CHAPTER 8
SHORT-TERM USE AND LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

This section discusses the proposed project's short-term use of man's environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity. The impacts and utilization of resources associated with the proposed project are given in Chapter 4.

Although the alternatives do not require a major amount of land to be taken out of production, losses of terrestrial plants and animals and habitats from natural productivity to accommodate the new facilities and temporary disturbances during construction are possible. Land clearing and construction activities resulting in personnel and equipment moving about an area would disperse wildlife and temporarily eliminate habitats. Short-term disturbances of previously undisturbed biological habitats from the construction of the transmission line and other structures could cause long-term reductions in the biological productivity of an area. These long-term effects tend to be more pronounced in arid areas such as the proposed project area where biological communities recover very slowly from disturbances. Effects of long-term occupancy by the transmission line include negative effects of encounters between humans and wildlife, such as mortality from recreation or maintenance vehicles. Changes in types and patterns of recreation use can be positive or negative, depending on the personal values of the interested and affected public.

The proposed project's impacts on previously undisturbed land both within the Coronado National Forest and outside of National Forest System lands would affect long-term cultural and visual resources. A large portion of each alternative crosses undeveloped land, impacting long-term preservation of unaltered landscapes. While none of the three alternative rights-of-way (ROWs) traverse the Pajarita Wilderness (see Figure 3.1–1), portions of each alternative would be visible from many locations on and off national forest lands. Use, productivity, and resource commitment related to archaeological and historic properties cannot be determined at this time until a complete inventory and evaluation of archaeological and historic sites is carried out. Such a survey would be conducted in accordance with direction provided in a Programmatic Agreement as discussed in Section 2.2.6.

Improved electricity reliability to the Nogales region would be expected to contribute to long-term socioeconomic benefits, including business development and regional growth.