

## 9.0 IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES

Resources that are committed irreversibly or irretrievably are those that cannot be recovered if the project is implemented. With either flood protection plan, a portion of the project area which now supports residential and commercial uses would be committed to flood control purposes. This commitment of land for flood control would essentially be irreversible, and would commit future generations to similar uses. The proposed action would not result in a large commitment of nonrenewable resources. Nor would the project include highway construction or other improvements that would provide access to a previously inaccessible area. In addition there would be the following irreversible or irretrievable effects.

- Fossil fuels (diesel and gasoline) would be used by construction equipment and by construction workers' vehicles commuting to the site.
- The materials or supplies used during construction would be consumed.
- There would be short-term impacts on local and regional air quality.
- Under the Channel Widening Plan there would be a short-term loss of 6.5 acres of riparian forest including 1,700 trees that would, after 5 to 30 years, be offset by the restoration of a greater acreage of riparian forest. Under the Bypass Channel Plan, these figures would be 9 acres of riparian forest and up to 3,100 trees that would, after 5 to 30 years, be offset by the provision of a greater acreage of riparian forest. Either plan would also cause a short-term loss of SRA cover and undercut banks, habitat features that are important to salmonids. With the Channel Widening Plan, 0.67 acre of SRA cover and 2,535 feet of undercut banks would be removed during project construction whereas with the Bypass Channel Plan, 0.86 acre of SRA cover and 1,100 feet of undercut banks would be lost. Habitat restoration measures would replace these features beginning during the first decade after construction, exceeding existing habitat values in approximately 30 years.
- There would be an intermediate-term degradation of the visual resources (i.e., scenic views) of the project area as seen from public and private vantage points.
- There would be short-term noise impacts on residents in the project vicinity during construction.
- There would be short-term impacts on traffic circulation in the project area during construction.
- There would be a short-term reduction in the quality of the recreational opportunities along the upper Guadalupe River.
- Significant archaeological and historical resources could be disturbed or removed. Both Channel Widening and Bypass Channel Plans could encroach with portions of a significant archaeological site that is known to include human burials.

The Bypass Channel Plan's disturbance of two archaeological sites containing human burials, if it cannot be avoided, would be a substantial commitment of irretrievable resources. Other environmental impacts resulting from either plan would not result in substantial commitments of resources.