

4.3 Agricultural Resources

This section describes the impacts of the Proposed Project on agricultural resources in the Project area. The following sources were reviewed for this analysis: soil classifications designated by the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service's (USDA NRCS's) Web Soil Survey; California Department of Conservation Farmland Monitoring and Mapping Program (DOC FMMP) data and reports; the Agriculture Element of the County's General Plan; and correspondence with the County's Department of Agriculture Weights and Measures.

The study area for this agricultural resources analysis includes the entire 193-acre existing and proposed quarry site (for reclamation activities only) and the 33-acre proposed mine expansion area (for mining and reclamation activities). The study area also includes a 2,000-foot buffer area surrounding the proposed expansion boundary. The current condition and quality of agricultural resources in the study area are described in EIR Section 4.3.1 (Existing Conditions). This is the "baseline" against which potential impacts are evaluated in EIR Section 4.3.5 (Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures). (Foo 2004)

Scoping Issues Addressed

During the Proposed Project's scoping period, one comment letter related to agricultural resources was received from the County's Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures, as summarized in Table ES-1 and Appendix A. This comment concurred with the preliminary environmental analysis provided with the Project's NOP, dated June 20, 2013 (see EIR Appendix A), and recommended that the Proposed Project should avoid and minimize impacts to agricultural resources, including water resources. The comment additionally suggested that the Project's conditions of approval include, but not be limited to, continued access to agricultural operations during quarry operations, dust and invasive weed management, agricultural buffers, and mitigation for the conversion of agricultural resources. The comment letter additionally recommended that the EIR's alternatives analysis consider alternatives that are located away from agricultural resources.

4.3.1 Existing Conditions

Regional Setting

The Proposed Project is within the western portion of the County in the Central Coast Mountain Range. In 2012, the value of the County's agricultural crops was \$861,803,000 (County of San Luis Obispo Department of Agriculture, 2012), and a recent study indicates that agriculture contributes \$1.87 billion annually to the County's economy (Agricultural Impact Associates, 2013). The County ranks fifteenth in agricultural commodity sales among the 58 California counties (CDFA, 2013). The County's diverse agriculture production includes over 100 different crops (Agricultural Impact Associates, 2013); the County's leading agricultural commodities are strawberries, wine grapes, cattle and calves, vegetables, and broccoli (CDFA, 2013).

Most farmland in the County has been classified by the DOC FMMP using a combination of current land use information and USDA/NRCS soil data. Approximately 1.59 million acres, 84 percent, of the County is classified as agricultural land as shown in Table 4.3-1 (DOC FMMP). Of these agricultural acres, 799,141 (50 percent) were enrolled in Williamson Act contracts in 2010 (DOC, 2010). Table 4.3-1 shows the County-wide breakdown of farmland and other non-agricultural land. The DOC FMMP categories are described in more detail in EIR Section 4.3.3 (Regulatory Setting, State Policies). The Agriculture Element of the County's General Plan is intended to help ensure the long-term stability and productivity of the County's farms, ranches, and soils (County of San Luis Obispo, 2010).

Table 4.3-1. County of San Luis Obispo Farmland Acreage and Land Use Types

FMMP Category	Acres	Percent of Total Acres	Percent of Total Agricultural Acres
Prime Farmland	41,319	2	3
Farmland of Statewide Importance	21,132	1	1
Unique Farmland	39,950	2	3
Farmland of Local Importance	307,325	16	19
Important Farmland Subtotal	409,726	22	26
Grazing Land	1,181,015	63	74
Agricultural Land Subtotal	1,590,741	84	100
Urban and Built-up Land	45,017	2	N/A
Other Land	242,998	13	N/A
Water Bodies	8,780	0.5	N/A
Total	1,887,536	100	N/A

Source: DOC FMMP, 2010.

Project Setting

The Proposed Project is approximately 3 miles northeast of the community of Santa Margarita. The proposed expansion would take place on a sloped area west of the existing quarry. The climate in the Project area is characterized by dry, warm summers and mild, rainy winters.

The existing quarry has been used for mining since the 1920s. The proposed mining expansion area has not been used for grazing or other agricultural production (Wallace Group, 2013). Other surrounding areas have been used for grazing and some limited hay production (Auchinachie, 2013). The Proposed Project site (including the existing quarry) is designated as Rural Lands (RL) and Agriculture (AG), as detailed in EIR Table 2.5-1 (Summary of APNs Associated with the Proposed Project). The proposed expansion area in particular is designated as Rural Lands, with a combining land use designation of Extractive Resource Area (EX1). The nearest parcels enrolled in the Williamson Act are over 2 miles northwest of the Proposed Project site.

Table 4.3-2 shows the DOC FMMP designations for the Project site and the 2,000-foot buffer area surrounding the Proposed RPA. These designations are also shown in Figure 4.3-1. The DOC FMMP (2010) categorizes all of the proposed expansion area as Other Land (non-agricultural, non-urban land). Of the 2,000-foot buffer area surrounding the Proposed RPA, 543.1 acres are categorized as Other, 235.3 acres are categorized as Grazing, and 54.4 acres are categorized as Farmland of Local Potential. Farmland of Local Potential is designated by the County and consists of areas identified by the NRCS soils maps as either Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance, but which are not currently cultivated.

Please note that the acreages in Tables 4.3-2 through 4.3-4 are estimates, and that all of these numbers are approximate.



FMMP Farmland Category

- Grazing Land (G)
- Farmland of Local Potential (LP)
- Other Land (X)



 RPA Footprint	 Proposed Quarry Activities
 RPA Area	 Undisturbed Buffer Area
 Extent of Existing Quarry Activities	 2000' Buffer Around Expansion Area
 Existing Operational Water Features	

0 500 1,000 Feet

Figure 4.3-1

California Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program

Table 4.3-2. FMMP Farmland Mapping Categories (acres)

FMMP Category	Proposed Expansion Area	Undisturbed Buffer Area	Proposed RPA Footprint	2,000-Foot Surrounding Area
Farmland of Local Potential (LP)	0	0	0	54.4
Grazing (G)	0	6.0	0	235.3
Other (X)	38.4	25.6	94.5	543.1

Source: DOC, 2010

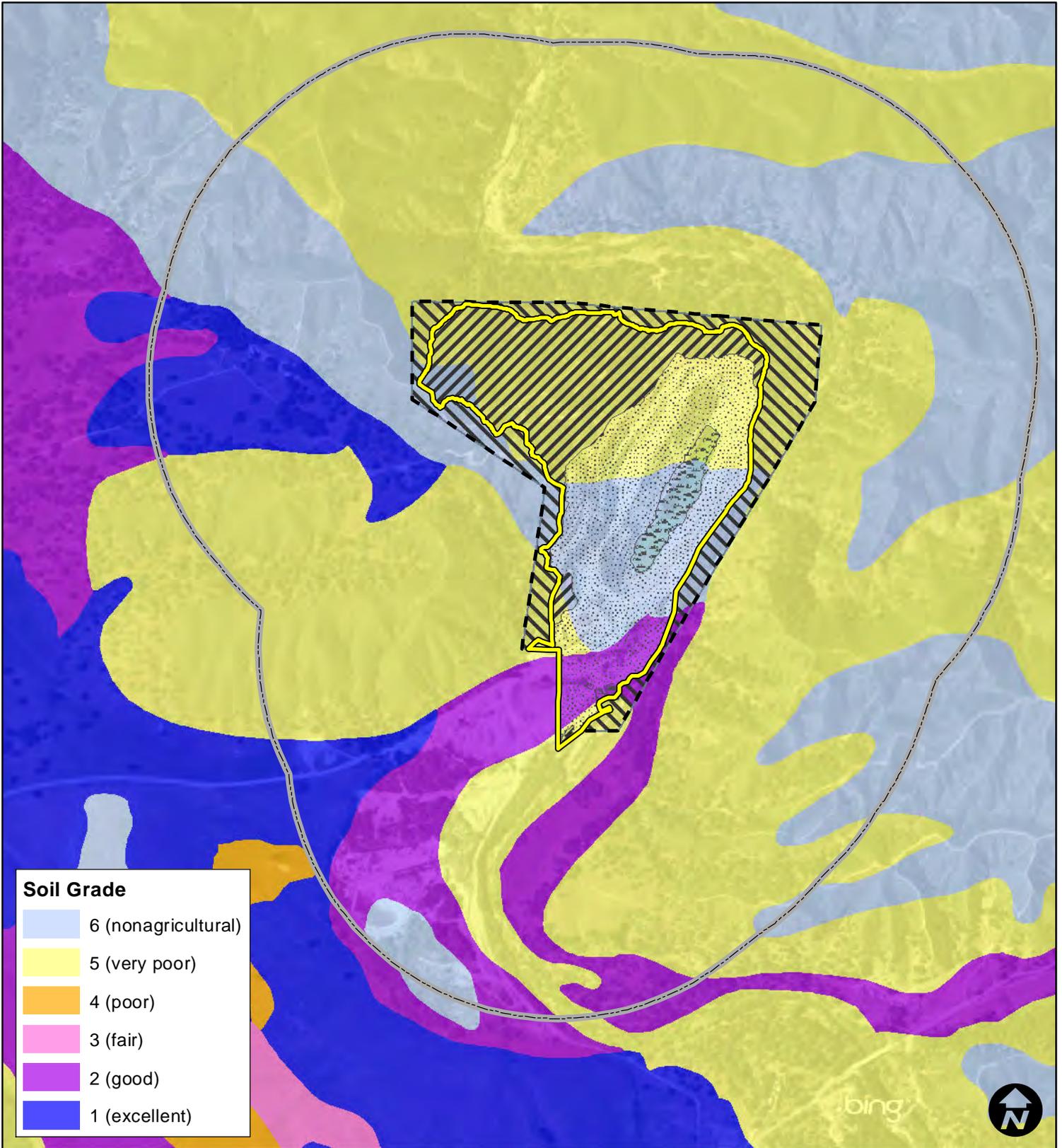
Tables 4.3-3 and 4.3-4 show the agricultural ratings of the soils on the site based on the California Revised Storie Index, as described below, and NRCS Farmland Classification. These classification systems are described below.

California Revised Storie Index. The Storie Index is a method of rating soils used mainly for irrigated agriculture based on crop productivity data (O’Geen et al., 2008). The Storie Index assesses the productivity of a soil from the following four characteristics: Factor A, degree of soil profile development; Factor B, texture of the surface layer; Factor C, slope; and Factor X, manageable features, including drainage, micro-relief, fertility, acidity, erosion, and salt content. A score ranging from 0 to 100 percent is determined for each factor, and the scores are then multiplied together to derive an index rating. For simplification, Storie Index ratings have been combined into six grade classes as follows: Grade 1 (excellent), 100 to 80; Grade 2 (good), 79 to 60; Grade 3 (fair), 59 to 40; Grade 4 (poor), 39 to 20; Grade 5 (very poor), 19 to 10; and Grade 6 (non-agricultural), less than 10. Figure 4.3-2 shows Storie Index ratings.

NRCS Farmland Classification. According to the USDA NRCS, Prime Farmland is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops, and is also available for these uses (the land could be cropland, pastureland, rangeland, forest land, or other land, but not urban built-up land or water). Sub-categories of Prime Farmland are included in USDA NRCS Farmland Classification, including: Prime Farmland if Drained; Prime Farmland if Irrigated; and Prime Farmland if Irrigated and Drained. USDA NRCS leaves criteria for Farmland of Statewide Importance, Farmland of Local Importance, and Farmland of Unique Importance up to each state (and county). USDA NRCS policy and procedures on Prime and Unique Farmlands are published in the "Federal Register," Vol. 43, No. 21, January 31, 1978. Figure 4.3-3 shows NRCS Farmland Classification.

Table 4.3-3. Storie Index (acres)

Storie Index Rating	Proposed Expansion Area	Undisturbed Buffer Area	Proposed RPA Footprint	2,000-Foot Surrounding Area
Grade 1 (Excellent)	0	0	0	47.5
Grade 2 (Good)	0.04	1.4	7.2	74.9
Grade 3 (Fair)	0	0	0	0
Grade 4 (Poor)	0	0	0	0.03
Grade 5 (Very Poor)	34.9	20.9	56.2	495.3
Grade 6 (Non-Agricultural)	3.4	9.4	31.1	215.1



Soil Grade

Light Blue	6 (nonagricultural)
Yellow	5 (very poor)
Orange	4 (poor)
Pink	3 (fair)
Purple	2 (good)
Dark Blue	1 (excellent)



- RPA Footprint
- Proposed Quarry Activities
- RPA Area
- Undisturbed Buffer Area
- Extent of Existing Quarry Activities
- 2000' Buffer Around Expansion Area
- Existing Operational Water Features

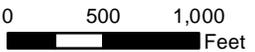
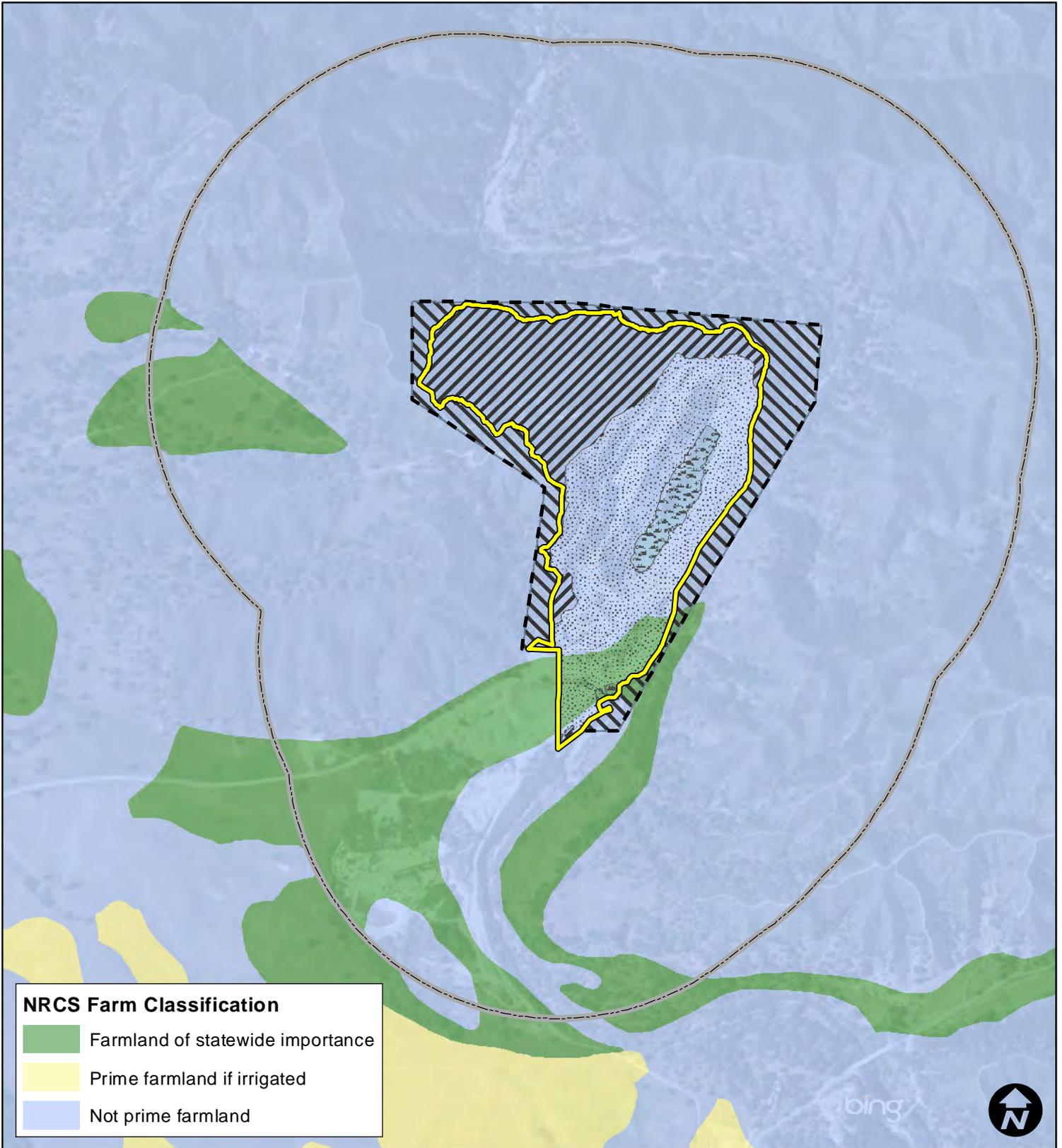


Figure 4.3-2

California Revised
Storie Index



NRCS Farm Classification

- Farmland of statewide importance
- Prime farmland if irrigated
- Not prime farmland



- RPA Footprint
- RPA Area
- Proposed Quarry Activities
- Undisturbed Buffer Area
- Extent of Existing Quarry Activities
- 2000' Buffer Around Expansion Area
- Existing Operational Water Features

0 500 1,000
 Feet

Figure 4.3-3
 USDA Natural Resources
 Conservation Service
 Farmland Classification

Table 4.3-4. NRCS Farmland Classification

NRCS Classification	Proposed Expansion Area	Undisturbed Buffer Area	Proposed RPA Footprint	2,000-Foot Surrounding Area
Farmland of Statewide Importance	0.04	1.4	7.2	105.2
Not Prime Farmland	38.3	30.2	87.4	727.6

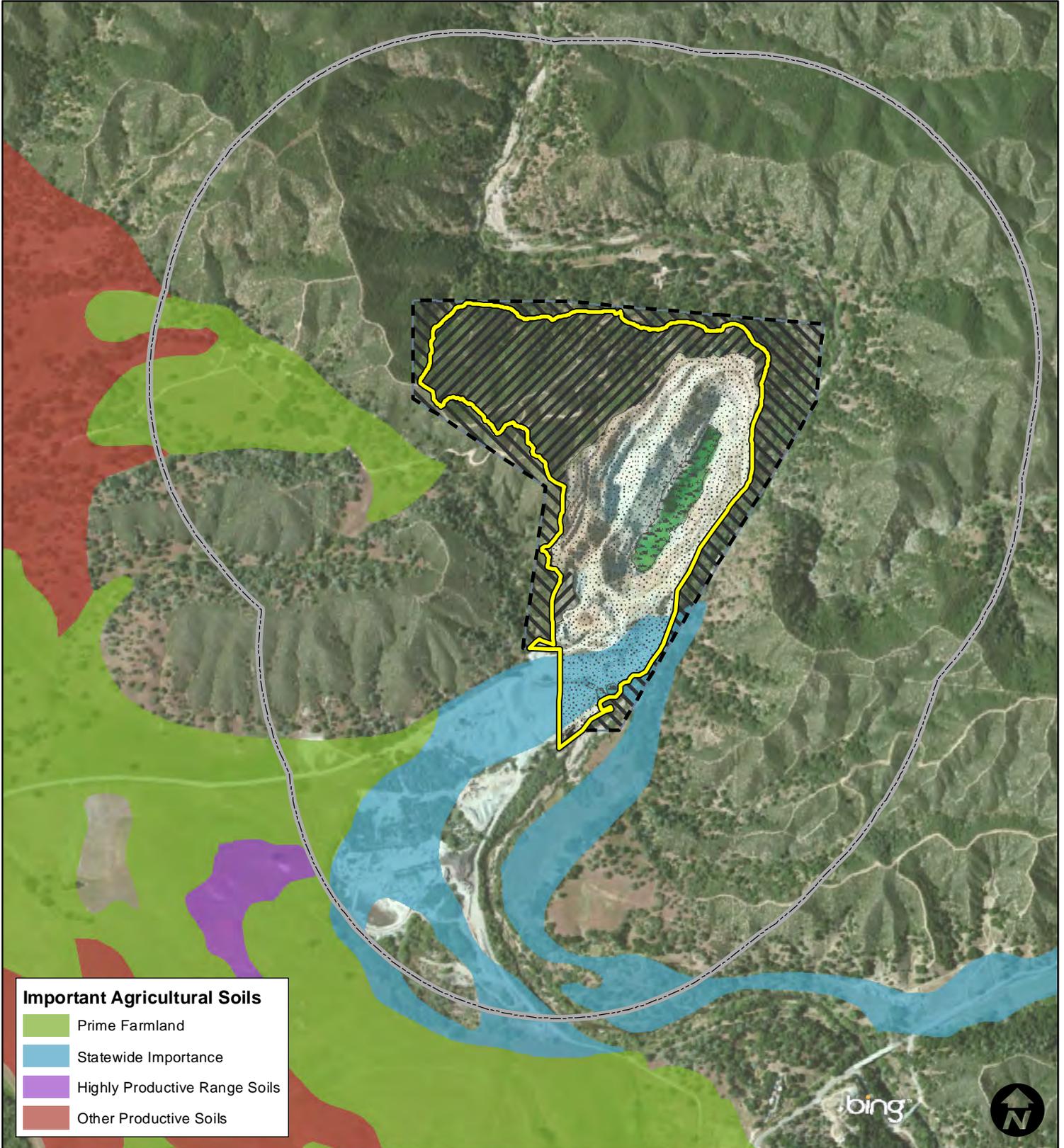
San Luis Obispo County-Designated Important Agricultural Soils. The County’s Conservation and Open Space Element designates Important Agricultural Soils and includes several goals and policies related to conserving these soils. Designated Important Agricultural Soils mapped in Figure SL-1 and listed in Table SL-2 of the Conservation and Open Space Element. Figure 4.3-4 shows the County’s designated Important Agricultural broken down by category. County-designated Important Agricultural Soils in the Project area are shown in Table 4.3-5. The County classifies soil types as follows:

- **Prime Farmland.** The County’s Prime Farmland designation is based on Land Capability Classification and Storie Index ratings; it does not rely on the availability of water for agriculture. Prime Agricultural Soils are defined in the Agriculture Element and the Land Use and Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance.
- **Farmland of Statewide Importance.** Farmland of Statewide Importance is defined by USDA NRCS in the Code of Federal Regulations for Agriculture. Like Prime Farmland, this category is based on physical and chemical properties of the soil, not whether land is irrigated.
- **Other Productive Soils.** This category includes Unique Farmland, as defined by the USDA NRCS in the Code of Federal Regulations for Agriculture. Most soils must all have a soil slope of 30 percent or less and all must meet at least two of the following three criteria: (1) Storie Index rating is fair, good or excellent; (2) Irrigated Capability Class is 1-6; (3) More than 3 percent of the soil type is in irrigated/permanent crop use as of 2008. Criteria 1 and 2 are based upon information from the Web Soil Survey. Criterion 3 is based upon GIS cropland mapping by the San Luis Obispo County Agriculture Department.
- **Highly Productive Rangeland Soils.** These soils meet all of the following criteria as identified on the Web Soil Survey: (1) Produce forage that is equivalent to 60 percent or more of the maximum normal year forage production for that soil survey area; (2) Majority of the forage produced is herbaceous; (3) Slope is less than 30 percent (except select soil types).

Table 4.3-5. County-Designated Important Agricultural Soils

Important Agricultural Soils Category	Proposed Expansion Area	Undisturbed Buffer Area	Proposed RPA Footprint	2,000-Foot Surrounding Area
Prime Farmland	0	0	0	47.6
Farmland of Statewide Importance	0.04	1.4	7.2	72.7
Other Productive Soils	0	0	0	2.2
Highly Productive Rangeland Soils	0	0	0	0.03

Local, State, and federal policies related to agricultural resources are described below.



Important Agricultural Soils

- Prime Farmland
- Statewide Importance
- Highly Productive Range Soils
- Other Productive Soils



- RPA Footprint
- RPA Area
- Proposed Quarry Activities
- Extent of Existing Quarry Activities
- Existing Operational Water Features
- Undisturbed Buffer Area
- 2000' Buffer Around Expansion Area

0 500 1,000 Feet

Figure 4.3-4
San Luis Obispo County
Designated Important
Agricultural Soils

4.3.2 San Luis Obispo County Plans and Policies

The County’s relevant agricultural plans and policies are shown in Table 4.3-6.

Table 4.3-6. San Luis Obispo County – Applicable Plans and Policies

Source	Policy, Plan, or Standard
<i>County of San Luis Obispo General Plan</i>	
Framework for Planning (Inland): The Land Use and Circulation Elements of the San Luis Obispo County General Plan (County of San Luis Obispo County, 2013)	
Planning Principle 1, Policy 6	Encourage the protection and use of agricultural land for the production of food, fiber and other agricultural commodities, and support the rural economy and locally based commercial agriculture.
Planning Principle 2, Policy 1	Maintain rural areas in agriculture, low-intensity recreation, very low-density residential uses, and open space uses that preserve and enhance a well-defined rural character.
<i>Chapter 8 Soil Resources</i>	
Policy SL 1.1	Prevent Loss of Topsoil in All Land Uses Minimize the loss of topsoil by encouraging broad-based cooperation between property owners, agricultural operators, agencies, and organizations that will lead to effective soil conservation practices on all lands, including County-controlled properties.
Policy SL 3.1	Conserve Important Agricultural Soils Conserve the important Agricultural Soils mapped in Figure SL-1 and listed in Table SL-2. Proposed conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses shall be evaluated against the applicable policies in this COSE and in the Agriculture Element, including Policy AGP 24. Soil types are classified by the County as: Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Other Productive Soils, and Highly Productive Rangeland Soils. The County bases its Prime Farmland designation on land capability classifications and Storie Index ratings. The County’s designation of Prime Farmland does not rely on the availability of water for agriculture.
<i>Agriculture Element (County of San Luis Obispo, 2010)</i>	
AG2	Conserve Agricultural Resources a. Maintain the agricultural land base of the County by clearly defining and identifying productive agricultural lands for long-term protection. b. Conserve the soil and water that are the vital components necessary for a successful agricultural industry in this county.
AG3	Protect Agricultural Lands. b. Maintain and protect agricultural lands from inappropriate conversion to non-agricultural uses. Establish criteria in this element and corresponding changes in the Land Use Element and Land Use Ordinance for when it is appropriate to convert land from agricultural to non-agricultural designations. c. Maintain and strengthen the County’s agricultural preserve program (Williamson Act) as an effective means for long-term agricultural land preservation.
AGP 17	Agricultural Buffers. a. Protect land designated Agriculture and other lands in production agriculture by using natural or man-made buffers where adjacent to non-agricultural land uses in accordance with the agricultural buffer policies adopted by the Board of Supervisors.
AGP 18	Location of Improvements. a. Locate new buildings, access roads, and structures so as to protect agricultural land. Discussion: This policy is intended to ensure that new facilities will be sited so that the most productive agricultural land will be kept available for agricultural production. On such land, allowable uses should generally be limited to those that are most directly related to agricultural production.

Table 4.3-6. San Luis Obispo County – Applicable Plans and Policies

Source	Policy, Plan, or Standard
AGP24	Conversion of Agricultural Land. a. Discourage the conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses through the following actions: 1. Work in cooperation with the incorporated cities, service districts, school districts, the County Department of Agriculture, the Agricultural Liaison Board, Farm Bureau, and affected community advisory groups to establish urban service and urban reserve lines and village reserve lines that will protect agricultural land and will stabilize agriculture at the urban fringe. 2. Establish clear criteria in this plan and the Land Use Element for changing the designation of land from Agriculture to non-agricultural designations. 3. Avoid land redesignation (rezoning) that would create new rural residential development outside the urban and village reserve lines. 4. Avoid locating new public facilities outside urban village and reserve lines unless they serve a rural function or there is no feasible alternative location within the urban and village reserve lines.
AGP25	Unique or Sensitive Habit b. For new development requiring a discretionary permit and for proposed land divisions, protect unique or sensitive habitat affected by the proposal through the following measures: 1. Site the proposed development so as to avoid significant impacts on the habitat or significant impacts on the agricultural operations. Provide for adjustments in project design where alternatives are infeasible, more environmentally damaging, or have a significant negative impact on agriculture. 2. When significant impacts are identified, the landowner shall implement county-approved mitigation measures consistent with the existing requirements of CEQA.

4.3.3 Regulatory Setting

Federal Policies

Farmland Protection Policy Act. The Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) is intended to minimize the impact federal programs have on conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses. Specifically, it is intended to ensure that federal programs are administered in a manner with state, local, and private programs and policies to protect farmland (7 United States Code Section 4201).

Federal Definition of Prime Farmland. According to the federal definition in the Code of Federal Regulations Title 7 (Agriculture) Section 657.5(a)(1), Prime farmland is “land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops, and is also available for these uses.” The USDA NRCS uses the following classifications for agricultural land: Prime Farmland; Farmland of Statewide Importance; Farmland of Local Importance; Unique Farmland; and Not Prime Farmland.

State Policies

Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. The DOC FMMP applies the NRCS soil classifications and land use information 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 FMMP has a minimum mapping unit of 10 acres for Important Farmlands, Other Land, and Urban Land, with smaller than 10-acre parcels being absorbed into the surrounding classifications. Grazing Land is mapped at a minimum scale of 40 acres.

The list below provides a comprehensive description of all the categories mapped by the DOC. Collectively, lands classified as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Local Importance are referred to as Important Farmland while Agricultural Land also includes Grazing Land (DOC FMMP, 2013a). In San Luis Obispo County, the DOC also maps Farmland of Local Potential, which consists of areas identified by the NRCS soils maps as either Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance, but which are not currently cultivated (DOC FMMP, 2013b).

- **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 approximately 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.

California Land Conservation Act of 1965 (Williamson Act). In enacting the Williamson Act, the California legislature stated that "the preservation of the maximum amount of the limited supply of agricultural land is necessary to the conservation of the State's economic resources, and is necessary not only to the maintenance of the agricultural economy of the state, but also for the assurance of adequate, healthful and nutritious food for future residents of this state and nation" (California Government Code Section 51220).

The Williamson Act enables participating local governments to enter into contracts with private landowners in order to restrict specific parcels of land to agricultural uses in return for reduced property tax assessments. Private land within locally designated agricultural preserve areas that meets certain minimum size and earnings requirements 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 to keep contracted parcels in agricultural, recreational, open space or other compatible uses for a minimum of ten years. Each year the contract automatically renews unless a notice of non-renewal or an application for cancellation is filed. In return, the land is taxed based on the income generated from the use of the land as opposed to its unrestricted market value. Participation in the Williamson Act program is dependent on County adoption and implementation of the program and is voluntary for landowners.

4.3.4 Environmental Impact Methodology

Significance Criteria

The following significance criteria for impacts to agricultural resources were derived from previous environmental impact assessments and from the State CEQA Guidelines (Appendix G, Environmental Checklist Form, Sections IX and XIV). The impacts of the Proposed Project may be considered significant and may require mitigation if the Project would:

- Convert farmland or grazing land to non-agricultural use;
- Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or with a Williamson Act contract; or
- Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in the conversion of the farmland or grazing land to non-agricultural use or impair agricultural use of other property.

Approach to Impact Analysis

As noted above, the study area for this agricultural resources analysis includes the entire 193-acre existing and proposed quarry site (for reclamation activities only) and the 33-acre proposed mine expansion area (for mining and reclamation activities). The study area also includes a 2,000-foot buffer area surrounding the proposed expansion boundary. The current condition and quality of agricultural resources in the study area are described in EIR Section 4.3.1 (Existing Conditions). This is the “baseline against which potential impacts are evaluated in EIR Section 4.3.5. EIR Section 4.3.5 addresses potential impacts on the study area from construction, operations, and maintenance of the Proposed Project. These activities were identified using the land use permit application for the Proposed Project and other supporting information provided to the County and Applicant.

Assessing impacts to agricultural resources involves examining both the environmental characteristics of those resources and their current and historic use. The strictly environmental components of agricultural resources include physical characteristics such as soil and water quality. The current and historic use of agricultural resources on a project site inherently involves the interaction of these environmental characteristics with economic factors.

Impacts are categorized per the significance classification system provided in EIR Section 4.1 (Environmental Analysis, Introduction, Impact Significance Classification Scheme).

4.3.5 Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Expanded mining activities would involve removing vegetation, topsoil, and overburden; blasting to fracture and loosen rock; extracting and transporting shot rock; and processing (crushing, screening, washing, sorting, temporarily storing) material for sale and distribution. No permanent stockpiles of mining waste would be left on the site. Water collected within the existing on-site Impoundment would be used for dust suppression; this water would be supplemented by water from the quarry’s existing Use Pond during dry periods. Water from the Use Pond would also be used for aggregate processing. The Use Pond is man-made and fills with groundwater (via the Source Pond). The mine would continue to operate 260 days per year with no change in annual aggregate production. The existing quarry has been active since the 1920s.

The Proposed Project also includes reclamation activities that would be undertaken in phases throughout the existing and expanded mining areas. The Proposed RPA is intended to reduce impacts from current and proposed mining operations. The Proposed RPA includes stabilizing soil, revegetation to create native plant habitat, and adapting mined areas to open space uses. Plant species used for reclamation would be capable of self-regeneration without continued dependence on irrigation, soil amendments or fertilizer, and would include species representative of surrounding vegetative communities.

Impact AG-1: Permanently convert farmland to a non-agricultural use

The proposed quarry expansion area is not zoned for agricultural use or mapped as farmland by FMMP (see Table 4.3-2). As shown in Table 4.3-3 (Storie Index) and Table 4.3-4 (NRCS Farmland Classification), only 0.04 acre of the proposed expansion area is classified as having good agricultural soil (Storie Index Grade 2 and NRCS Farmland of Statewide Importance). This 0.04 acre may be the result of a mapping error. The Proposed RPA would involve soil stabilization and revegetation of mined areas; these activities would not convert any farmland to non-agricultural use. Because the Proposed Project would directly affect a maximum of 0.04 acre of farmland, impacts would be less than significant (Class III).

Impact AG-2: Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or with a Williamson Act contract

The proposed quarry expansion area is designated as Rural Land (RL) with a combining land use allowing resource extraction (Extractive Resource Area [EX1]). None of the existing quarry or the proposed expansion area is enrolled in a Williamson Act contract. The Proposed RPA would not conflict with any existing zoning or other policies related to agricultural use. Therefore, there would be no impact (No Impact).

Impact AG-3: Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in the conversion of the farmland or grazing land to non-agricultural use or impair agricultural use of other property

Excavation

The expansion area is not designated by the County for agricultural use, and the site's soils are poorly adapted for agricultural production. There is 0.04 acre of land classified by NRCS as Farmland of Statewide importance within the proposed expansion area; however, this small amount of farmland may be the result of a mapping error. Just outside of the Proposed RPA footprint there is grazing and some limited hay production.

Activities in the expansion area, including topsoil removal, blasting, and material transport could potentially affect surrounding grazing operations and hay production through fugitive dust, sedimentation, or accidental spills of hazardous materials. As noted above, mining operations would use on-site ponds (recharged by groundwater) as a source of water for dust suppression. Expanded operations would comply with the existing quarry's approved National Pollutant Discharge Elimination (NPDES) General Permit for industrial activities, and Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be implemented in accordance with the quarry's Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP) and Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). Mitigation Measure HYD-1.1 includes specific requirements for the Project's SWPPP. The expanded quarry operations would also be subject to a Hazardous Materials Business Plan (HMBP) and a Spill Prevention, Countermeasure, and Control Plan (SPCC) as described in EIR Section 4.9 (Hazards and Hazardous Materials). As noted in EIR Section 4.4 (Air Quality), fugitive dust would be minimized in compliance with APCD Rules 401 and 402 and Mitigation Measure AQ-1. In addition,

Mitigation Measures BIO-1.2 and BIO-3.2 would require development and implementation of a Weed Control Plan and BMPs to minimize impacts on plants and wildlife. The implementation of all of these measures would ensure that impacts on surrounding agriculture would be less than significant (Class II). Therefore, no further mitigation is required.

Reclamation

Implementation of the Proposed RPA would include some activities (e.g. moving soil) that could generate some fugitive dust and pose some risk of accidental fuel spills. These risks would be minimal and reclamation activities would be phased over time, with very minor operational impacts at any one time. The eventual re-establishment of vegetation and open space in the currently mined area would have a net benefit for surrounding agricultural operations. Therefore, overall impacts on agricultural resources from implementation of the Proposed RPA would be less than significant (Class III).