Section 4.2
Agricultural Resources
Section 4.2

Agricultural and Forest Resources

4.2.1 Introduction

This section of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) addresses potential impacts of the proposed project on agricultural and forest resources. This section also provides the environmental and regulatory settings and discusses mitigation measures to reduce impacts, where applicable.

4.2.2 Environmental Setting

Regional

Kern County has a long history of agricultural operations. Kern County covers 8,202 square miles, including 1,373 square miles of harvested agricultural land and 2,317 square miles of range land (Kern County Department of Agriculture, 2009). In 2008 17 percent of the total land was harvested land and 28 percent of County land was rangeland. Agriculture in Kern County was worth $4 billion in 2008. The top five commodities during that year were almonds, grapes, milk, carrots and citrus. Kern County is growing rapidly and other non-agricultural uses are encroaching on agricultural lands. The California Department of Conservation (DOC) 2006–2008 Land Use Conversion table shows that 3,423 acres of land, including all of the categories of important farmland, grazing land, and other land, were converted to non-agricultural use. 16 square miles of this land were converted to urban land (DOC, 2009).

Local

The project site is located at the base of the Tehachapi and Piute Mountains in the Mojave Desert, just west of the Fremont Valley (see Figure 3-1). The project site is entirely designated for extensive agriculture and is largely agriculturally zoned. As discussed in Section 3.4, “Environmental Setting,” zoning for the 13,535-acre project site is Exclusive Agriculture (A); Limited Agriculture and Mobilehome Combining (A-1 MH). The project proponents are requesting the County change the A-1 to A WE (Exclusive Agriculture, Wind Energy Combining District) and adopt Wind Energy (WE) Combining District overlays for the remaining A-zoned parcels, with the exception of Zone Map 132 which would add both a WE overlay as well as a Floodplain (FP) Combining District overlay.

While there are parcels that are being farmed in the Tehachapi Valley area located 14 miles southwest of the site, these lands are not adjacent to the project site and there is no active farming within a 10-mile radius of the project site. Additionally, the project site has no developed water source. Therefore, the agricultural productivity of the land is limited. The project site is designated as open range land and has historically been used for grazing (mainly cattle and sheep) with portions of it continuing to be used for grazing. None of the lands are classified as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland, and no parcels within the project site are subject to Williamson Act land use contracts. The nearest Prime Farmland is located over 11 miles west of the proposed project site. No portion of the site is subject to a Williamson Act land use contract and the nearest contracted land is located more than 3 miles west of the project site.
4.2.3 Regulatory Setting

Federal

Farmland Protection Policy Act (7 U.S.C. Section 4201)

The purpose of the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) is to minimize the extent to which federal programs contribute to the unnecessary and irreversible conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses. It additionally directs federal programs to be compatible with State and local policies for the protection of farmlands. Congress passed the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 (Public Law 97-98) containing the FPPA—Subtitle I of Title XV, Section 1539-1549. The final rules and regulations were published in the Federal Register on June 17, 1994.

The FPPA is intended to minimize the impact federal programs have on the unnecessary and irreversible conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses. It assures that, to the extent possible, federal programs are administered to be compatible with State, local units of government, and private programs and policies to protect farmland. Federal agencies are required to develop and review their policies and procedures to implement the FPPA every two years. The FPPA does not authorize the Federal Government to regulate the use of private or non-federal land or, in any way, affect the property rights of owners.

For the purpose of FPPA, farmland includes prime farmland, unique farmland, and land of statewide or local importance. Farmland subject to FPPA requirements does not have to be currently used for cropland. It can be forest land, pastureland, cropland, or other land, but not water or urban built-up land.

Projects are subject to FPPA requirements if they may irreversibly convert farmland (directly or indirectly) to non-agricultural use and are completed by a federal agency or with assistance from a federal agency (NRCS, 2008).

State

California Department of Conservation (DOC), Division of Land Resource Protection

The Department of Conservation provides services and information that promote environmental health, economic vitality, informed land-use decisions and sound management of our state’s natural resources. The Division of Land Resource Protection provides information, maps, funding and technical assistance to local governments, consultants, Resource Conservation Districts and non-profit organizations statewide with the goal of conserving the state’s agricultural and natural resources.

Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program

The California DOC applies the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) soil classifications to identify agricultural lands, and these agricultural designations are used in planning for the present and future of California’s agricultural land resources. The DOC has a minimum mapping unit of 10 acres, with parcels that are smaller than 10 acres being absorbed into the surrounding classifications. Figure 4.2-1 shows the Important Farmland mapping information for the project area.
The list below provides a comprehensive description of all the categories mapped by the DOC (DOC, 2004). Collectively, lands classified as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Unique Farmland is referred to as Farmland (DOC, 2004).

- **Prime Farmland.** Farmland that has the best combination of physical and chemical features able to sustain long-term agricultural production. This land has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.

- **Farmland of Statewide Importance.** Farmland similar to Prime Farmland but with minor shortcomings, such as greater slopes or less ability to store soil moisture. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.

- **Unique Farmland.** Farmland of lesser quality soils used for the production of the State’s leading agricultural crops. This land is usually irrigated, but may include non-irrigated orchards or vineyards as found in some climatic zones in California. Land must have been cropped at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.

- **Farmland of Local Importance.** Land of importance to the local agricultural economy as determined by each county’s board of supervisors and a local advisory committee.

- **Grazing Land.** Land on which the existing vegetation is suited to the grazing of livestock. This category was developed in cooperation with the California Cattlemen’s Association, University of California Cooperative Extension, and other groups interested in the extent of grazing activities. The minimum mapping unit for Grazing Land is 40 acres.

- **Urban and Built-up Land.** Land occupied by structures with a building density of at least 1 unit to 1.5 acres, or 6 structures to a 10-acre parcel. This land is used for residential, industrial, commercial, institutional, public administrative purposes, railroad and other transportation yards, cemeteries, airports, golf courses, sanitary landfills, sewage treatment, water control structures, and other developed purposes.

- **Other Land.** Land not included in any other mapping category. Common examples include low density rural developments; brush, timber, wetland, and riparian areas not suitable for livestock grazing; confined livestock, poultry or aquaculture facilities; strip mines and borrow pits; and water bodies smaller than 40 acres. Vacant and non-agricultural land surrounded on all sides by urban development and greater than 40 acres is mapped as Other Land.

**California Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act)**

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, commonly referred to as the Williamson Act, is promulgated in California Government Code Section 51200-51297.4, and therefore is applicable only to specific land parcels within the State of California. The Williamson Act enables local governments to enter into contracts with private landowners for the purpose of restricting specific parcels of land to agricultural or related open space uses in return for reduced property tax assessments. Private land within locally designated agricultural preserve areas is eligible for enrollment under Williamson Act contracts. The Williamson Act program is administered by the DOC, in conjunction with local governments, which administer the individual contract arrangements with landowners. The landowner commits the parcel to a 10-year period wherein no conversion out of agricultural use is permitted. Each year the contract automatically renews unless a notice of non-renewal or cancellation is filed. In return, the land is taxed at a rate based on the actual use of the land for agricultural purposes, as opposed to its unrestricted market value. An application
Figure 4.2-1
Farmland Classifications

- Grazing Land
- Nonagricultural and Natural Vegetation
- Rural Residential Land
- Semi-Agricultural and Rural Commercial Land

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for immediate cancellation can also be requested by the landowner, provided that the proposed immediate cancellation application is consistent with the cancellation criteria stated in the California Land Conservation Act and those adopted by the affected county or city. Non-renewal or immediate cancellation does not change the zoning of the property. Participation in the Williamson Act program is dependent on county adoption and implementation of the program and is voluntary for landowners.

The Williamson Act states that a board or council by resolution shall adopt rules governing the administration of agricultural preserves. The rules of each agricultural preserve specify the uses allowed. Generally, any commercial agricultural use will be permitted within any agricultural preserve. In addition, local governments may identify compatible uses permitted with a use permit (DOC, 2007).

California Government Code Section 51238 states that, unless otherwise decided by a local board or council, the erection, construction, alteration, or maintenance of electric and communication facilities, as well as other facilities, are determined to be compatible uses within any agricultural preserve. Also Section 51238 states that board of supervisors may impose conditions on lands or land uses to be placed within preserves to permit and encourage compatible uses in conformity with Section 51238.1.

**Farmland Security Zone Act**

The Farmland Security Zone Act is similar to the Williamson Act and was passed by the California State Legislature in 1999 to ensure that long-term farmland preservation is part of public policy. Farmland Security Zone Act contracts are sometimes referred to as “Super Williamson Act Contracts.” Under the provisions of this act, a landowner already under a Williamson Act contract can apply for Farmland Security Zone status by entering into a contract with the county. Farmland Security Zone classification automatically renews each year for an additional 20 years. In return for a further 35% reduction in the taxable value of land and growing improvements (in addition to Williamson Act tax benefits), the owner of the property promises not to develop the property into non-agricultural uses.

**Local**

**Kern County General Plan (KCGP)**

The KCGP states that agriculture is vital to the future of Kern County and sets the goals of protecting important agricultural lands for future use and preventing the conversion of prime agricultural lands to other uses (e.g., industrial or residential). The KCGP includes three designations for agricultural land:

- **8.1 Intensive Agriculture** - Minimum parcel size is 20 acres gross. Devoted to the production of irrigated crops or having potential for such use;
- **8.2 Resource Reserve** - Minimum parcel size is 20 acres gross, except lands subject to a Williamson Act Contract/Farmland Security Zone Contract, in which case the minimum parcel size shall be 80 acres gross. Devoted to areas of mixed natural resource characteristics including rangeland, woodland, and wildlife habitat which occur in an established County water district; and
- **8.3 Extensive Agriculture** - Minimum parcel size is 20 acres gross, except lands subject to a Williamson Act contract/Farmland Security Zone contract, in which case the minimum parcel size is 80 acres gross.
size shall be 80 acres gross. Devoted to uses involving large amounts of land with relatively low value-per-acre yields such as livestock grazing, dry-land farming, and woodlands.

The policies, goals, and implementation measures in the KCGP for Agricultural and Forest Resources applicable to the project are provided below. The KCGP contains additional policies, goals, and implementation measures that are more general in nature and not specific to development such as the proposed project. Therefore, they are not listed below, but, as stated in Chapter 2, “Introduction,” all policies, goals, and implementation measures in the KCGP are incorporated by reference.

Chapter 1. Land Use, Open Space, and Conservation Element

1.9 Resource (Land Use, Conservation, and Open Space Element)

Goals

- **Goal 1.** To contain new development within an area large enough to meet generous projections of foreseeable need, but in locations which will not impair the economic strength derived from the petroleum, agriculture, rangeland, or mineral resources, or diminish the other amenities which exist in the County.

- **Goal 2.** Protect areas of important mineral, petroleum, and agricultural resource potential for future use.

- **Goal 5.** Conserve prime agriculture lands from premature conversion.

Policies

- **Policy 1.** Appropriate resource uses of all types will be encouraged as desirable and consistent interim uses in undeveloped portions of the County regardless of General Plan designation.

- **Policy 2.** In areas with a resource designation on the General Plan map, only industrial activities which directly and obviously relate to the exploration, production, and transportation of the particular resource will be considered to be consistent with the General Plan.

- **Policy 5.** Areas of low intensity agriculture use (Map Code 8.2 (Resource Reserve), Map Code 8.3 (Extensive Agriculture), Map Code 8.5 (Resource Management)) should be of an economically viable size in order to participate in the State Williamson Act Program/Farmland Security Zone Contract.

- **Policy 7.** Areas designated for agricultural use, which include Class I and II and other enhanced agricultural soils with surface delivery water systems, should be protected from incompatible residential, commercial, and industrial subdivision and development activities.

- **Policy 11.** Minimize the alteration of natural drainage areas. Require development plans to include necessary mitigation to stabilize runoff and silt deposition through utilization of grading and flood protection ordinances.

- **Policy 12.** Areas identified by the NRCS (formerly Soil Conservation Service) as having high range-site value should be conserved for Extensive Agriculture uses or as Resource Reserve, if located within a County water district.

Implementation Measures

- **Implementation Measure C.** The County Planning Department will seek review and comment from the County Engineering, Surveying, and Permit Services Department on the
implementation of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System for all discretionary projects.

- **Implementation Measure F.** Prime agricultural lands, according to the Kern County Interim-Important Farmland 2000 map produced by the Department of Conservation, which have Class I or II soils and a surface delivery water system shall be conserved through the use of agricultural zoning with minimum parcel size provisions.

- **Implementation Measure G.** Property placed under the Williamson Act/Farmland Security Zone Contract must be in a Resource designation.

**Kern County Zoning Ordinance**

The Wind Energy (WE) Combining District (Chapter 19.64) contains development standards and conditions (Section 19.64.140) that would be applicable to the siting and operation of wind turbine generators (WTGs). The following provisions apply to agricultural and forest resource issues related to the proposed project:

**Section 19.64.140(C):** Fencing shall be erected for each wind machine or on the perimeter of the total project. Wind project facilities shall be enclosed with a minimum four-(4-) foot-high security fence constructed of four (4) strand barbed wire or materials of a higher quality. Fencing erected on the perimeter of the total project shall include minimum eighteen-(18-) inch by eighteen-(18-) inch signs warning of turbine dangers. Such signs shall be located a maximum of three hundred (300) feet apart and at all points of site ingress and egress. Where perimeter fencing is utilized, the Planning Director may waive this requirement for any portion of the site where unauthorized access is precluded due to topographic conditions.

**Section 19.64.140(D):** All on-site electrical power lines associated with wind machines shall be installed underground within one hundred fifty (150) feet of a wind turbine and elsewhere when practicable, excepting therefrom “tie-ins’ to utility type transmission poles, towers, and lines. However, if project terrain or other factors are found to be unsuitable to accomplish the intent and purpose of the provision, engineered aboveground electrical power lines shall be allowed.

**19.64.140(H):** All wind projects including wind generators and towers shall comply with all applicable County, State, and federal laws, ordinances, or regulations.

**Williamson Act Standard Uniform Rules**

Kern County has adopted a set of Agricultural Preserve Standard Uniform Rules that identify land uses that are considered compatible uses within agricultural preserves established under the Williamson Act. These rules are designed to restrict the uses of land enrolled in a Williamson Act contract to agriculture or other compatible uses. Agricultural uses include crop cultivation, grazing operations, commercial wind farms, livestock breeding, dairies, and uses that are incidental to agricultural uses. Other compatible uses include the erection of gas, electric, communications, water, and other similar public utilities.
4.2.4 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Methodology

The analysis in this section was conducted through review of (1) the most current California DOC Division of Land Resource Protection’s Important Farmland Map and farmland conversion tables; (2) NRCS soils information; and (3) Kern County’s Williamson Act Map.

In addition, a compatibility analysis was completed to determine whether operating a wind energy facility on the project site would be incompatible with agricultural uses on parcels currently under Williamson Act contracts. This EIR does not consider potential economic impacts of the project on Agricultural and Forest Resources because there are no economic impacts that would result in physical impacts. In any event, economic impacts are beyond the scope of environmental analysis under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Section 15131(a) of the CEQA Guidelines states:

“Economic or social effects of a project shall not be treated as significant effects on the environment. An EIR may trace a chain of cause and effect from a proposed decision on a project through anticipated economic or social changes resulting from the project to physical changes caused in turn by the economic or social changes. The intermediate economic or social changes need not be analyzed in any detail greater than necessary to trace the chain of cause and effect. The focus of the analysis shall be on the physical changes.”

Thresholds of Significance

The Kern County CEQA Implementation Document and Kern County Environmental Checklist state that a project would normally be considered to have a significant impact if it would:

- Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use;
- Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract;
- Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)) or timberland (as defined in Public Resources Code section 4526);
- Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use;
- Involve other changes in the existing environment which, because of their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use; or
- Result in the cancellation to an open space contract made pursuant to the California Land Conservation Act of 1965 or Farmland Security Zone Contract for any parcel of 100 or more acres (Section 15206(b)(3) Public Resources Code).

As discussed in Appendix A (Notice of Preparation/Initial Study [NOP/IS]), the proposed project was determined to have no impact with regard to the following impact thresholds:

- Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use;
• Involve other changes in the existing environment which, because of their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use; or
• Result in the cancellation to an open space contract made pursuant to the California Land Conservation Act of 1965 or Farmland Security Zone Contract for any parcel of 100 or more acres (Section 15206(b)(3) Public Resources Code).

These issues are not discussed further in this EIR.

**Project Impacts**

**Impact 4.2-1: Conflict with Existing Agricultural Zoning or Williamson Act Contracts**

As described above, no parcels within the project site or immediately adjacent to the project site are subject to Williamson Act contracts; therefore, there is no need to determine if the proposed uses are compatible with existing Williamson Act contracts.

13,082 acres (Acreage numbers are based on data dated March 2011 and may be subject to slight adjustments based on final project layout) of the project site are zoned A (Exclusive Agriculture) District. The entire project area is currently designated as “Open Range” land and is subject to the provisions of Chapter 7.16 of the Kern County Ordinance Code. However, as described in Section 4.4, Biological Resources, and stipulated by Mitigation Measure 4.4-14, any existing grazing leases on the project site shall be phased out over the course of 5 years to limit habitat impacts to California condors. While Mitigation Measure 4.4-14 would effectively preclude grazing on the project site, other agricultural uses and other uses consistent with the A (Exclusive Agriculture) zoning would continue to be allowed.

While the elimination of grazing on the project site would be adverse, dryland or irrigated farming and other “by right” uses would still be allowed on the project site; therefore, the severity of the impact is reduced. In order to determine the severity of this impact, a California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) Model was prepared in accordance with the detailed instructions provided in the LESA Model Instruction Manual (DOC, 1997). As provided for in the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G (Environmental Checklist Form, Item II, Agricultural Resources), “…[i]n determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the LESA Model prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland” (CCR, 2006a).

The LESA Model is an approach for rating the relative quality of land resources based upon specific measurable features. The formulation of a California Agricultural LESA Model is the result of Senate Bill 850 (Stats. 1993, ch. 812, section 3), which charged the Resources Agency, in consultation with the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, with developing an amendment to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines concerning agricultural lands. Such an amendment is intended “to provide lead agencies with an optional methodology to ensure that significant effects on the environment of agricultural land conversions are quantitatively and consistently considered in the environmental review process” (Public Resources Code Section 21095).

The California Agricultural LESA Model is composed of six different factors. Two “Land Evaluation” (LE) factors are based upon measures of soil resource quality. Four “Site Assessment” (SA) factors provide measures of a given project’s size, water resource availability, surrounding agricultural lands, and surrounding protected resource lands.
For a given project, each of these factors is separately rated on a 100 point scale. The factors are then weighted relative to one another and combined, resulting in a single numeric score for a given project, with a maximum attainable score of 100 points. It is this project score that becomes the basis for making a determination of a project’s potential significance, based upon a range of established scoring thresholds (DOC, 1997a).

The LESA score is based on a scale of 0 to 100. The Final LESA score for the proposed project is 22. Based on the California Agricultural LESA Thresholds, a score of 22 would not result in a significant impact and, therefore, the proposed project would not result in significant conflicts with existing agricultural zoning or Williamson Act contracts. The LESA Model worksheets completed for the proposed project are included within Appendix C.

Because the proposed project would not change the existing base zone district of A (Exclusive Agriculture), the land could be utilized for other types of compatible agricultural uses. At the end of the project lifespan (currently estimated to be 30 years), project infrastructure would be removed or abandoned in place and the land disturbed by the project could be restored to conditions suitable for grazing or other agricultural uses. The WE Combining District, however, would be permanent unless rezoned.

However, use of access roads throughout Jawbone Canyon and within the project site, particularly during construction, could result in potential conflicts between grazing animals and trucks on roadways, or movement of grazing animals into the Jawbone Canyon Open Area through gates left open by project personnel. These impacts would be considered significant. With the implementation of Mitigation Measure 4.2-1, however, monitoring of gates and maintenance of cattle guards at appropriate locations would reduce impacts to be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures**

**MM 4.2-1** Prior to issuance of grading or building permits, the project proponent shall submit to the Planning and Community Development Department a written statement indicating how the existing cattle guards shall be maintained at entry gates on Jawbone Canyon Road to prevent livestock from entering the project site.

**Level of Significance**

Impacts would be less than significant.

**Impact 4.2-2: Conflict with Existing Zoning for, or Cause Rezoning of, Forest Land or Timberland**

While timber production is allowed “by right” on lands zoned A (Exclusive Agriculture), the proposed project would not cause the rezoning of lands zoned for forest land or timberland, nor would it conflict with timber production. A variety of mixed woodland habitats occur within the proposed project site boundaries, including mixed Juniper-Joshua tree woodland, Ponderosa pine-oak woodland, and Mojavean riparian forest are located within the proposed project boundaries, but are not used for timber production. Although Joshua trees were harvested for various purposes in the southwest by previous native cultures, the plant has no current commercial value. However, because of its relatively limited distribution, endemic nature to southwest desert habitats, and role as an indicator for gauging the health of desert ecosystems, this species is afforded a variety of State and local protections. Joshua tree woodlands are considered sensitive communities by the California Department of Fish and Game State, indicating some vulnerability to extirpation or extinction and a
high priority for inventory and description (CDFG, 2007). Additionally, specific issues are addressed and measures provided for the protection and conservation of Joshua trees and Joshua tree habitat in the Willow Springs Specific Plan. While Ponderosa pine and oak have historically been harvested, oak woodlands are protected under the KCGP. As the Ponderosa pine and other harvestable timber species within the project boundaries are largely mixed with oak woodlands, they would not be used for timber production.

**Mitigation Measures**

The project would comply with the goals, policies, and implementation measures of the KCGP. No additional mitigation measures are proposed.

**Level of Significance**

Impacts would be less than significant.

**Impact 4.2-3: Result in the Loss of Forest Land or Conversion of Forest Land to Non-forest Use**

As described in Section 4.4, Biological Resources, the proposed project site is predominately desert scrub and mixed oak woodland, and much of the area has been subject to historic and ongoing grazing and off-highway vehicle disturbance. As described above, Joshua tree woodlands are considered sensitive communities and are protected under State and local laws and oak woodlands are protected under the KCGP. The removal of Juniper-Joshua tree woodland or oak woodland for construction of the proposed project would be considered a significant impact. As described in Section 4.4, Biological Resources, however, implementation of Mitigation Measure (MM) 4.4-4 requires project construction to avoid the removal of Joshua trees and/or oak woodlands. With the implementation of MM 4.4-4, no forest would be removed during construction of the proposed project and impacts associated with the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest uses would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures**

Implement Mitigation Measure 4.4-4 as described in Section 4.4, Biological Resources.

**Level of Significance after Mitigation**

Impacts would be less than significant.

**Cumulative Setting Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

**Cumulative Setting**

The geographic scope for cumulative impacts to agricultural and forest resources encompasses Kern County. As agricultural land statistics and characteristics are typically collected at the County level, cumulative impacts to agricultural and forest land should be evaluated within the context of Kern County.

**Impact 4.2-4: Contribute to Cumulative Agricultural and Forest Resource Impacts**

With regard to projects converting prime farmland, unique farmland, or farmland of statewide importance to non-agricultural uses, the proposed project would not result in the conversion of these
Classes of farmland to other uses and would therefore not have the potential to combine with impacts from past, present, or reasonably foreseeable projects to result in a cumulative impact.

With regard to conflicts with existing agricultural zoning, Williamson Act contracts, and the conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses, while the proposed project’s preclusion of grazing activities would be adverse, it would not be significant. Additionally, because implementation of the proposed project would not change the existing zoning of the property and the land would remain available for agriculture use at the end of the project lifespan, impacts of the proposed project would not have the potential to combine with impacts from past, present, or reasonably foreseeable projects to result in any significant cumulative impact.

With regard to conflicts with or losses of forest land or timberland, the project would not affect any forest land or timberland or conflict with the A (Exclusive Agriculture) zoning which allows for timber production, with implementation of MM 4.4-4. Consequently, the proposed project would not have the potential to combine with impacts from past, present, or reasonably foreseeable projects to result in a significant cumulative impact to forest land or timberland.

**Mitigation Measures**

Implement Mitigation Measure 4.4-4 as described in Section 4.4, Biological Resources.

**Level of Significance after Mitigation**

Cumulative impacts would be less than significant.