NOTICE OF PREPARATION

DATE: January 28, 2021

TO: State of California Office of Planning and Research – State Clearinghouse

FROM: Chicken Ranch Rancheria of the Me-Wuk Indians of California
Attn: NOP Comments
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Fax: (209) 984-9269
Email: Bhunter@crtribal.com

SUBJECT: **Notice of Preparation of a Tribal Environmental Impact Report Chicken Ranch Rancheria New Casino and Hotel Project**

COMMENT PERIOD: January 28, 2021 to February 26, 2021

The Chicken Ranch Rancheria of the Me-Wuk Indians of California (Tribe) is the lead agency preparing a Tribal Environmental Impact Report (TEIR) for the Chicken Ranch Rancheria New Casino and Hotel Project (Proposed Project). The TEIR is being prepared pursuant to the process set forth in Section 10.8, Off-Reservation Environmental Impacts, of the 1999 Tribal State Gaming Compact between the Tribe and the state of California. This Notice of Preparation describes the Proposed Project and associated TEIR, and solicits input on issues to be evaluated in the TEIR. The TEIR will analyze potentially significant off-Reservation environmental impacts of the Proposed Project and will identify appropriate mitigation where necessary. This notice requests public comments relating to potential off- Reservation environmental issues and reasonable mitigation measures to be analyzed in the TEIR. Comments are due to the Tribe at the above mailing address, fax number, or email address by **5:00 pm on February 26, 2021**. Information regarding the Proposed Project and TEIR will be made available online at https://chickenranchtribe.com/press.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

The Chicken Ranch Reservation is located in the western portion of Tuolumne County, California. The Tribe currently has a gaming operation called the Chicken Ranch Casino, which consists of more than 600 Class II and Class III games. The existing casino added 175 Class II slots in 2019 and operates at near capacity.

The Tribe plans to build the Proposed Project with direct visibility and access from California State Highway 49/108 on a 42-acre site on the Reservation, which is already held in trust by the federal government (**Figure 1, Regional Location and Figure 2, Project Location**). The Proposed Project will include approximately 900 slot machines and 12 – 14 table games, the facility will serve alcohol, two (2) attached 900 – 970 space four (4)-story parking structures, and an attached hotel with a 3.5 star property rating. The Proposed Project will replace the existing Chicken Ranch Casino, which will be shut down and converted to other uses once the Proposed Project begins operations. The Proposed Project will contribute to the economy of both the county and the Tribe by providing a safe and secure entertainment and restaurant venue, and additional job opportunities for Tribal and non-Tribal members.

POTENTIAL OFF-RESERVATION ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The TEIR will discuss potential off-Reservation environmental impacts associated with the Proposed Project. The following off-Reservation issue areas have been identified to be potentially impacted by the Proposed Project and appropriate mitigation will be addressed in detail within the TEIR.

- Aesthetics
- Air quality
- Biological resources
- Greenhouse gas emissions
- Hazards and hazardous materials
- Water resources
- Land use and Planning
- Noise
- Population and housing
- Public services
- Transportation and traffic
- Utilities and service systems
- Cumulative impacts

Aesthetics. The TEIR will describe the existing aesthetic setting and resources of the Proposed Project area and surrounding region and evaluate potential off-Reservation environmental impacts. If necessary, mitigation measures will be presented to reduce identified off-Reservation impacts to aesthetic resources. Aesthetic resources include natural and cultural features of the landscape including trees, historic buildings, and night sky conditions that contribute to the public's visual enjoyment of the environment.

Air Quality. The TEIR will assess off-Reservation impacts of the Proposed Project associated with air quality, including consistency with applicable air quality standards and impacts to sensitive receptors from

pollutant emissions. If necessary, the TEIR will identify mitigation measures to address potentially significant off-Reservation impacts on air quality.

Biological Resources. Biological resources include sensitive habitats, wetlands and waters of the United States, and protected plant and animal species. Although the TEIR assesses off-reservation environmental impacts of the Proposed Project, the Proposed Project would occur on-Reservation. However, the TEIR will identify mitigation measures, if necessary, to address potentially significant off-reservation impacts to biological resources, such as migratory birds and wetlands.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Greenhouse gases (GHGs) are gases that contribute to climate change via emission into the atmosphere. The TEIR will assess off-Reservation impacts of the Proposed Project associated with GHG emissions, including consistency with applicable GHG standards. If necessary, the TEIR will identify mitigation measures to address potentially significant off-Reservation impacts with respect to GHGs.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials. The TEIR will analyze the off-Reservation hazards and hazardous materials, evaluate potential off-Reservation environmental impacts that may result from implementation of the Proposed Project, and present mitigation measures to reduce identified off-Reservation impacts associated with hazards and hazardous materials. A hazard is defined as a danger or risk to the public, such as a wildfire or toxic spill. A material is considered hazardous if it appears on a list of hazardous materials prepared by a federal, state, or local agency, or if it has characteristics defined as hazardous by such an agency. The TEIR will review federal, state and local regulations, the existing environmental setting, online databases, and the list of materials that would be used during construction and operation that may pose a risk to the public and environment.

Water Resources. Water resources include water usage, water quality, wastewater generation, and water and wastewater treatment. The TEIR will assess off-Reservation impacts of the Proposed Project associated with water resources, including compliance with applicable plans, standards, laws, and regulations relating to water resources, off-Reservation groundwater supplies and quality, alteration of off-Reservation drainage patterns, and off-Reservation flood hazards. If necessary, the TEIR will identify mitigation measures to address potentially significant off-Reservation impacts on water resources.

Land Use and Planning. The TEIR will review existing land uses and zoning of the surrounding region and evaluate potential off-Reservation environmental impacts that may result from implementation of the Proposed Project. If necessary, the TEIR will identify mitigation measures to address potentially significant off- Reservation impacts on land use.

Noise: The TEIR will review the existing conditions related to noise in the surrounding off-Reservation areas. Sensitive noise receptors are located near the Proposed Project site. If necessary, the TEIR will identify mitigation measures to address potentially significant off-Reservation noise impacts.

Population and Housing. The TEIR will review the existing conditions related to population, housing, and jobs in the surrounding area and will evaluate potential off-Reservation growth-inducing effects that may

result from implementation of the Proposed Project. However, the Proposed Project would be constructed on-Reservation, would not displace existing housing, and does not involve housing construction. The TEIR will assess the Proposed Project's impacts on off-Reservation population growth. If necessary, the TEIR will identify mitigation measures to address potentially significant off-Reservation impacts with respect to population and housing.

Public services. The TEIR will address and discusses potential impacts of the Proposed Project on the off-Reservation environment associated with public services. Public services include fire protection, law enforcement, medical services, public schools, public parks, and other public facilities. If necessary, the TEIR will identify mitigation measures to address potentially significant off-Reservation impacts on public services.

Transportation and Traffic. The TEIR will address off-Reservation vehicular transportation, public transportation, alternative modes of transportation, and traffic circulation patterns. If necessary, the TEIR will identify mitigation measures to address potentially significant off-Reservation impacts on transportation and traffic.

Utilities and Service Systems. The TEIR will analyze off-Reservation utilities and service systems and discusses the impacts of the Proposed Project on off-Reservation utilities and service systems. Utilities and service systems include water supply systems, wastewater treatment facilities, stormwater drainage, solid waste landfills, and electricity and natural gas. If necessary, the TEIR will identify mitigation measures to address potentially significant off-Reservation impacts on utilities and service systems.

Cumulative Impacts. The TEIR will analyze whether the Proposed Project will cause cumulative off-Reservation impacts, which are impacts that are considerable when viewed in connection with past, current, or probable future projects in an area. If necessary, the TEIR will identify mitigation measures to address potentially significant off-Reservation cumulative impacts.

OFF-RESERVATION ISSUE AREAS NOT IMPACTED BY PROPOSED PROJECT

The following off-Reservation issue have been identified as not having any potential impact by the Proposed Project and will be eliminated from detailed analysis in the TIER.

- Agricultural and Forest Resources
- Cultural resources,
- Geology and soils
- Mineral resources
- Recreation

Agricultural and Forest Resources. Agricultural and forest resources include off-Reservation areas used to produce, grow, and harvest crops, farmed products, or timber. The Proposed Project would occur on-Reservation. No off-Reservation impacts to agricultural and forest resources would occur. The TEIR will not discuss agricultural and forest resources further.

Cultural Resources. Cultural resources include prehistoric and historic properties and items, architectural properties such as buildings, bridges, and infrastructure, paleontological resources, and resources important to the Tribe. The Proposed Project would occur on-Reservation and would not include any grading or other construction activities outside the footprint of the proposed project site. No off-Reservation impacts to cultural resources would occur. The TEIR will not discuss cultural resources further.

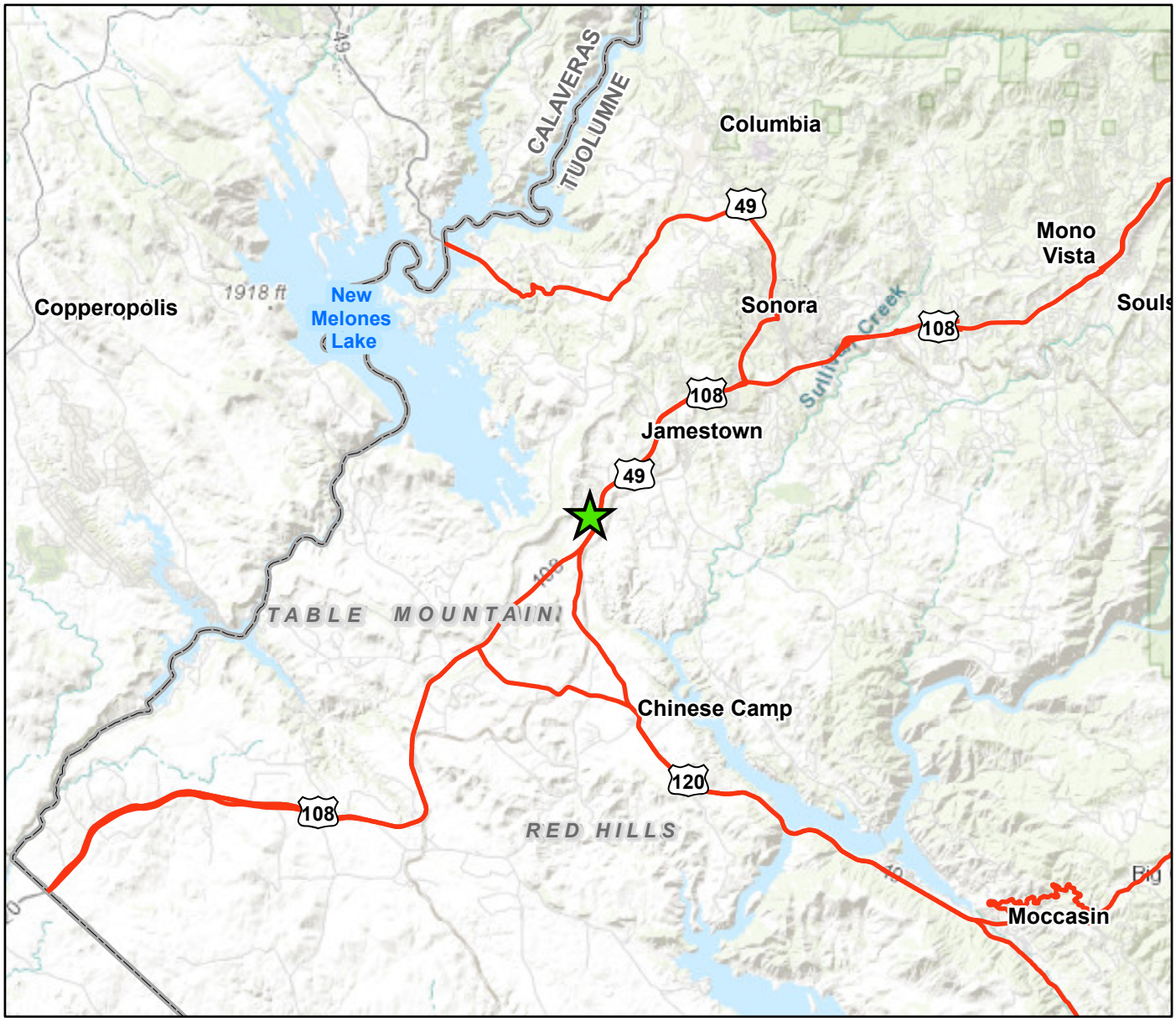
Geology and Soils. Geology and soils include effects from earthquakes, ground shaking, seismic ground failure, landslides, or erosion because of the Proposed Project. The Proposed Project would occur on-Reservation. No off-Reservation impacts with respect to geology and soils would occur. The TEIR will not discuss geology and soils further.

Mineral Resources. Mineral resources are defined as the concentration or occurrence of natural, solid, inorganic, or fossilized organic material of such grade or quality that it has reasonable prospects for economic extraction. The Proposed Project would occur on-Reservation and no off-Reservation impacts to mineral resources would occur. The TEIR will not discuss mineral resources further.

Recreation. Recreation areas include public parks and other public facilities. The Proposed Project will be built on-reservation and would not impact off-reservation recreation areas. The TEIR will not discuss recreation further.

Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians of California

Proposed New Hotel and Casino Project - Notice of Preparation



0 3.5 7 Miles

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LEGEND

Proposed New Chicken Ranch Casino and Hotel Project Location

Notes:
1. This map is provided as-is and may contain representations of property boundaries. It is intended for general references only. None of the parties involved in preparing this map or data contained herein warrant or represent information to be complete and accurate and cannot be held responsible for errors or omissions.
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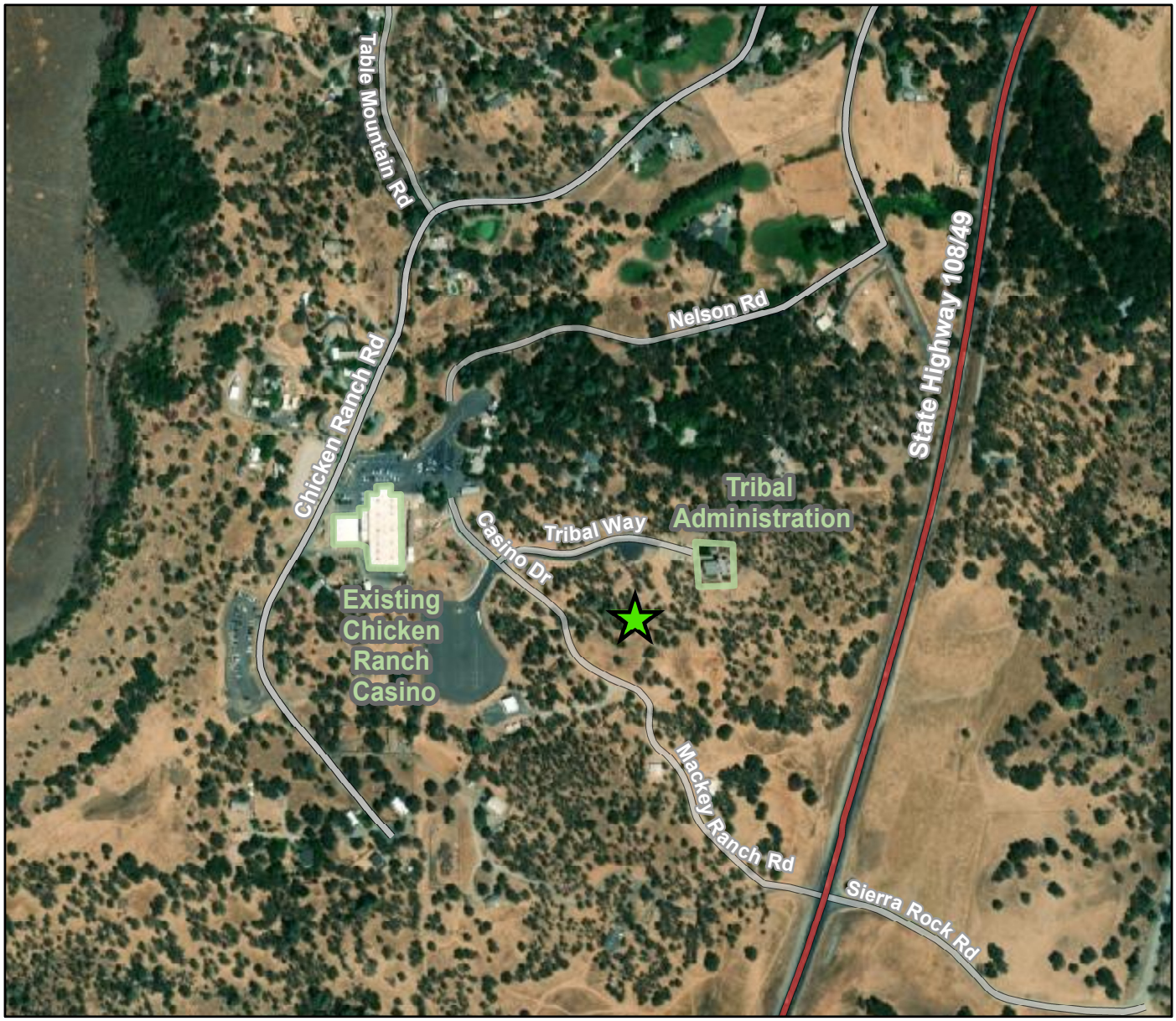
3. Map Preparation by Sundance Consulting Inc., 2020

Figure 1. Regional Location

Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians of California

Proposed New Hotel and Casino Project - Notice of Preparation



LEGEND

Proposed New Chicken Ranch Casino and Hotel Project Location

Roads

Highway

Other Road

0 0.1 0.2 Miles

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Figure 2. Project Location