

with Forest Service standards and guidelines on preserving sensitive plant species. The project is not expected to have any adverse impacts on the federally listed unarmored three-spine stickleback because no suitable habitat occurs within, nearby, or downstream of the project area.

3.5.3.2 Alternative 2 - Conveyor Transport - Claim Group II to Plant Site

The total land disturbance resulting from conveyor and road rights-of-way would be approximately 20 acres of chaparral and wildlife habitat, or half the amount that would be disturbed from construction of Road Section B. A total of approximately 276 acres of chaparral would be lost with this alternative. The conveyor system would eliminate impacts to riparian vegetation on steep slopes on the east side of Pole Canyon possibly associated with Road Section B of the proposed action. However, the area in Pole Canyon at the base of riparian vegetation along the route of proposed Road Section B could be potentially affected. The attendant construction and maintenance road associated with the conveyor system would also affect this area as well as vegetation on the higher slopes of Pole Canyon.

The conveyor transport system would avoid the highly developed riparian area, most of the ephemeral ponds and springs and an extensive population of Greta's aster located in the Pole Canyon. However, it may result in some impacts to a narrow band of riparian vegetation dominated by sycamores in an adjacent drainage slightly to the north.

Impacts to other aspects of the proposed action would remain the same with this alternative.

3.5.3.3 Alternative 3 - Road Section D to Claim Group II

Development of Road Section D would result in more extensive adverse impacts to well-developed riparian vegetation, and presumably populations of Greta's aster, in the higher reaches of Pole Canyon than would be affected by Road Section B of the proposed action. Areas downstream from the proposed road crossing in Alternative 3 could also be affected by debris from this construction. However, the haul road would provide a movement corridor through the dense chaparral for large mammals. This would also provide easy access for many other wildlife species to the surface water within Pole Creek. Total area disturbed under this alternative is 306 acres.

Impacts to other aspects of the proposed action remain the same with this alternative.