

4.18 AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

This section analyzes and discusses the potential impacts to agricultural resources due to the Proposed Project.

4.18.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.18.1.1 Existing Conditions

There are three type of soils found within the Detailed Study Area (DSA) at Gness Field Airport (DVO or Airport).¹ The area occupied by the airfield and those areas adjacent to the airfield are composed of urban land and fill Xerothents. The remaining portions of the DSA are composed of Reyes clay, which is a somewhat poorly drained soil.² According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service, Reyes clay does not meet the criteria for prime farmland or farmland of statewide importance as outlined in the USDA's Land Inventory and Monitoring project for the Marin County Soil Survey.³ See Exhibit 4.3-1, *Site Soils* in Section 4.3 for locations of soil types within the DSA. Currently none of the land within the DSA is being used for agricultural purposes.

4.18.2 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

4.18.2.1 Significance Criteria

According to Appendix G of the California Environmental Quality Act, a project would generally have a significant effect on agricultural resources if it would:

- a) 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;
- b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract; or
- c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use.

¹ Web Soil Survey, accessed September 2009, U.S. Soil Conservation Service and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service, <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>.

² U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) database for Marin County, California, 10/12/2007.

³ California Department of Conservation. Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program: Soil Candidate Listing for Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance, Marin County, 7/06/2004.

Marin County's supplemental requirements and common engineering practice identifies a single criterion for impacts agricultural resources under impacts to land use which incorporates those criteria listed above. The criterion identifies a potential for a significant effect if the Proposed Project calls for land uses that would convert prime agricultural land to non-agricultural use or impair the productivity of prime agricultural land.

4.18.2.2 Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Project

None of the land to be affected by the Proposed Project is being used for agricultural purposes nor does it contain soils that meet the criteria for prime or unique farmland or farmland of statewide importance. The land to be affected by the Proposed Project is not encumbered by any Williamson Act contracts. Portions of the project site are used for cattle grazing, but vegetation cover is limited and the loss of the area currently used for cattle grazing would not impair the cattle enterprise. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not convert prime agricultural land to nonagricultural uses or impair the cattle productivity of the land. Accordingly, the impact on agricultural resources is deemed less-than-significant.

Mitigation: None required.

4.18.3 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

Due to the fact that the Proposed Project would not convert prime agricultural land to nonagricultural uses and offers very little vegetation cover for cattle grazing, it can be concluded that the Proposed Project would not cause any cumulative or long-term impacts to agricultural resources.