

SHORT-TERM USE AND LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

This section discusses the short-term use of the environment and the maintenance of its long-term productivity. A more detailed discussion of impacts and resource utilization associated with the ESJ U.S. Transmission Line project is presented in Section 3. For this EIS, *short-term* refers to impacts that would occur during the period of construction and require two to five years to recover, depending on the resource. *Long-term* refers to those impacts that would last for the life of the transmission line but would recover following removal of the ESJ U.S. Transmission Line project components.

The area subject to short-term use would be limited to the alternative corridors rights-of-way and the main and transmission line access roads. Work areas and pull sites would be needed during the erection of towers or monopoles and during the stringing of the conductors. The alternative corridors would be located on undeveloped private land that is not currently in use. The alternative corridors would not be located on or near any cultivated land; thus, no agricultural lands would be taken out of production. In addition, construction activities would not occur in any designated open space or recreational areas and the alternative corridors are not included in the designated critical habitat of any proposed or listed threatened or endangered species. Land clearing and construction activities would disperse any wildlife present on the site and temporarily eliminate some habitat; however, mitigation measures would prevent the loss of individual organisms belonging to species of concern.

The transmission line and associated access roads would have only limited effects on the long-term productivity of the natural environment, because of the relatively small area that would be occupied and the limited use of the area by maintenance and monitoring personnel. Long-term reductions in biological productivity are possible in some temporary work areas, since the effects of disturbance tend to be more pronounced in arid lands, such as the alternative corridors area, where biological communities tend to recover slowly. The permanent removal of vegetation and habitat due to the placement of towers (or monopoles) and a new access road would be the only long-term effect of occupancy by the ESJ U.S. Transmission Line project; however the proposed conservation easement would offset such impacts.