

SECTION 4 UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

4.1 Vegetation

A total of 233 acres of existing vegetation on the project site will be affected by project construction, leaving nearly 70% of the site vegetation unaffected. Only 26 of the 233 acres affected will be converted to impervious areas. The remaining 207 acres will be revegetated as golf course, landscaped areas, etc. To mitigate the potential impacts associated with changing currently vegetated lands to buildings, roads, driveways, parking, golf course and other project elements, stormwater management practices have been designed throughout the project in accordance with NYSDEC and NYCDEP requirements so that the rate of runoff from the project site after vegetation is removed and the project is built will be the same as the rate of runoff under the current vegetated conditions. The Water Budget analysis conducted for the project has demonstrated that the removal of the existing vegetation and construction of the project elements will not result in a significant change in groundwater recharge or runoff from the project site. The loss of vegetation and the related unavoidable impacts to wildlife are discussed in section 4.2 below. The removal of vegetation and potential impacts for soil erosion are discussed in section 4.3 below.

4.2 Wildlife

Although project plans include reasonable and practicable efforts to minimize wildlife impacts, the alteration of approximately 235 acres, most of which is currently forested, would result in an unavoidable impact to wildlife resources. The magnitude of this avoidable impact would vary across the spectrum of species known to use the site. Small-sized species with small home ranges would be reduced in abundance to an extent commensurate with the loss of habitat. Larger-sized species, with larger home ranges and the ability to adjust their ranges, would also be reduced in abundance, but to a lesser degree. The unavoidable impacts to such species, primarily forest-dwelling species, would be offset to some extent by the creation of ecotone habitat that would improve habitat suitability of other species. There would be no impact on wildlife species listed as endangered, threatened, or special concern.

These unavoidable impacts to wildlife are offset through the protection against future development of nearly 1,200 acres of land at Big Indian and the placement of over 200 acres in the Adelstein parcel into a conservation easement.

4.3 Erosion and Water Quality

Site soils will erode during precipitation events and it will be necessary to implement proper sediment control measures to control erosion at the source in order to protect water quality. As described in Section 3.1, plans for the project include perhaps one of the most comprehensive sediment and erosion control plans proposed for a development project in New York State. Implementation of these plans in accordance with permits issued by NYSDEC and NYCDEP is assured by additional mitigation measures including those that are part of the AIP.

4.4 Fugitive Dust

See Appendix 22A, “Air Quality Assessment of Construction Activities”, handling of gravel materials including rock crushing, cement processing, truck transport of materials and truck movement on unimproved roads will lead to fugitive dust. During periods of time when extremely dry conditions are occurring, dust emissions may escape normal control. This will be a short-term impact and can be minimized by use of dust control agents. Sensitive receptors are located far enough away so that there will not be significant impacts.

4.5 Sound

Construction will result in some short term and temporary noise impacts on nearby receptors. Noise sources will include construction equipment and rock crushers. Mitigation measures such as reduced construction equipment levels and noise barriers are proposed to reduce the amount of noise to levels deemed acceptable by regulatory standards.

4.6 Visual

There will be some changes in views into the project site, primarily for lightly traveled local roads on the north side of the Route 28 corridor. As discussed in section 3.6 and discussed in more detail and illustrated in Appendix 25, the changes in the views are not considered significant due to the context of the views and the mitigation measures inherent in the project design.

4.7 Traffic

Construction of the Project will result in some additional trucks and passenger vehicles traveling local roadways. Some additional traffic delays can be expected during construction as the result of trucks entering or exiting the site. Based on information provided in section 3.5, it is expected that the peak construction truck traffic will occur during the first two years of construction with an estimated 53 truck trips per day. Assuming a ten-hour workday, this equates to approximately five trips per hour. The addition of five trips and hour will not be noticeable and will not have an impact on the adjacent roadway system. Currently, the average annual daily traffic on Route 28 is 3,000 vehicles. The addition of 53 trips equates to a maximum overall daily increase in traffic of less than two percent.

During the operational phase of the project, specific mitigative measures have been identified to relieve traffic impacts (see Section 3.5 and Appendix 11, “Traffic Impact Study”).

4.8 Water Supply

The testing of the wells that will supply water to Resort were done in accordance with NYSDEC and NYSDOH standards, and demonstrated that using these wells for the project water supply will not adversely impact groundwater resources or surface water resources.

4.9 Global Warming and Carbon Footprint

The project will result in the generation of greenhouse gas emissions during both the construction and operation phases. There will be direct and indirect emissions during construction and operation. The level of emissions, however, will be below the levels deemed to be significant under the Clean Air Act and the Council on Environmental Quality guidance. The project incorporates a host of mitigation measures to limit greenhouse gas emissions, among the most significant being LEED Silver eligible design for the major resort buildings.