

3.0 Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

This chapter describes the environment that would be affected by development of the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative. The environmental baseline information summarized in this chapter was obtained from field studies of the project area, published sources, unpublished materials, and communication with relevant government agencies and private individuals with knowledge of the area. The affected environment for individual resources was delineated based on the area of potential direct and indirect environmental impacts for the proposed project. For some resources, such as geology and soils, the affected area was determined to be the physical location and immediate vicinity of the areas to be disturbed by the project. For other resources, such as water resources, air quality, and social and economic values, the affected environment comprised a larger area (i.e., watershed, airshed, local communities, etc.).

This chapter also describes the anticipated direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative. Evaluation of potential impacts assumes the implementation of Sabine's committed environmental protection measures (see **Table 2-11**). Potential additional monitoring and mitigation measures for identified impacts are being considered by the USACE for individual resources as identified in the resource-specific sections in this chapter and summarized in **Table 2-11**. These measures are not part of Sabine's proposed project but could be added as special conditions to any Section 404 permit that may be issued by the USACE or as stipulations of approval or authorizations of other regulatory agencies. This chapter also identifies residual adverse effects, that is, the effects that would remain after the proposed environmental protection measures and additional recommended mitigation measures have been implemented.

The proposed project may result in cumulative impacts associated with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in the area. For resources where project-specific impacts are identified, the cumulative impacts associated with the proposed project were evaluated together with other projects. The period of potential cumulative impact is defined as the 30-year life of the project plus approximately 5 years for reclamation.

This chapter is organized by environmental resource. Sections 3.1 through 3.15 describe the existing conditions and potential environmental impacts associated with each resource. Energy requirements and conservation potential are addressed in Section 3.16. The short-term use of the environment relative to the long-term productivity of resources is discussed in Section 3.17. Short-term is defined as the 30-year period of project construction and operations and 5-year period of reclamation. Long-term effects on productivity are defined as effects that would continue post-reclamation (i.e., beyond 35 years). The irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources is described in Section 3.18.

Numerous technical reports were prepared as support documents to this EIS. Copies of these technical reports are available for review on the USACE Fort Worth District website at: <http://www.swf.usace.army.mil/pubdata/environ/regulatory/index.asp>. These documents will be available a minimum of 60 days past the date of the USACE's Record of Decision for the project.