Reader's Guide for the Alpine County Park Project 2026 Recirculated Draft Environmental Impact Report

The purpose of this Reader's Guide is to summarize relevant actions and changes since the Alpine County Park Project (project), sometimes referred to as the Alpine Community Park Project, was approved and its Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was certified in December 2023, with detail on technical modifications included in the accompanying documents presented for public review. The December 2023 FEIR and its associated appendices are available for viewing at the County Parks website (https://www.sdparks.org/content/sdparks/en/AboutUs/Plans/public-review-documents.html) for reference only.

Project History and Litigation Background

The County of San Diego (County) published a Notice of Preparation (NOP) for an EIR for the project on March 8, 2021. The County also published a recorded presentation in lieu of a scoping meeting and initiated a 30-day public comment period on the NOP. The County prepared a Draft EIR (2021 DEIR) to analyze the potential significant environmental impacts resulting from the project, which was circulated for public review and comment on September 30, 2021. The 2021 DEIR had a 47-day public review period. In December 2022, in response to comments received on the 2021 DEIR, the County prepared a Recirculated Draft EIR (2022 RDEIR), to correct deficiencies and provide additional information. The County recirculated for public review the following sections and associated technical appendices: Preface, Executive Summary; Biological Resources (Section 4.4); Hazards and Hazardous Materials (Section 4.9); Wildfire (Section 4.20); and Alternatives (Chapter 6). The 2022 RDEIR had a 75-day public review period, which ended on February 28, 2023. The County revised and refined the EIR after the public review periods and considered all comments received. The County responded to all comments received on the 2021 DEIR and 2022 RDEIR public review, and provided the comments and responses in the Final EIR.

The Final EIR (2023 FEIR) was released in October 2023 and originally set for public hearing on November 8, 2023. On November 7, 2023, the Cleveland National Forest Foundation and California Native Plant Society (Petitioners) submitted comments on the 2023 FEIR. Based on these comments and additional comments from the public requesting additional time to review the 2023 FEIR, the public hearing was continued to December 6, 2023. On December 4, 2023, Petitioners submitted a second comment letter reiterating the concerns raised in their November 7, 2023 letter. On December 6, 2023, the County certified the 2023 FEIR and approved the project.

On January 5, 2024, the Cleveland National Forest Foundation and the California Native Plant Society (Petitioners) filed a lawsuit, alleging approval of the project violated the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the California Planning and Zoning Law, and County Ordinances. The Petitioners also sought declaratory relief, or clarification on the parties' rights and obligations, regarding the County's Biological Mitigation Ordinance (BMO), including whether the project is exempt from the BMO as an essential park project.

The Superior Court of the State of California (Superior Court) ruled in the County's favor for all issues except for the CEQA claim regarding the EIR's analysis of potential impacts related to western spadefoot toad, pallid bat, wildfire, and vehicle traffic public safety. On January 20, 2026, the Superior Court entered a judgment granting the petition for Writ of Mandate (Writ) solely as to

these CEQA issues. The Writ ordered the County to set aside the Board's certification of the EIR for the project and rescind all project approvals, including but not limited to the County's adoption of Environmental Findings and Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Program.

The Court further stated that to the extent that the County revises the project's EIR, the revised environmental analysis must address only the CEQA deficiencies identified in the Court's June 9, 2025 Minute Order. Having found in County's favor on all other issues raised in the petition, except for those matters described below, the Court found that the following updates are necessary under Public Resources Code section 21168.9(b) to comply with the provisions of CEQA:

a. "Western Spadefoot Toad. Respondent shall address, providing reasoned analysis supported by substantial evidence in the record, comments submitted by Petitioners' expert stating that the Spadefoot can travel up to 600 meters from their breeding pools and noting that the USGS recommended an undeveloped buffer of 300 to 400 meters around breeding pools.

b. Pallid Bat. Prior to making any finding that the 200-foot avoidance buffer from potential pallid bat roost sites, as set forth in mitigation measure MM-BIO-8, will avoid or substantially reduce a significant impact, Respondent shall support such a finding with substantial evidence in the record.

c. Wildfire Impacts. Respondent shall separately analyze the significant impacts of the fire risk and its baseline existing conditions before proposing mitigation measures, and shall provide information on *how* it analyzed the effectiveness of the proposed measures.

d. Vehicle Traffic Public Safety. Respondent shall analyze and disclose the traffic hazard impacts concerning South Grade Road, in particular, whether the Project will substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections). In doing so, Respondent shall not delay reasonably feasible analysis and potential impacts of the Project's driveway, the driveway's traffic control device, and sight distance analysis on traffic collisions, including as to pedestrians and bicyclists."

On April 22, 2026, the County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved setting aside the certification of the 2023 FEIR and removing all project approvals, as mandated by the Court.

The Court's June 2025 Minute Order, the January 2026 Judgment, and the January 2026 Writ are attached as Appendix M, *Project Court Documents*, to this EIR.

Res Judicata Applies to All Other Issues

All other issues not addressed in the January 2026 Writ have been fully resolved, and res judicata bars such issues from further litigation. The decertification of the entire 2023 FEIR does not alter the fact that the 2023 FEIR was litigated, and all issues were resolved. Res judicata applies even if an agency rescinds approval of a project and decertifies the entire EIR. (Citizens for Open Government v. City of Lodi [2012] 205 Cal.App.4th 296 [the court applied res judicata even though the city rescinded approval of the project and decertified the prior EIR].) Finally, res judicata bars the litigation of both issues that were actually litigated or could have been litigated. (Citizens for Open Government v. City of Lodi [2012] at 324-325.)

2026 Recirculated Draft EIR

In response to the Court's January 2026 Writ, the County has revised the project's EIR to address the issues listed above. As described above, the revised analysis is only required to address the CEQA deficiencies identified by the Court, and the previously certified 2023 FEIR is not being recirculated in its entirety for public review. The following sections of the EIR are being recirculated for public review in the 2026 Recirculated Draft EIR (2026 RDEIR):

- Biological Resources (Section 4.4): revised with updated western spadefoot and pallid bat analyses and updates to MM-BIO-8: Bat Roost Avoidance.
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials (Section 4.9): revised with updated regulations and wildfire risk analysis comparing baseline conditions to post-project conditions with both required and additional fire prevention measures.
- Transportation and Circulation (Section 4.17): revised with updated traffic hazard analysis related to South Grade Road and change from four-way stop to a two-way stop at project entrance.
- Wildfire (Section 4.20): revised with updated regulations and wildfire risk analysis comparing baseline conditions to post-project conditions with both required and additional fire prevention measures.
- References: updated with new references added to the Sections above.

To address the issues identified by the Court, the following new appendices have been prepared:

- Appendix D2: Addendum to the Biological Resources Report for the Alpine County Park Project
- Appendix I1: Addendum to the Alpine Community Park Transportation Impact Study
- Appendix J1: Addendum to the Fire & Emergency Operational Assessment

Additional clerical changes and minor clarification changes to sections of the 2023 FEIR may occur for purposes of consistency within the FEIR. All changes and a Response to Comments received on this 2026 RDEIR will be published on the County Parks website (sdparks.org) at least 30 days prior to County Board of Supervisors' consideration of certification of the FEIR for the project.

The matrix below describes the specific issues identified by the Court's June 2025 Minute Order and January 2026 Writ, provides a summary resolution, and cites 2026 RDEIR and technical report locations where the identified information can be found.

Court-Identified Issue in the 2023 FEIR	Resolution	Location within 2026 RDEIR and Technical Report
Western Spadefoot Toad		
The County shall address, providing reasoned analysis supported by substantial evidence in the record, comments submitted by Petitioners' expert stating that the Spadefoot can travel up to 600 meters from their breeding pools and noting that the USGS recommended an undeveloped buffer of 300 to 400 meters around breeding pools.	An addendum to the Biological Resources Report was prepared to address the buffer recommended by USGS and substantiate the buffer selected by the County.	Appendix D2
	Threshold 1 impact discussion has been revised to acknowledge the Petitioners' and USGS' comments and further explain the rationale for the project's proposed buffer around breeding pools.	Section 4.4, Threshold 1 Impact Analysis (pg. 4.4-27) Appendix D2, Western Spadefoot Toad Response to Writ
Pallid Bat		
Prior to making any finding that the 200-foot avoidance buffer from potential pallid bat roost sites, as set forth in mitigation measure MM-BIO-8, will avoid or substantially reduce a significant impact, the County shall support such a finding with substantial evidence in the record.	An addendum to the Biological Resources Report was prepared to substantiate the proposed 200-foot avoidance buffer using evidence in the record.	Appendix D2
	Section 4.4, Threshold 1 has been revised to describe the surveys completed for pallid bat in more detail.	Section 4.4, Threshold 1 Special-Status Bat Species (pgs. 4.4-32 and 4.4-35)
	Mitigation measure MM-BIO-8 has been revised to clarify that the minimum buffer distance around maternal roost sites shall be 200 feet, but that the ultimate buffer would be determined by a qualified bat biologist should a roost be discovered during pre-construction surveys.	Section 4.4, Threshold 1 Mitigation Measures (pgs. 4.4-51 through 4.4-52) Appendix D2, Pallid Bat Mitigation

Court-Identified Issue in the 2023 FEIR	Resolution	Location within 2026 RDEIR and Technical Report
	Section 4.4, Threshold 1 has been revised to further explain the rationale for the proposed 200-feet minimum buffer distance around any identified maternal roost sites.	Section 4.4, Threshold 1 Level of Significance After Mitigation (pgs. 4.4-53 through 4.4-54) Appendix D2, Pallid Bat Response to Writ
Wildfire Impacts		
The County shall separately analyze the significant impacts of the fire risk and its baseline existing conditions before proposing mitigation measures, and shall provide information on how it analyzed the effectiveness of the proposed measures.	A fire protection memorandum was prepared to provide fire behavior modeling for the pre- and post-project condition and analyze the project's alignment with the Attorney General's Guidance for Best Practices for Analyzing and Mitigating Wildfire Impacts of Development Projects Under the California Environmental Quality Act.	Appendix J1
	Section 4.20.3 and Figure 4.20-1, *Fire Severity*, has been updated with the most recent Fire Hazard Severity Zones established by CAL FIRE.	Section 4.20.3, Fire Hazard Designations (pg. 4.20-5) Figure 4.20-1 (pg. 4.20-9)
	The wildfire regulations in Section 4.20 have been updated to reflect the current regulations for wildfire prevention, including the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's (CAL FIRE's) 2024 Strategic Fire Plan, the 2025 California Fire Code, and the 2025 California Wildland Urban Interface Code have been added to Section 4.20.5.	Section 4.20, Applicable Laws and Regulations (pgs. 4.20-12 through 4.20-25)

Court-Identified Issue in the 2023 FEIR	Resolution	Location within 2026 RDEIR and Technical Report
	The Methodology in Section 4.20 has been updated to describe the fire prevention measures that are assumed for the analysis.	Section 4.20, Methodology (pgs. 4.26 through 4.20-28) Appendix J1, Project Description
	Section 4.20, Threshold 2 impact discussion has been revised to describe existing vegetation, environmental conditions, and fire behavior and then evaluate fire behavior with both required and additional fire prevention measures to demonstrate how the proposed fuel modification, landscaping, and human activity measures reduce wildfire risk.	Section 4.20, Threshold 2 Impact Analysis (pgs. 4.20-32 through 4.20-38) Appendix J1, Impact Summary
	Section 4.9, Threshold 7 impact discussion has been revised to describe existing vegetation, environmental conditions, and fire behavior prior to proposing fire prevention measures, and then evaluates post-development fire behavior to demonstrate how the proposed fuel modification and landscaping measures reduce wildfire risk.	Section 4.9, Threshold 7 Impact Summary (pgs. 4.9-23 through 4.9-30)
Vehicle Traffic Public Safety		
The County shall analyze and disclose the traffic hazard impacts concerning South Grade Road, in particular, whether the Project will substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections). In doing so, the County shall not delay reasonably feasible analysis and potential impacts of the Project's driveway, the driveway's traffic control device, and sight distance	An addendum to the Alpine Community Park Project Traffic Impact Analysis was prepared to further analyze and disclose traffic hazard impacts along South Grade Road, including driveway sight distance, traffic control device analysis, pedestrian and bicyclist safety, and additional safety treatments considered.	Appendix I1

Court-Identified Issue in the 2023 FEIR	Resolution	Location within 2026 RDEIR and Technical Report
analysis on traffic collisions, including as to pedestrians and bicyclists.	Section 4.17, Threshold 3 impact discussion has been revised to describe the updated pedestrian and bicycle hazard, sight distance, traffic control, and design features analyses performed in Appendix I1 and more clearly address traffic hazards associated with South Grade Road. Threshold 3 has also been revised to clarify that the project would implement a two-way stop instead of an all-way stop at the project's proposed driveway at the Calle de Compadres and South Grade Road intersection per the recommendation of the updated traffic safety analysis.	Section 4.17, Threshold 3 Impact Analysis (pgs. 4.17-13 through 4.17-18) Appendix I1, Response to Writ
	Section 4.17, Threshold 3 impact discussion has been revised to describe the parking demand analysis performed in Appendix I1 and address pedestrians parking and walking along or across South Grade Road. The updated analysis includes program scheduling requirements to be included as part of the project through conditions of approval.	Section 4.17, Threshold 3 Impact Analysis (pgs. 4.17-13 through 4.17-18) Appendix I1, Response to Writ
	Section 4.17, Threshold 3 impact discussion has been revised to describe pedestrian and bicyclist safety.	Section 4.17, Threshold 3 Impact Analysis (pgs. 4.17-13 through 4.17-18) Appendix I1, Response to Writ

Court-Identified Issue in the 2023 FEIR	Resolution	Location within 2026 RDEIR and Technical Report
	Section 4.17, Threshold 3 impact discussion has been revised to acknowledge the sight distance deficiency at project Driveway #2 and more thoroughly describe the site plan review process that would require sufficient sight distance to be satisfied and shown on project plans before issuance of a grading or construction permit.	Section 4.17, Threshold 3 Impact Analysis (pgs. 4.17-13 through 4.17-18) Appendix I1, Response to Writ
	Section 4.17, Threshold 3 impact discussion has been revised to clarify the analysis and recommended stop control measures to prevent significant traffic hazard impacts.	Section 4.17, Threshold 3 Impact Analysis (pgs. 4.17-13 through 4.17-18) Appendix I1, Response to Writ
	Section 4.17, Threshold 3 impact discussion has been revised to list the scheduling requirements for all organized sports activities at the park to ensure the parking lot does not become overburdened.	Section 4.17, Threshold 3 Impact Analysis (pgs. 4.7-13 through 4.17-18) Appendix I1, Response to Writ

2026 Recirculated Draft EIR Format

The 2026 RDEIR follows a similar approach as the 2022 RDEIR that is appended to the October 2023 FEIR, making track changes edits to the applicable version of the sections noted above. Each change from the 2023 FEIR is shown in double ~~strike-out~~/underline for the ease of reader review. Single ~~strike-out~~/underline indicates changes that were made between the 2022 RDEIR and the 2023 FEIR and are not new revisions made for the 2026 RDEIR. Throughout the 2026 RDEIR, "Recirculated Draft EIR" refers to the 2022 RDEIR, while the 2026 RDEIR is referred to as such ("2026 Recirculated Draft EIR" or "2026 RDEIR").

Figures with a single slash are figures that were modified between the 2022 RDEIR and the 2023 FEIR; figures with a double slash (X) are figures that were modified between the 2023 FEIR and the 2026 RDEIR; figures with no slashes are the most current version of that figure. Where figures have been replaced, the old figure is presented ahead of the new figure. Only one figure, Figure 4.20-1, has been revised for the 2026 RDEIR.

Public Comment on the 2026 Recirculated Draft EIR

The sections listed above are being recirculated for a 46-day public review period beginning on July 31, 2026.

As described above, only the deficiencies identified by the Court related to western spadefoot, pallid bat, wildfire risk, and vehicle traffic public safety are required to be addressed in the 2026 RDEIR. Pursuant to the legal principles described above and CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5(f)(2), reviewers should limit their comments to only the EIR revisions in the recirculated sections and supplemental documents (Appendices D2, I1, and J1*)* referenced in or appended to this Reader's Guide.

Comments must be received by September 14, 2026, at 5:00 p.m., and should reference the project name: Alpine County Park Project, SCH# 2021030196. Comments must be submitted to Megan Doran at the County Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) address listed below or via email to: CountyParksCEQA@sdcounty.ca.gov.

Department of Parks and Recreation
ATTN: Megan Doran
5510 Overland Avenue, Suite 270
San Diego, CA 92123

For additional information, please contact: Megan Doran atCountyParksCEQA@sdcounty.ca.gov or (619) 909-6309.

Files Availability. The 2026 RDEIR sections and the previous 2023 FEIR, as well as the new appendices and this Reader's Guide with attachments are available on the DPR website: https://www.sdparks.org/content/sdparks/en/AboutUs/Plans/public-review-documents.html, at the County of San Diego, Department of Parks and recreation, 5510 Overland Avenue, Suite 270, San Diego, CA 92123, and at the Alpine County Library, located at 1752 Alpine Boulevard, Alpine, CA 91901.