

- **Impact 3.23.3.7-11:** Bat foraging habitat would be impacted as a result of the Slower, Longer Project Alternative for the duration of the Project.

Significance of the Impact: This impact is not considered significant; however, the following mitigation is proposed.

- **Mitigation Measure 3.23.3.7-11:** In order to minimize impacts to bat habitat, prior to the initiation of Project activities, EML would close those mine workings that would be removed over the life of the Project (after bats have been evacuated) and install bat-friendly closures on openings that would not be directly impacted by the Project in order to preserve access to the remaining bat habitat (also see Appendix C).
- **Effectiveness of Mitigation and Residual Effects:** The protection of specific mine openings in the Project Area would be effective as mitigation for the loss of habitat associated with those mines that would be removed as a result of Project activities. Bats excluded from the closed mines in the Project Area are familiar with the mine openings that would remain accessible and would take advantage of its preservation.

3.23.3.7.3 Residual Adverse Impacts

The Slower, Longer Project Alternative would result in the unavoidable loss of up to 734 acres of terrestrial wildlife habitat resulting from surface disturbance in the open pit area. Approximately 7,656 acres of wildlife habitat would be removed over the course of this alternative and then reclaimed as a result of mine development, operation, and closure. The reclaimed land would have more grass and forb forage and less mature shrub forage. Browsers would benefit the most from the early seral stage vegetation immediately following reclamation. As the plant communities within the Project Area mature, larger shrubs would provide additional cover for larger animals and less of a forage prey base for raptors, similar to the existing conditions. In addition, the impacts from this alternative would create prolonged habitat disturbance on wildlife.

3.24 Transportation and Access

3.24.1 Regulatory Framework

The transportation system associated with, and in the vicinity of, the Project consists of a network of roads that are maintained by either Eureka County, the NDOT, BLM, or are existing roads on public lands that are not maintained.

Public lands under BLM jurisdiction are managed “...on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield unless otherwise specified by law” (Sec. 102 (a)(7), FLPMA). Under the FLPMA, access to public lands is generally considered open, unless the BLM RMP has designated otherwise. All public lands in the vicinity of the Project Area, except for the Roberts Mountain WSA are in an open status.

3.24.2 Affected Environment

3.24.2.1 Study Methods

The baseline data presented below is based on information from the Plan, NDOT, and the MLFO files.

3.24.2.2 Existing Conditions

Transportation

On the eastern boundary of the Project Area SR 278 traverses the Project Area from north to south. This paved route connects the communities of Eureka and Carlin. To the south of the Project Area, the Town of Eureka is situated on U.S. Highway 50, which is one of the two-lane east-west highways that cross the US. To the north of the Project Area, the City of Carlin is situated on I-80, which is one of the major east-west four-lane interstate highways that cross the U.S. SR 278 had an average daily traffic volume of 740 vehicle trips per day, 175 of which were trucks in 2008 (NDOT 2011). U.S. Highway 50 had an average daily traffic volume of 1,900 vehicles, 130 of which were trucks in 2008 (NDOT 2011).

Access

Primary access within Eureka County is furnished by I-80, U.S. Highway 50, SR 278, county roads, and public access roads. The majority of public lands are accessible to the general public via one of these roads. I-80 and U.S. Highway 50 are the primary east-west highways in north-central Nevada. SR 278 is the main north-south corridor through Eureka County, connecting the Town of Eureka (along U.S. Highway 50) and the City of Carlin (along I-80).

The Project Area is reached from I-80 by traveling approximately 65 miles south on SR 278 along Pine Valley to Garden Pass. The Project is located on the west side of SR 278 immediately south of Garden Pass. The Project Area can also be reached from the intersection of U.S. Highway 50 by traveling north on SR 278 through Diamond Valley for approximately 23 miles. From SR 278, a number of dirt roads can be used to access the Project, which is located one mile west of SR 278.

3.24.3 Environmental Consequences

3.24.3.1 Significance Criteria

The Proposed Action would normally have a significant effect on transportation and access if the following would occur:

- Cause an increase in traffic that is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the roadway system; or
- Prevent or substantially reduce access to public land through the elimination of existing routes of travel.

3.24.3.2 Assessment Methodology

To evaluate impacts to transportation and access, the Proposed Action and alternatives are reviewed against existing conditions and local transportation plans. The significance criteria are then applied to determine if the adverse effects would be considered significant impacts if the Project or an alternative were implemented.

3.24.3.3 Proposed Action

The Project would employ a substantial number of personnel for administration and the operation of mining and production equipment; however, through the use of buses to transport workers from the communities in the area (Eureka, Carlin, Elko), traffic pressure on SR 278 would be minimized. The Project would also require additional deliveries of some hazardous chemicals to the Project Area, which are discussed in Section 3.20.

Since SR 278 is the main north-south corridor through Eureka County (connecting the Town of Eureka with the City of Carlin), the primary reason that the public may utilize SR 278 in the vicinity of the Project Area would be to travel to and from the Town of Eureka and City of Carlin, as well as more distant points. The Project would result in approximately 26 daily truck trips, including the toll roasting, which would create an approximately 15 percent increase in truck traffic. In addition, there would be an undetermined increase in passenger vehicle trips per day on SR 278. Some Project-related traffic would utilize U.S. Highway 50.

Overall, the impact of the Proposed Action on increasing traffic on existing roadways is not considered significant.

- **Impact 3.24.3.3-1:** For the life of the Project, which could be up to 70 years, there would be an increase in truck (approximately 15 percent) and passenger car traffic on SR 278 and U.S. Highway 50.

Significance of the Impact: The impact is not considered significant. Based on the conclusions from the analysis, no additional mitigation is proposed.

The public may also access the Roberts Mountains for dispersed recreation opportunities (hunting or OHV use) by using the Henderson-Roberts Creek Road, also known as the Old Pony Express Trail, which is the 1980s re-route of the original trail. This road is located on the west side of Mount Hope and traverses through Henderson Summit to connect with SR 278 approximately four miles north of Mount Hope. The designated Pony Express Trail is located on the south side of Mount Hope. Impacts of the Proposed Action on the Pony Express Trail are discussed in Section 3.21. For the life of the Project, which could be up to 70 years, access through the Project Area would be restricted.

Public access routes to areas near and beyond the Project Area would not be impacted by the Proposed Action. Public access to surrounding areas would remain available throughout the construction, mining, and reclamation phases of the Project. All haul and access roads constructed by EML under the Proposed Action would be reclaimed following the completion of mining and processing. The Proposed Action would not otherwise impact access.

- **Impact 3.24.3.3-2:** For the life of the Project, which could be up to 70 years, access through the Project Area would be restricted. Public access to surrounding areas would remain available throughout the construction, mining, and reclamation phases of the Project.

Significance of the Impact: This impact is not considered significant. Based on the conclusions from the analysis, no additional mitigation is proposed.

3.24.3.3.1 Residual Adverse Impacts

The Proposed Action would result in the unavoidable loss of up to 734 acres of public lands utilized for livestock grazing and mineral exploration resulting from surface disturbance associated with the open pit. There would be no residual impact to access resulting from the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action would have the unavoidable, but reversible, indirect potential to adversely affect access through the Project Area and increase use of the transportation system for the life of the Project.

3.24.3.4 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, EML is currently authorized under six Notices to disturb approximately 30 acres of public land as a result of the exploration and development of the Project. Facilities and operations that have been approved but not yet completed would have impacts on transportation and access. Public lands managed for multiple uses within the Project Area that have been proposed for surface disturbance and fencing would remain accessible.

No additional public lands would be removed from multiple use management, and impacts to land use would be limited to ongoing permitted mining and exploration activities. There would be no impacts to access beyond existing conditions resulting from the approved Notices.

3.24.3.4.1 Residual Adverse Impacts

There would be no residual impacts to transportation and access under the No Action Alternative, other than those impacts caused by authorized Notice-level operations at the Project. The impacts to access caused by existing operations at the Project are considered temporary, and no residual adverse impacts are anticipated.

3.24.3.5 Partial Backfill Alternative

The Project would employ a substantial number of personnel for administration and the operation of mining and production equipment; however, through the use of buses to transport workers from the communities in the area (Eureka, Carlin, Elko), traffic pressure to SR 278 would be minimized. The Project would also require additional deliveries of some hazardous chemicals to the Project Area, which are discussed in Section 3.20.

Since SR 278 is the main north-south corridor through Eureka County (connecting the Town of Eureka with the City of Carlin), the primary reason that the public may utilize SR 278 in the vicinity of the Project Area would be to travel to and from the Town of Eureka and the City of Carlin, as well as more distant points. The Project would result in approximately 26 daily truck trips, including the toll roasting, which would create an approximately 15 percent increase in

truck traffic. In addition, there would be an undetermined increase in passenger vehicle trips per day on SR 278. Some Project-related traffic would utilize U.S. Highway 50.

Overall, the impact of the Partial Backfill Alternative on increasing traffic on existing roadways is not considered significant.

- **Impact 3.24.3.5-1:** For the life of the Project, which could be up to 70 years, there would be an increase in truck (approximately 15 percent) and passenger car traffic on SR 278 and U.S. Highway 50.

Significance of the Impact: This impact is not considered less than significant. Based on the conclusions from the analysis, no additional mitigation is proposed.

The public may also access the Roberts Mountains for dispersed recreation opportunities (hunting or OHV use) by using the Henderson-Roberts Creek Road, also known as the Old Pony Express Trail, which is the 1980s re-route of the original trail. This road is located on west side of Mount Hope and traverses through Henderson Summit to connect with SR 278 approximately four miles north of Mount Hope. The designated Pony Express Trail is located on the south side of Mount Hope. Impacts of the Proposed Action on the Pony Express Trail are discussed in Section 3.21. For the life of the Project, which could be up to 70 years, access through the Project Area would be restricted.

Public access routes to areas near and beyond the Project Area would not be impacted by the Proposed Action. Public access to surrounding areas would remain available throughout the construction, mining, and reclamation phases of the Project. All other haul and access roads constructed by EML under the Proposed Action would be reclaimed following the completion of mining. The Partial Backfill Alternative would not otherwise impact access.

- **Impact 3.24.3.5-2:** For the life of the Project, which could be up to 70 years, access through the Project Area would be restricted. Public access to surrounding areas would remain available throughout the construction, mining, and reclamation phases of the Project.

Significance of the Impact: This impact is considered less than significant. Based on the conclusions from the analysis, no additional mitigation is proposed.

3.24.3.5.1 Residual Adverse Impacts

The Partial Backfill Alternative would result in the unavoidable loss of 734 acres of public lands utilized for livestock grazing and mineral exploration, resulting from surface disturbance of the open pit area. There would be no residual adverse impact to access resulting from the Partial Backfill Alternative. Similar to the Proposed Action, the Partial Backfill Alternative would have the unavoidable indirect potential to adversely affect access through the Project Area for the duration of the Project.

3.24.3.6 Off-Site Transfer of Ore Concentrate for Processing Alternative

The Project would employ a substantial number of personnel for administration and the operation of mining and production equipment; however, through the use of buses to transport

workers from the communities in the area (Eureka, Carlin, Elko), traffic pressure to SR 278 would be minimized. The Project would also require additional deliveries of some hazardous chemicals to the Project Area, which are discussed in Section 3.20.

Since SR 278 is the main north-south corridor through Eureka County (connecting the Town of Eureka with the City of Carlin), the primary reason that the public may utilize SR 278 in the vicinity of the Project Area would be to travel to and from the Town of Eureka and the City of Carlin, as well as more distant points. The Project would result in approximately 26 daily truck trips, including the toll roasting, which would create an approximately 15 percent increase in truck traffic. In addition, there would be an undetermined increase in passenger vehicle trips per day on SR 278. Some Project-related traffic would utilize U.S. Highway 50.

Overall, the impact of the Off-Site Transfer of Ore Concentrate for Processing Alternative on increasing traffic on existing roadways is not considered significant.

- **Impact 3.24.3.6-1:** For the life of the Project, which could be up to 70 years, there would be an increase in truck (approximately 15 percent) and passenger car traffic on SR 278 and U.S. 50.

Significance of the Impact: This impact is considered less than significant. Based on the conclusions from the analysis, no additional mitigation is proposed.

The public may also access the Roberts Mountains for dispersed recreation opportunities (hunting or OHV use) by using the Henderson-Roberts Creek Road, also known as the Old Pony Express Trail, which is the 1980s re-route of the original trail. This road is located on the west side of Mount Hope and traverses through Henderson Summit to connect with SR 278 approximately four miles north of Mount Hope. The designated Pony Express Trail is located on the south side of Mount Hope. Impacts of the Off-Site Transfer of Ore Concentrate for Processing Alternative on the Pony Express Trail are discussed in Section 3.21. For the life of the Project, which could be up to 70 years, access through the Project Area would be restricted.

Public access routes to areas near and beyond the Project Area would not be impacted by the Off-Site Transfer of Ore Concentrate for Processing Alternative. Public access to surrounding areas would remain available throughout the construction, mining, and reclamation phases of the Project. All other haul and access roads constructed by EML under the Off-Site Transfer of Ore Concentrate for Processing Alternative would be reclaimed following the completion of mining. The Off-Site Transfer of Ore Concentrate for Processing Alternative would not otherwise impact access.

- **Impact 3.24.3.6-2:** For the life of the Project, which could be up to 70 years, access through the Project Area would be restricted. Public access to surrounding areas would remain available throughout the construction, mining, and reclamation phases of the Project.

Significance of the Impact: This impact is considered less than significant. Based on the conclusions from the analysis, no additional mitigation is proposed.

3.24.3.6.1 Residual Adverse Impacts

The Off-Site Transfer of Ore Concentrate for Processing Alternative would result in the unavoidable loss of 734 acres of public lands utilized for livestock grazing and mineral exploration, resulting from surface disturbance of the open pit area. There would be no residual adverse impact to access resulting from the Off-Site Transfer of Ore Concentrate for Processing Alternative. Similar to the Proposed Action, the Off-Site Transfer of Ore Concentrate for Processing Alternative would have the unavoidable indirect potential to adversely affect access through the Project Area for the duration of the Project.

3.24.3.7 Slower, Longer Project Alternative

The Project would employ a substantial number of personnel for administration and the operation of mining and production equipment; however, through the use of buses to transport workers from the communities in the area (Eureka, Carlin, Elko), traffic pressure to SR 278 would be minimized. The Project would also require additional deliveries of some hazardous chemicals to the Project Area, which are further discussed in Section 3.20.

Since SR 278 is the main north-south corridor through Eureka County (connecting the Town of Eureka with the City of Carlin), the primary reason that the public may utilize SR 278 in the vicinity of the Project Area would be to travel to and from the Town of Eureka and the City of Carlin, as well as more distant points. The Project would result in approximately 13 daily truck trips, including the toll roasting, which would create an approximately seven percent increase in truck traffic. In addition, there would be an undetermined increase in passenger vehicle trips per day on SR 278. Some Project-related traffic would utilize U.S. Highway 50.

Overall, the impact of the Slower, Longer Project Alternative on increasing traffic on existing roadways is not considered significant.

- **Impact 3.24.3.7-1:** For the life of the Project, which could be up to 70 years, there would be an increase in truck (approximately seven percent) and passenger car traffic on SR 278 and U.S. Highway 50.

Significance of the Impact: This impact is considered less than significant. Based on the conclusions from the analysis, no additional mitigation is proposed.

The public may also access the Roberts Mountains for dispersed recreation opportunities (hunting or OHV use) by using the Henderson-Roberts Creek Road, also known as the Old Pony Express Trail, which is the 1980s re-route of the original trail. This road is located on the west side of Mount Hope and traverses through Henderson Summit to connect with SR 278 approximately four miles north of Mount Hope. The designated Pony Express Trail is located on the south side of Mount Hope. Impacts of the Slower, Longer Project Alternative on the Pony Express Trail are discussed in Section 3.21. For the life of the Project, which could be up to twice as long (Approximately 115 years) as the Proposed Action, access through the Project Area would be restricted.

Public access routes to areas near and beyond the Project Area would not be impacted by the Slower, Longer Project Alternative. Public access to surrounding areas would remain available throughout the construction, mining, and reclamation phases of the Project. All other haul and

access roads constructed by EML under the Slower, Longer Project Alternative would be reclaimed following the completion of mining. The Slower, Longer Project Alternative would not otherwise impact access.

- **Impact 3.24.3.7-2:** For the life of the Project, which could be up to twice as long (approximately 115 years) as the Proposed Action, access through the Project Area would be restricted. Public access to surrounding areas would remain available throughout the construction, mining, and reclamation phases of the Project.

Significance of the Impact: This impact is considered less than significant. Based on the conclusions from the analysis, no additional mitigation is proposed.

3.24.3.7.1 Residual Adverse Impacts

The Slower, Longer Project Alternative would result in the unavoidable loss of up to 734 acres of public lands utilized for livestock grazing and mineral exploration resulting from surface disturbance associated with the open pit. There would be no residual impact to access resulting from the Slower, Longer Project Alternative. This alternative would have the unavoidable, but reversible, indirect potential to adversely affect access through the Project Area for the life of the Project.

3.25 Forest Products

3.25.1 Regulatory Framework

The 43 CFR 5400 regulates the sale of forest products harvested from public lands.

3.25.2 Affected Environment

Study Methods

The NRCS soil surveys were reviewed to obtain existing vegetation data for the area and potential natural vegetation and ecological site descriptions (SRK 2007b). A gross scale mapping effort of the vegetation in the majority of the Project was conducted by aerial survey (helicopter) on April 28, 2006, and ground surveys (SRK 2007b). UTM coordinates were obtained for boundaries between plant communities. An additional survey for biological resources, including vegetation, was conducted on July 1 and 2, 2008 (Great Basin Ecology 2008). The BLM provided information of the known woodland product harvesting in the Project Area.

3.25.2.1 Existing Conditions

Singleleaf piñon and Utah juniper woodlands provide the majority of the forest products occurring in the BLM MLFO area. Piñon-juniper woodlands are currently located in the northern, central, and southeastern portions of the proposed mine area. Forest products come from the following activities in the Project Area: pine nut harvesting; fence posts; fuel wood (e.g., greenwood and dead wood); and Christmas tree cutting. Approximately 12,812 acres of vegetation containing a singleleaf piñon and Utah juniper component are located in the Project Area (Table 3.9-1). Forest product harvesting is not permitted in WSAs.

3.25.2.1.1 Greenwood Cutting

Personal greenwood cutting can occur where cutting of live trees is permitted. Commercial greenwood cutting is allowed on a case-by-case basis by the BLM. The most common uses of greenwood cutting products are fence posts and fuel wood. Commercial fuel wood harvesting can occur in the vicinity of the Project Area.

3.25.2.1.2 Pine Nut Harvest

The public can collect up to 25 pounds of piñon pine nuts each year with no cost or permit being required. A permit is required to collect more than 25 pounds annually. The majority of public lands administered by the BLM are open to the general public for pine nut collection. All pine nuts that are intended for resale require a permit/contract with the BLM. The Nevada BLM has designated commercial sale areas which are advertised for sale each year in August. The Project is located within the Whistler/Sulfur Springs and Roberts Commercial Pine Nut Sale Areas (Figure 3.25.1).

3.25.2.1.3 Christmas Tree Cutting

Christmas tree cutting occurs in the vicinity of the Project Area. Christmas tree permits are available from the BMDO. Piñon pine and Utah juniper are the only trees that can be cut on BLM-administered lands in Nevada. Christmas trees may be cut anywhere on BLM land within the BMDO boundaries except in WSAs. Commercial Christmas tree harvesting can occur in the vicinity of the Project Area.

3.25.3 Environmental Consequences and Mitigation Measures

The environmental consequences of the Proposed Action and each alternative as they relate to forestry products are discussed in this section.

3.25.3.1 Significance Criteria

Based upon NEPA guidelines and commonly accepted criteria, the Proposed Action or alternatives would normally be considered to have a significant effect on forestry products if the following occurred:

- Substantially affect greenwood cutting, pine nut harvesting, or Christmas tree cutting; or
- Area is somehow rendered unsuitable for traditional use.

3.25.3.2 Assessment Methodology

Potential effects on forestry products can be categorized as direct and indirect, as well as short term (i.e., during the life of the Project) and long term. Direct effects on forestry products would include temporary and permanent loss of singleleaf piñon and Utah juniper associated with construction, operation, and maintenance of the Project. Indirect effects could include degradation of habitat due to trampling, soil compaction, water table decline, spills, increased access, and introduction of noxious weeds. Short-term impacts are those that could occur during Project implementation and until reclamation is complete. Long-term impacts are those occurring

after reclamation is complete. The effects are determined to be significant or not significant based on the applicable significance criteria listed in Section 3.25.3.1.

3.25.3.3 Proposed Action

Implementation of the Proposed Action would result in the temporary disturbance or loss of up to 8,318 acres of vegetation over the 44-year mine life. Approximately 3,426 acres of vegetation with a singleleaf piñon component would be impacted by the Proposed Action within the Project Area (Table 3.9-2).

The Proposed Action would result in the conversion of tree- and shrub-dominated vegetation types in the Project Area to grass/forb-dominated vegetation types following reclamation. Over the long term, shrubs and trees would become reestablished and increase in abundance within the majority of disturbed areas as a result of reclamation and natural recolonization. Due to timing of the Project development and concurrent reclamation, the total acreage of vegetation disturbed would not occur all at one time. Upon completion of the Project, the reclamation portion of the Proposed Action would be completed for 7,656 acres (92 percent of the disturbed area). Approximately 734 acres of vegetation in the vicinity of the open pit would be removed and not reclaimed.

The removal of 3,426 acres of singleleaf piñon and Utah juniper trees would be a long-term impact, since it would take approximately 75 to 100 years for mature woodland to become reestablished in the disturbance areas. Of the 3,426 acres of total disturbance in piñon-juniper vegetation, approximately 734 acres of piñon-juniper woodland would be permanently lost due to the development of the open pit. The long-term change in vegetation and loss of woodland productivity would not result in significant impacts to woodland products since the Proposed Action is located in an area where abundant singleleaf piñon and Utah juniper exist on public lands.

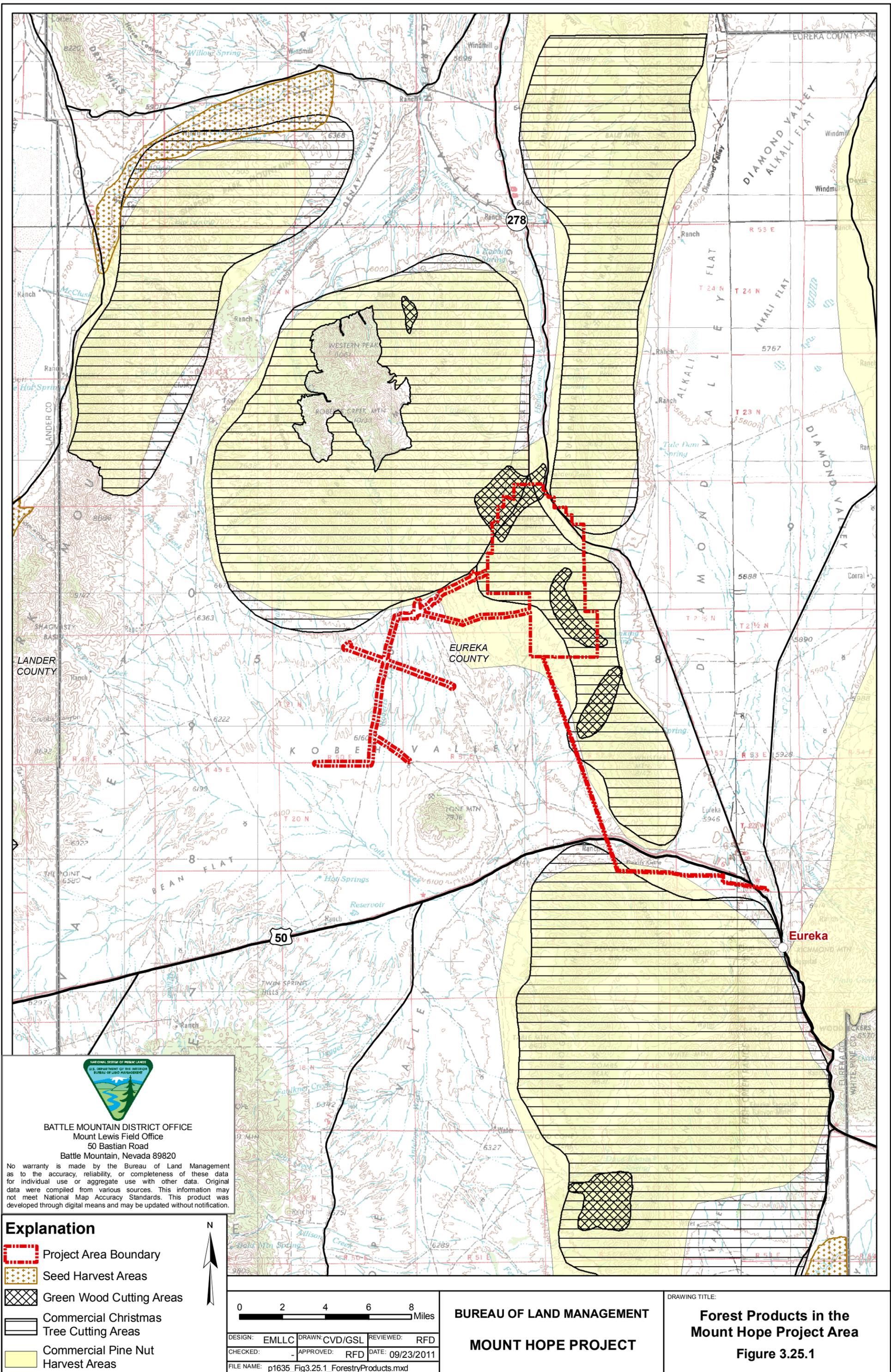
Reclamation and revegetation would minimize the aforementioned impacts to vegetation. A total of 7,656 acres (or 92 percent of the disturbed area) would eventually be revegetated. Only the 734 acres of the open pit would remain unvegetated. Revegetation activities would be conducted as outlined in Section 2.1.17. Reclamation seed mixtures and application rates, based on BLM requirements, are shown in Tables 2.1-9 and 2.1-10.

- **Impact 3.25.3.3-1:** Disturbance or removal of 3,426 acres of vegetation with a singleleaf piñon and Utah juniper component would occur as a result of the Proposed Action.

Significance of the Impact: The impact is not considered significant. Based on the conclusions from the analysis, no additional mitigation is proposed.

3.25.3.3.1 Residual Adverse Impacts

Residual adverse impacts to forestry products would include the permanent loss of vegetative productivity from approximately 734 acres of land associated with the open pit that would not be reclaimed and a long-term change in vegetation composition (i.e., tree and shrub dominated communities to grass and forb dominated communities) as a result of Project development and operation.



BATTLE MOUNTAIN DISTRICT OFFICE
 Mount Lewis Field Office
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 Battle Mountain, Nevada 89820

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Explanation

- Project Area Boundary
- Seed Harvest Areas
- Green Wood Cutting Areas
- Commercial Christmas Tree Cutting Areas
- Commercial Pine Nut Harvest Areas



DESIGN: EMLLC	DRAWN: CVD/GSL	REVIEWED: RFD
CHECKED: [blank]	APPROVED: RFD	DATE: 09/23/2011
FILE NAME: p1635_Fig3.25.1_ForestryProducts.mxd		

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MOUNT HOPE PROJECT

DRAWING TITLE:
**Forest Products in the
 Mount Hope Project Area**
 Figure 3.25.1

Residual adverse impacts to woodland products would result from the long-term loss of approximately 3,426 acres of vegetation communities containing a singleleaf piñon and Utah juniper component on BLM administered land. Woodland products from these areas would not be available until mature trees had become reestablished, which would take approximately 75 to 100 years. Of the 3,426 acres of total disturbance in vegetation with a singleleaf piñon and Utah juniper component, approximately 734 acres of singleleaf piñon and Utah juniper would be permanently lost with the development of the open pit.

3.25.3.4 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the proposed Project would not be developed and associated impacts to forestry products would not occur. EML would continue existing activities under previously permitted Notices, and the area would remain available for future mineral development or for other purposes as approved by the BLM. Under the No Action Alternative, EML would continue to conduct mineral exploration and data acquisition within the Project Area. Ongoing reclamation would help to minimize impacts to vegetation through continuation of current and ongoing activities, with resulting short-term impacts to herbaceous species and long-term impacts to woody species.

- **Impact 3.25.3.4-1:** Disturbance or removal of 3,426 acres of vegetation with a singleleaf piñon and Utah juniper component would occur as a result of the Proposed Action.

Significance of the Impact: The impact is not considered significant. Based on the conclusions from the analysis, no additional mitigation is proposed.

3.25.3.4.1 Residual Adverse Impacts

The No Action Alternative would have the unavoidable long-term impacts to piñon-juniper as part of surface disturbance associated with permitted exploration and data acquisition; however, revegetation and reclamation would minimize these impacts to forestry products.

3.25.3.5 Partial Backfill Alternative

Impacts to forestry products would be similar to those described for the Proposed Action; however, the Partial Backfill Alternative would involve the partial backfilling of the open pit to eliminate the pit lake and the floor of the open pit would be reclaimed using growth media and then seeded. Although the Proposed Action would have 734 acres that would remain unvegetated in the open pit, under this alternative approximately 527 acres would remain unvegetated following Project completion and reclamation; therefore, impacts to forestry products would be similar to, but slightly less than, those described for the Proposed Action.

- **Impact 3.25.3.5-1:** Disturbance or removal of 3,426 acres of vegetation with a singleleaf piñon and Utah juniper component would occur as a result of the Proposed Action.

Significance of the Impact: The impact is not considered significant. Based on the conclusions from the analysis, no additional mitigation is proposed

3.25.3.5.1 Residual Adverse Impacts

Residual adverse effects to forestry products would include the permanent loss of vegetative productivity from approximately 527 acres of land associated with the open pit that would not be reclaimed and a long-term change in vegetation composition (i.e., tree and shrub dominated communities to grass and forb dominated communities) as a result of Project development and operation.

Residual impacts to woodland products would result from the long-term loss of approximately 3,426 acres of vegetation communities with a singleleaf piñon and Utah juniper component on BLM-administered land. Woodland products from these areas would not be available until mature trees had become reestablished, which would take approximately 75 to 100 years. Of the 3,426 acres of total disturbance in singleleaf piñon and Utah juniper, approximately 527 acres of singleleaf piñon and Utah juniper would be permanently lost with the development of the open pit.

3.25.3.6 Off-Site Transfer of Ore Concentrate for Processing Alternative

Although the Off-Site Transfer of Ore Concentrate for Processing Alternative would result in approximately 20 acres less surface disturbance when compared to the Proposed Action, impacts to vegetation community types from this alternative would be similar to those for the Proposed Action since the disturbance acreage would decrease by only 0.2 percent.

- **Impact 3.25.3.6-1:** Disturbance or removal of 3,426 acres of vegetation with a singleleaf piñon and Utah juniper component would occur as a result of the Proposed Action.

Significance of the Impact: The impact is not considered significant. Based on the conclusions from the analysis, no additional mitigation is proposed.

3.25.3.6.1 Residual Adverse Impacts

The potential residual impacts to forestry products from the Off-Site Transfer of Ore Concentrate for Processing Alternative would be similar to those for the Proposed Action.

3.25.3.7 Slower, Longer Project Alternative

Impacts to forestry products from the Slower, Longer Project Alternative are expected to be similar to impacts from the Proposed Action at the end of the Project; however, impacts from the Slower, Longer Project Alternative would occur over a period approximately twice as long in duration compared to the Proposed Action.

- **Impact 3.25.3.7-1:** Disturbance or removal of 3,426 acres of vegetation with a singleleaf piñon and Utah juniper component would occur as a result of the Proposed Action.

Significance of the Impact: The impact is not considered significant. Based on the conclusions from the analysis, no additional mitigation is proposed.

3.25.3.7.1 Residual Adverse Impacts

Residual adverse impacts to forestry products would include the permanent loss of vegetative productivity from approximately 734 acres of land associated with the open pit that would not be reclaimed and a long-term change in vegetation composition (i.e., tree and shrub dominated communities to grass and forb dominated communities) as a result of Project development and operation.

Residual adverse impacts to woodland products would result from the long-term loss of approximately 3,426 acres of vegetation communities containing a singleleaf piñon and Utah juniper component on BLM administered land. Woodland products from these areas would not be available until mature trees had become reestablished, which would be longer compared to the Proposed Action because of in the increased duration of this alternative. Of the 3,426 acres of total disturbance in vegetation with a singleleaf piñon and Utah juniper component, approximately 734 acres of singleleaf piñon and Utah juniper would be permanently lost with the development of the open pit.

3.26 Relationship Between the Local Short-Term Uses of the Human Environment

Short term is defined as the life of the Project through closure and reclamation. Long term is defined as the future beyond reclamation. Many of the impacts associated with the Proposed Action would be short term and would cease following successful reclamation; however, decreases in long-term soil and vegetation productivity in reclaimed areas are expected until the areas have fully recovered. Long-term soil and vegetation productivity under all alternatives is expected to be generally similar to the Proposed Action.