Air Quality

Other major projects with access to the regional power grid would be linked in that respect to the True North project. For the near- and mid-term future, however, GVEA has ample existing power reserves to support one or more such projects. With the addition of both the Healy Clean Coal project and the planned upgrade of the power line to bring power from southcentral Alaska to the Interior, no reasonably foreseeable projects would require developing additional power sources that might cause significant cumulative impact to air quality.

Application of mitigation measures such as the use of water trucks or chemical additives would result in an insignificant release of fugitive dust. For this reason, the short-lived nature of the True North project, and because of its location at a substantial distance from other reasonably foreseeable projects that might produce some fugitive dust, the True North project would have no significant cumulative impact on fugitive dust emissions.

Wetlands

Development of additional satellite prospects would cause disturbance to wetlands at the mine sites (the mine pits, the overburden, development rock, and growth medium stockpiles, and the maintenance complexes) and along some road corridors from the satellite prospects to the Fort Knox Mill (new roads, or possible widening of existing roads). The absolute extent of disturbance cannot be determined at this time because of many unknown factors. At agency request, however, FGMI identified areas of hypothetical development disturbance to wetlands at four potential satellite prospects, excluding access roads. These are presented in Table 2. While these values represent good faith, reasonable hypothetical scenarios, it must be understood that they are just that, hypothetical. There are no wetlands at the Ryan Lode prospect.

Table 2 shows that approximately 450 acres of wetlands, of a total area of approximately 769 acres, would be disturbed if all four prospects were to be developed under these hypothetical scenarios over many years. Wetlands would constitute approximately 58 percent of the total disturbed area at the four prospects. This compares to approximately 403 acres of wetlands disturbance expected from mine site development at the proposed Phase I True North project. Thus, cumulative wetlands disturbance from development of all four prospects would be modestly greater than from the proposed True North project.

Because of the substantial distances between the prospect locations, the relatively site-specific nature and small area of absolute disturbance caused by these hypothetical mining projects within a regional context, and the permitting requirements to mitigate wetland impacts, there would not be a significant cumulative wetland impact from development of these four prospects.

Traffic

Under a regional mill scenario, each satellite prospect likely would undergo its own specific NEPA review. Most of a given project's impacts would be located at or near the particular satellite mine site and would be specific to that general area. By their

Table 2.
Disturbance to wetland and upland areas, based on national wetlands inventory (NWI) maps, from hypothetical development at four mineral prospects.

Satellite		NWI Class	Hectares		Acres	
West Ridge		PFO4B	2.4		5.9	
		PSS4B	8.5		21.0	
Subtotal:	Wetlands			10.9		26.9
	Uplands	U		20.8		51.4
Steamboat		PFO4/1B	11.6		28.6	
Subtotal:	Wetlands			11.6		28.6
	Uplands	U		49.0		121.1
Gil		PSS4B	55.0		136.0	
Subtotal:	Wetlands			55.0		136.0
	Uplands	U		33.7		83.2
Amanita		PFO4B	72.6		179.3	
		PSS4B	31.9		78.9	
Subtotal:	Wetlands			104.5		258.2
	Uplands	U		25.7		63.4
Total:	Wetlands			182.0		449.7
	Uplands			129.2		319.1
	Land area			311.2		768.8

Source: ABR (2000)

nature, however, each such satellite project would require hauling ore to the Fort Knox Mill. While satellite projects could be located in any direction from the Fort Knox Mill, at some point the haul routes would converge as they approached the mill, but in some cases not until right at the mill. Thus, while the direct and indirect impacts from individual satellite projects might not be significant within the context of a given mine site area itself, hauling ore from these dispersed sites to one regional mill site might cause unacceptable cumulative impacts to the residential community in the vicinity of the Fort Knox Mill. This is discussed below.