8.0 IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

For construction and operation of the proposed power plant, some resource commitments would be irreversible and irretrievable; that is, the resources used would be neither materials that would be obtained from renewable sources nor resources that would later be recoverable for future uses. Resources that would be irreversibly and irretrievably committed for construction and operation of the proposed power plant would consist of a small area of vegetation and associated habitat that would be developed for constructing the plant, construction materials that would not be recovered or recycled, and fuel and sorbent that would be consumed or reduced to unrecoverable forms of waste.

Resources committed for construction of the proposed power plant would include crushed stone, sand, water, diesel fuel, gasoline, and iron ore used in producing the steel required for the plant. Resources committed for plant operations would include coal, natural gas, aqueous ammonia, limestone sorbent, and water. Except for groundwater, abundant supplies of all resources committed for the proposed plant would be readily available. Groundwater commitments could potentially result in adverse impacts from aquifer drawdown and groundwater quality degradation. These potential effects would be partially offset by groundwater withdrawal from multiple wells with sufficient separation to avoid connected impacts on groundwater levels and by monitoring drawdown and water quality to detect, and correct as necessary, any trend that could result in adverse impacts. Water that evaporates would be lost locally but would be recycled to the atmosphere.

The proposed power plant would require a commitment of human and financial resources that would eliminate availability of these resources for alternative projects or Federal activities. However, this commitment would be consistent with the purpose and need for the proposed action (Section 1.0).