

the visual effects of the introduction of this additional form into the landscape. The transmission lines would diminish dramatically in the strength of their visual impression with distance, and the lattice construction would allow the viewer to see natural light, and to some degree, the background landscape through the tower. The proposed project would not affect the color value and hue of the existing landscape.

The view from the nearest residence (KOP 3) would not be substantially affected, given the similar distant forms already present and the low-lying landforms and vegetation between the residence and the proposed project. These landforms would have the effect of breaking up the already diffuse views of the proposed project alignment.

The completed project would be a permanent and prominent feature in the landscape visible to travelers on SR-98 and sightseers. The existing SDG&E transmission line is immediately adjacent to the proposed routes and other electrical transmission facilities are also within view in this area. The proposed project would therefore not introduce a new and obtrusive element into the landscape.

It is unavoidable that, to some degree, visual resource impacts would result from the construction and operation of the proposed project. Construction-related visual impacts, while involving lay-down areas, helicopter installation of towers, and work crews over a period of up to six months, would be temporary. Operational visual impacts would result from the proposed project being seen from multiple viewpoints and from the effects on the existing scenic values of the landscape.

Implementation of the proposed project would meet the visual contrast criteria established under the objectives developed for VRM Class III. These objectives stipulate that the existing character of the landscape be partially retained and any level of change should be moderate. A project in a VRM Class III area may attract attention although it should not dominate views. The proposed project meets these criteria.

4.8 Paleontological Resources

It is not known if important paleontological resources are present below the surface on the site. Such resources could be present and could be harmed by excavation, particularly by excavation for transmission line support structure footings in older alluvium or pre-Quaternary geologic formations. In order to assure that the scientific information represented by any fossils that are present is recovered, the applicants have agreed to a monitoring and reporting program to be implemented during construction. The mitigation measures are listed in Section 2.2.6 of this EA.