

this area for several years and as large mammals (i.e., mule deer, coyote, fox) were readily detected onsite during the biological assessment, it can be concluded that mining activities in the area have little adverse impacts to large mammal populations.

Impacts to wildlife habitat discussed for Claim Group I also apply to the widening of Road Sections A and C. The upper half of Road Section C, however, would also affect some deer habitat.

Road Section B would adversely affect localized wildlife species inhabiting Pole Canyon and wildlife which travel to Pole Canyon to drink. Assuming haul road construction will not directly affect the riparian vegetation or cause siltation within the drainage, impacts to wildlife will be mostly in the form of disturbance displacement. Noise generated by dump trucks and other mining-related activities will temporarily displace wildlife utilizing the water resource. However, because of the crepuscular and nocturnal behavior of most mammals, many species may continue to utilize this resource. Impacts to wildlife habitat as Road Section B ascends up the hillside are similar to those discussed for Claim Group II.

The proposed action does not significantly affect any threatened, endangered, or sensitive wildlife. Although undetected during field surveys for the project, the coast horned lizard has been previously identified as potentially occurring in the area and there may be some incremental loss of habitat for this Category 2 species.

Although the mining operations will add to the cumulative reduction in chaparral habitat within the region, some wildlife habitat will be compensated by the creation of edge habitat, consequently providing greater habitat diversity for native birds and mammals. Large mammals with extensive home ranges will benefit by the increase in movement corridors. Ultimately, upon completion of mineral extraction at the three Claim Groups, reclamation of disturbed areas will create a mosaic of habitat types and an increase in wildlife diversity.

Sensitive Species. At the present time, populations of Greta's aster in the vicinity of proposed Road Section B occur primarily in association with clumps of well-developed, undisturbed willows in the wettest portions of the streambed, possibly where small springs are present. Construction of Road Section B in Pole Canyon could potentially result in the degradation of riparian habitat, the loss of populations of Greta's aster along its route, and possibly, the disturbance of small springs which support a variety of other herbaceous species in addition to Greta's aster. However, avoiding impacts to riparian zones along Pole Creek will also protect this population of Greta's aster. This is in keeping