

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the environment that may be affected by the proposed action. As described in Chapter 1, Purpose and Need for the Federal Action, the proposed action considered in this Supplemental Draft EIS is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) response to the application for an incidental take permit (ITP) submitted by Tejon Ranchcorp (TRC) for the Covered Activities associated with the Tehachapi Uplands Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (TU MSHCP). Eight resource areas are described in the individual sections of this chapter: biological resources, water resources, air quality, geology and soils, cultural resources, visual resources, community resources, transportation, and climate change and greenhouse gases. Each section includes a summary of the sources of information used to describe the affected environment and a detailed description of resources in the study area. This information forms the basis for the description of potential effects provided in Chapter 4, Environmental Consequences.

3.0.1 Covered Lands and Study Area

As described in Section 2.1.1, Location of Alternatives, the area covered by the alternatives considered in this Supplemental Draft EIS, including the Proposed TU MSHCP Alternative, is referred to as the Covered Lands. The Covered Lands encompass 141,886 acres of the 270,365-acre Tejon Ranch (ranch), located approximately 60 miles north of Los Angeles and 30 miles south of Bakersfield, California (Figure 2-1). The Covered Lands generally constitute the Tehachapi Uplands of the ranch, which is roughly above 2,000 feet above mean sea level (amsl) on the north (San Joaquin Valley) side of the mountains and 3,500 feet amsl on the south (Antelope Valley) side. The Covered Lands reflect the area where activities associated with the alternatives considered in this Supplemental Draft EIS would be implemented.

The study area, as the term is used in this chapter, represents the area considered in characterizing the affected environment, and varies by resource topic. In some cases, the study area is the same as the Covered Lands. For other resource areas, the study area extends beyond the boundary of the Covered Lands to account for potential effects on resources affected by the Covered Activities. For example, the study area for the air quality section encompasses the entire airshed where the proposed action would occur. For resource topics that require evaluation of a study area that is different from the Covered Lands, a description of that study area is provided in the introduction to that section.