, some of the agricultural land to be acquired as a part of the conservation strategy or converted as a result of Covered Activities such as transportation programs, maintenance of water infrastructure, and habitat restoration could be land enrolled in Williamson Act contracts, as most of the Williamson Act lands in the Plan Area (Figure 3.1-2) are located in the areas designated as RAAs. Open space uses are generally considered compatible uses under Williamson Act contracts in Placer County, so impacts directly related to acquisition would be limited.

NEPA Determination: Alternative 3 could result in conflicts with and the acquisition of land zoned for agricultural or land enrolled in Williamson Act contracts located within the RAA as some of the agricultural land to be acquired as a part of the conservation strategy or converted as a result of Covered Activities such as transportation programs, maintenance of water infrastructure, and habitat restoration could be land enrolled in Williamson Act contracts. This impact would be significant and unavoidable.

CEQA Determination: Alternative 3 could result in conflicts with and the acquisition of land zoned for agricultural or land enrolled in Williamson Act contracts located within the RAA as some of the agricultural land to be acquired as a part of the conservation strategy or converted as a result of Covered Activities such as transportation programs, maintenance of water infrastructure, and habitat restoration could be land enrolled in Williamson Act contracts. This impact would be significant and unavoidable.

Impact AG-3: Conflict with existing zoning of forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production (NEPA: no impact; CEQA: no impact)

No forest, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production occurs in the Plan Area. All of the land zoned for Forestry or Timberland Production in Placer County is located in the eastern portion of the county.

NEPA Determination: There is no land zoned for TPZ or Forestry in the Plan Area. There would be no impact.

CEQA Determination: There is no land zoned for TPZ or Forestry in the Plan Area. There would be no impact. No mitigation has been identified.

Impact AG-4: Loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use (NEPA: no impact; CEQA: no impact)

As stated above, forest land and timberland are concentrated in the eastern portion of the Plan Area and are not located within the Plan Area.

NEPA Determination: There is no forest land in the Plan Area. There would be no impact.

CEQA Determination: There is no forest land in the Plan Area. There would be no impact. No mitigation has been identified.

Impact AG-5: Potential to cause other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use (NEPA: significant and unavoidable; CEQA: significant and unavoidable)

Growth associated with Placer County and the City of Lincoln's general plans as well as future projects of SPRTA and PCWA would result in direct conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses. No indirect conversion impacts were identified in the EIRs for those general plans, and both jurisdictions have Right to Farm regulations. However, it is possible that the SPRTA and PCWA projects could result in restrictions on agricultural uses of land in addition to direct conversion. Alternative 3 would result in the acquisition of lands that could be located adjacent to farmland, and could, potentially, result in indirect conversion of those adjacent farmlands. This impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level by the following Plan requirement for buffers (Appendix A: Chapter 6).

When the PCA acquires land adjacent to existing or planned development or agriculture that has no buffer zone or an inadequate buffer zone, one must be created on the reserve (see Section 5.3.1.3, *Reserve System Components*). Therefore, the buffers described below will not extend onto private land when the species occurs on PCA reserves.

There is no forest land or timberland in the Plan Area.

NEPA Determination: No indirect conversion impacts were identified in the EIRs for Placer County or the City of Lincoln's general plans, and both jurisdictions have Right to Farm regulations. Alternative 3 would result in the acquisition of lands that could be located adjacent to farmland and could potentially result in indirect conversion of those adjacent farmlands. This impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level by the Plan requirement for buffers. However, it is possible

that SPRTA and PCWA projects could result in restrictions on agricultural uses of land in addition to direct conversion. Accordingly, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

CEQA Determination: No indirect conversion impacts were identified in the EIRs for Placer County or the City of Lincoln’s general plans, and both jurisdictions have Right to Farm regulations. Alternative 3 would result in the acquisition of lands that could be located adjacent to farmland and could potentially result in indirect conversion of those adjacent farmlands. This impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level by the Plan requirement for buffers. However, it is possible that SPRTA and PCWA projects could result in restrictions on agricultural uses of land in addition to direct conversion. Accordingly, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

Alternative 4—Reduced Permit Term

Impact AG-1: Conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to nonagricultural use (NEPA: significant and unavoidable; CEQA: significant and unavoidable)

Under Alternative 4, it is expected that fewer acres would be developed under the Plan compared to Alternative 2, the proposed action, because the shorter permit term would mean some long-term projects are not covered. Additionally, it is expected that fewer acres would be acquired and restored than under Alternative 2 because there would be fewer fees collected and overall conservation would be less due to less development occurring; accordingly, there would be less potential to convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance as a result of implementation of the PCCP under this alternative.

As described under Alternative 1, Placer County and the City of Lincoln have determined that the implementation of their general plans would allow growth that would result in significant or potentially significant impacts by converting Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to nonagricultural uses. As stated in those EIRs, there are no feasible mitigation measures that would reduce impacts to less-than-significant levels. The growth allowed under the general plans could be Covered Activities that would result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. Future projects of SPRTA and PCWA could also result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to nonagricultural use to the extent that projects take place on Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. Some of this would occur after the permit term of the Plan under Alternative 4, but it would still occur.

NEPA Determination: Fewer acres would be acquired under Alternative 4, and impacts resulting from Plan implementation would be less than those described under Alternatives 2 and 3. However, Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance within the RAA would still be converted to nonagricultural use under Alternative 4. Covered Activities associated with public and private development envisioned in the *Placer County General Plan* and the *City of Lincoln General Plan* and with SPRTA and PCWA projects could result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to nonagricultural use. Although the goals, policies, and actions of Placer County and the City of Lincoln’s general plans as well as SPRTA and PCWA BMPs could reduce impacts on some of the agricultural lands, such impacts would not be reduced to less-than-significant levels. Accordingly, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

CEQA Determination: Fewer acres would be acquired under Alternative 4, and impacts resulting from Plan implementation would be less than those described under Alternatives 2 and 3. However, Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance within the RAA would still be converted to nonagricultural use under Alternative 4. In addition, Covered Activities associated with public and private development envisioned in the *Placer County General Plan* and the *City of Lincoln General Plan* and with SPRTA and PCWA projects could result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to nonagricultural use. Although the goals, policies, and actions of the general plans as well as SPRTA and PCWA BMPs could reduce impacts on some of the agricultural lands, such impacts would not be reduced to less-than-significant levels. Accordingly, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

Impact AG-2: Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or with a Williamson Act contract (NEPA: significant and unavoidable; CEQA: significant and unavoidable)

In addition to the potential effects that would occur from Covered Activities associated with the *Placer County General Plan*, *City of Lincoln General Plan*, and SPRTA and PCWA projects, most of the lands to be acquired under the Plan would be zoned for agriculture. Although the specific location of land use acquisitions within the RAA would be determined during Plan implementation, some of the agricultural land to be acquired as a part of the conservation strategy or converted as a result of Covered Activities such as transportation programs, maintenance of water infrastructure, and habitat restoration could be land enrolled in Williamson Act contracts, as most of the Williamson Act lands in the Plan Area (Figure 3.1-2) are located in the areas designated as RAAs. Under Alternative 4, it is expected that fewer acres would be acquired than under Alternative 2, the proposed action; accordingly, there would be less potential to conflict with zoning for agricultural use or Williamson Act contracts under this alternative. Open space uses are generally considered compatible uses under Williamson Act contracts in Placer County, so impacts directly related to acquisition would be limited.

NEPA Determination: Alternative 4 could result in conflicts with and the acquisition of land zoned for agricultural or land enrolled in Williamson Act contracts located within the RAA as some of the agricultural land to be acquired as a part of the conservation strategy or converted as a result of Covered Activities such as transportation programs, maintenance of water infrastructure, and habitat restoration could be land enrolled in Williamson Act contracts. Although impacts of Alternative 4 would be less than those of Alternative 2, the proposed action, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

CEQA Determination: Alternative 4 could result in conflicts with and the acquisition of land zoned for agricultural or land enrolled in Williamson Act contracts located within the RAA as some of the agricultural land to be acquired as a part of the conservation strategy or converted as a result of Covered Activities such as transportation programs, maintenance of water infrastructure, and habitat restoration could be land enrolled in Williamson Act contracts. Although impacts of Alternative 4 would be less than those of Alternative 2, the proposed action, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

Impact AG-3: Conflict with existing zoning of forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production (NEPA: no impact; CEQA: no impact)

No forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production occurs in the Plan Area. All of the land zoned for Forestry or Timberland Production in Placer County is located in the eastern portion of the county.

NEPA Determination: There is no land zoned for Forestry or Timberland Production in the Plan Area. There would be no impact.

CEQA Determination: There is no land zoned for Forestry or Timberland Production in the Plan Area. There would be no impact. No mitigation has been identified.

Impact AG-4: Loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use (NEPA: no impact; CEQA: no impact)

As stated above, forest land and timberland are concentrated in the eastern portion of the Plan Area and are not located within the Plan Area.

NEPA Determination: There is no forest land in the Plan Area. There would be no impact.

CEQA Determination: There is no forest land in the Plan Area. There would be no impact. No mitigation has been identified.

Impact AG-5: Potential to cause other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use (NEPA: significant and unavoidable; CEQA: significant and unavoidable)

Under Alternative 4, it is expected that fewer acres would be acquired than under Alternative 2, the proposed action; accordingly, indirect effects on farmland would be less than those resulting from conversion of farmland under Alternative 2. Growth associated with Placer County and the City of Lincoln's general plans as well as future projects of SPRTA and PCWA would result in direct conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses. No indirect conversion impacts were identified in the EIRs for those general plans, and both jurisdictions have Right to Farm regulations. However, it is possible that the SPRTA and PCWA projects could result in restrictions on agricultural uses of land in addition to direct conversion. Alternative 4 would result in the acquisition of lands that could be located adjacent to farmland and could potentially result in indirect conversion of those adjacent farmlands. This impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level by the following Plan requirement for buffers (Appendix A:Chapter 6).

When the PCA acquires land adjacent to existing or planned development or agriculture that has no buffer zone or an inadequate buffer zone, one must be created on the reserve (see Section 5.3.1.3, *Reserve System Components*). Therefore, the buffers described below will not extend onto private land when the species occurs on PCA reserves.

There is no forest land or timberland in the Plan Area.

NEPA Determination: No indirect conversion impacts were identified in the EIRs for Placer County or the City of Lincoln's general plans, and both jurisdictions have Right to Farm regulations. Alternative 4 would result in the acquisition of lands that could be located adjacent to farmland and could potentially result in indirect conversion of those adjacent farmlands. This impact would be

reduced to a less-than-significant level by the Plan requirement for buffers. However, it is possible that the SPRTA and PCWA projects could result in restrictions on agricultural uses of land in addition to direct conversion. Accordingly, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

CEQA Determination: No indirect conversion impacts were identified in the EIRs for Placer County or the City of Lincoln's general plans, and both jurisdictions have Right to Farm regulations. Alternative 4 would result in the acquisition of lands that could be located adjacent to farmland and could potentially result in indirect conversion of those adjacent farmlands. This impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level by the Plan requirement for buffers. However, it is possible that the SPRTA and PCWA projects could result in restrictions on agricultural uses of land in addition to direct conversion. Accordingly, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

4.1.3 Cumulative Analysis

Alternative 1—No Action

The *Placer County General Plan* and the *City of Lincoln General Plan* contain policies that support agriculture and forest lands. However, the EIRs for these general plans determined that implementation would result in significant or potentially significant impacts by converting farmland to non-agricultural use and forest land to non-forestry use and would contribute to cumulative impacts related to conversion of farmland.

Alternative 2—Proposed Action

Alternative 2, the proposed action, would directly result in the acquisition of land, some of which is designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance and enrolled in Williamson Act contracts. Up to 8,050 acres of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance in the RAA could be converted to nonagricultural use. There is no forest land, timberland, or land zoned for Timberland Production in the Plan Area. Although Placer County and the City of Lincoln's general plans have policies in place to protect agriculture and forest lands, agricultural land would be converted to non-agricultural use under implementation of these plans. Alternative 2 would contribute to this effect because it could result in additional conversions of agricultural land to non-agricultural use for habitat. Therefore, the proposed action would be cumulatively considerable.

Alternative 3—Reduced Take/Reduced Fill

Alternative 3 would directly result the acquisition of land, some of which is designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance and enrolled in Williamson Act contracts, of which up to 8,050 acres could be converted to nonagricultural use. There is no forest land, timberland, or land zoned for Timberland Production in the Plan Area. Although Placer County and the City of Lincoln's general plans have policies in place to protect agriculture and forest lands, agricultural land would be converted to non-agricultural use under the implementation of these plans. Alternative 3 would contribute to this effect because it could result in additional conversions of agricultural land to non-agricultural use. Therefore, Alternative 3 would be cumulatively considerable.

Alternative 4—Reduced Permit Term

The cumulative impacts under Alternative 4 would be the same as under Alternative 2, the proposed action, but of a lesser magnitude because of the decreased extent of land acquisition.

4.1.4 References Cited

City of Lincoln. 2008. *City of Lincoln General Plan Update Final Environmental Impact Report*. State Clearinghouse No. 2005112003. February.

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