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Initial Study-Mitigated Negative Declaration
Fuel Reduction for the Proposed
Pine Mountain Lake Project
Tuolumne County, California

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For

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
The Lead Agency Pursuant to § 21082.1 of the
California Environmental Quality Act
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MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Introduction and Regulatory Context

STAGE OF CEQA DOCUMENT DEVELOPMENT

☐ **Administrative Draft.** This California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) document is in preparation by California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) staff.

☐ **Public Document.** This completed CEQA document has been filed by CAL FIRE at the State Clearinghouse on April 24, 2026, and is being circulated for a 30-day state agency and public review period. The review period ends on May 25, 2026.

■ **Final CEQA Document.** This final CEQA document contains the changes made by the Department following consideration of comments received during the public and agency review period. The CEQA administrative record supporting this document is on file, and available for review, at CAL FIRE's Sacramento Headquarters, Environmental Protection Program.

INTRODUCTION

This initial study-mitigated negative declaration (IS-MND) describes the environmental impact analysis conducted for the proposed Project. This document was prepared by TCRCD staff utilizing information gathered from a number of sources including research, field review of the proposed Project area and consultation with environmental planners and other experts on staff at other public agencies. Pursuant to § 21082.1 of CEQA, the lead agency, CAL FIRE, has prepared, reviewed, and analyzed the IS-MND and declares that the statements made in this document reflect CAL FIRE's independent judgment as lead agency pursuant to CEQA. CAL FIRE further finds that the proposed project, which includes revised activities and mitigation measures designed to minimize environmental impacts, will not result in a significant effect on the environment.

REGULATORY GUIDANCE

This IS-MND has been prepared by the Tuolumne County Resource Conservation District (TCRCD) and CAL FIRE to evaluate potential environmental effects that could result following approval and implementation of the proposed project. This document has been prepared in accordance with current CEQA Statutes (Public Resources Code §21000 *et seq*.) and current CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations [CCR] §15000 *et seq*.)

An initial study is prepared by a lead agency to determine if a project may have a significant effect on the environment (14 CCR § 15063(a)), and thus, to determine the appropriate environmental document. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines §15070, a "public agency shall prepare…a proposed negative declaration or mitigated negative declaration…when: (a) The initial study shows that there is no substantial evidence…that the project may have a significant impact upon the environment, or (b) The initial study identifies potentially significant effects but revisions to the project plans or proposal are agreed to by the applicant and such revisions will reduce potentially significant effects to a less-than-significant level." In

this circumstance, the lead agency prepares a written statement describing its reasons for concluding that the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment and, therefore, does not require the preparation of an environmental impact report. This IS-MND conforms to these requirements and to the content requirements of CEQA Guidelines § 15071.

PURPOSE OF THE INITIAL STUDY

CAL FIRE has primary authority for carrying out the proposed Project and is the lead agency under CEQA. The purpose of this IS-MND is to present to the public and reviewing agencies the environmental consequences of implementing the proposed project and to describe the adjustments made to the Project to avoid significant effects or reduce them to a less-than-significant level. This disclosure document is being made available to the public and reviewing agencies for review and comment. The IS-MND is being circulated for public and state agency review and comment for a review period of 30 days as indicated on the ***Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration*** (NOI). The 30-day public review period for this project begins on April 24, 2026 and ends on May 25, 2026.

The requirements for providing an NOI are found in CEQA Guidelines §15072. These guidelines require CAL FIRE to notify the general public by providing the NOI to the county clerk for posting, sending the NOI to those who have requested it, and utilizing at least one of the following three procedures:

- Publication in a newspaper of general circulation in the area affected by the proposed Project,
- Posting the NOI on and off site in the area where the Project is to be located, or
- Direct mailing to the owners and occupants of property contiguous to the Project.

TCRCD has elected to utilize the first and second options of the notification options. The NOI was posted at two prominent locations on and off-site in the area where the Project is located for the entire 30-day public review period. The two locations where the NOI was posted are:

1. First Location: At the entrance to the Motherlode Land Trust parking area, approximately 12000 Clinton Road, Groveland, CA 95321
2. Second Location: At the entrance of Pine Mountain Lake Association approximately, 19200 Ferretti Road, Groveland, CA 95321

The NOI was also published in the Union Democrat newspaper on 04/21/2026, providing access to the public during the 30-day public review period. An electronic version of the NOI and the CEQA document were made available for review for the entire 30-day review period through the posting at:

https://ceqanet.lci.ca.gov

If submitted prior to the close of public comment, views and comments are welcomed from reviewing agencies or any member of the public on how the proposed project may affect the environment. Written comments must be postmarked or submitted on or prior to the date the public review period will close (as indicated on the NOI) for CAL FIRE's consideration. Written comments may also be submitted via email (using the email address that appears below), but comments sent via email must also be received on or prior to the close of the 30-day public comment period. Comments should be addressed to:

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Len Nielson Staff Chief, Environmental Protection
CAL FIRE
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Sacramento, CA 94244-2460
Phone: (916) 653-7772
Email: sacramentopubliccomment@fire.ca.gov

After comments are received from the public and reviewing agencies, CAL FIRE will consider those comments and may (1) adopt the mitigated negative declaration and approve the proposed project; (2) undertake additional environmental studies; or (3) abandon the project.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

PROJECT LOCATION

The Pine Mountain Lake Fuel Reduction (PMLFR) Project is located East of Groveland, CA adjacent to the community of Pine Mountain Lake in Tuolumne County. The Project footprint is owned by multiple private landowners. The PMLFR Project boundary is described as portions of sections 13, 23, 24, 25 & 26, T1S, R16E and portions of section 19, T1S, R17E, Mount Diablo Baseline and Meridian (MDB&M).

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR THE PROJECT

The Pine Mountain Lake Association (PMLA) is a large Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) subdivision in an extreme fire hazard zone in southern Tuolumne County. Since the major bark beetle infestation began in 2010, due to drought conditions and expanding climate change, the landscapes around Pine Mountain Lake have been dramatically impacted by conifer mortality. In some sections of the forest, it is not uncommon to witness over 50% mortality of the mature ponderosa pine component of the Sierra mixed conifer habitat type. Within the 3,360 acres that encompasses the PMLA, most of the dead, standing trees around houses and structures have been addressed through the hard work of the community. Their uninhabited green space has not been treated. This green space of PMLA, and adjacent properties to the east, need to have the dangerous dead fuels removed. These untreated lands to the east are relatively large parcels owned by landowners who have limited financial resources to adequately address the imposing wildfire threat that is currently present. The town of Groveland is located to the west of PMLA and is an important gateway to Yosemite National Park. Both PMLA and Groveland are large economic centers within Tuolumne County. This Project will dramatically decrease the wildfire threat to the 2,834 parcels within PMLA, and the approximately 1,250 other parcels within the Groveland Community Service District. This region of Tuolumne County has historically been impacted by large wildfires. This Project's intent is to develop a defensible fuel break on the eastern flank of Pine Mountain Lake and Groveland. This Project will develop a defensible fuel break of approximately 820 acres, using the anchors of Highway 120 to the south and the rim of the Tuolumne River to the north.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1. Build a sustainable, defensible fuel break.
2. Establish a fire resilient and healthy forest.
3. Dramatically reduce the potential release of high levels of CO_2 from wildfire.

PROJECT START DATE

The Project is proposed to start Upon Approval.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The PMLFR Project is composed of two contiguous areas: Pine Mountain Lake 1 (PML 1) and Pine Mountain Lake 2 (PML 2). PML 1 is a 640 acre area just east of the PMLA. The first two phases

described below have been completed in this area. This work was completed under SCH #2024010405. PML 2 is comprised of two different locations. The first is a 156 acre area east of PML 1 and the second is an approximately 22-acre area within the PML 1 boundary. It is funded under CAL FIRE Grant 5GG23222. No work has been done in PML 2. A variety of methods will be utilized to reduce fuel loading and remove ladder fuels on this highly dense, approximately 820 acre WUI area east of Pine Mountain Lake.

Phase I: Initial Fuels Reduction

Manual or mechanical tree felling of dead/hazard trees with a felling crew with chain saw or tracked style feller buncher to establish a safe work environment. Brush, ladder fuels and suppressed trees less than 12" DBH will be targeted for removal with a goal of retaining diverse species and stand structure. Ideal spacing in the treated landscape will be variable and dependent on vegetation density. Generally, 10-40 foot crown spacing. The primary treatment method for this will be mastication using tracked style excavators or skid-steers.

Phase II: Slash Treatment

Slash treatment (if required) will be done with a tracked or rubber-tired masticator. In areas where machinery is unable to access or is excluded from, slash disposal will be done by hand and piled for burning or lopped and scattered.

Phase III: Maintenance

A targeted herbicide hand application may be conducted 1-2 growing seasons after Phase 1 activities have been completed in an area.

- Herbivory may be used to browse the resprouting vegetation. If herbivory is used it is anticipated that:
- Locally sourced goats will be used for the grazing treatment.
- There will be approximately 50 head of goats when executing the herbivory treatment.
- Exclusion fencing will be installed to protect riparian and sensitive botanical resources. The fencing will be removed immediately following herbivory activities.
- Herbivory activities can occur anytime of the year.

Prescribed burning may also be utilized.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING OF THE PROJECT REGION

The Project lays in the southwestern portion of Tuolumne County in the Sierra Nevada Mountain range. It is directly adjacent to Pine Mountain Lake and various surrounding communities. The Project footprint sprawls across portions of the Pine Mountain Lake, Hells Hollow Creek and Grapevine Creek watersheds. These are considered part of the upper Tuolumne River drainage and San Joaquin River basin. The Project runs from Highway 120 in the south to just east of Pine Mountain Lake Airport. The ownership consists of multiple private landowners with 2 larger main landowners being PMLA and the Mother Lode Land Trust (MLLT). The land is presently not actively managed.

DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

The 820 acre Project area is best described as a transition belt between montane-hardwood conifer to Sierra Nevada Mixed Conifer Forest consisting of sugar pine, ponderosa pine, incense cedar, white fir, black oak, valley oak, California foothill pine and interior live oak as well as other riparian species. The understory consists primarily of interior live oak, manzanita, conifer saplings, toyon, yerba santa, poison oak and ceanothus. Slopes within the Project vary from level topography to over 50%. Elevation ranges from 2,500 to 3,100 feet. The aspect is variable though it mostly lies on multiple ridgelines with a northwest aspect. Big Creek, Texas Gulch and Long Gulch run through the Project area.

Table 1. California Wildlife Habitat Relationship

Vegetation Type	Vegetation Type Symbol	Total Project Acres	Percent of Project
Barren	bar	0.50	0%
Residential Park	rsp	1.13	0%
Montane Riparian Woodland	mri	10.66	1%
Unclassified		25.32	3%
Annual Grassland	ags	46.31	6%
Mixed Chapparal	mch	92.94	11%
Montane Hardwood Conifer	mhc	108.08	13%
Blue oak-Foothill Pine	bop	223.13	27%
Ponderosa Pine	ppn	309.92	38%
Totals		817.99	100%

CURRENT LAND USE AND PREVIOUS IMPACTS

There are many historic land uses. The central Sierra Mi-Wuk were known to inhabit this region in prehistoric times. In historic times, the lands were utilized in various subsistence manners and for resource extraction, such as gold and timber. The Project is located on a portion of the 1500-acre Long Gulch Ranch owned by John Meyer and Lena Meyer Ferretti in the 1920's and was primarily cattle land. Various mining ditches are located within the property. The historic main line of the Hetch Hetchy Railroad bisects the Project. In 2014, the MLLT purchased a portion of the Long Gulch Ranch, placing half of it into a preserve for the Great Gray Owl (GGO) and the other half was subdivided. Since then, it has either been used for cattle range or has sat unoccupied. Present land uses on the various parcels include wildlife habitat, recreation and residential.

Multiple projects have been proposed within the footprint though few have come to fruition.

A Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) funded fuel reduction project for Long Gulch Ranch was assessed in 2016 though never materialized and ultimately transformed into the present Project.

Recorded known timber harvest activities include:
Previous timber harvest activities were visible within the Project area though no records were available during preparation of this document. These harvest activities likely occurred in the 1980's and possibly a previous harvest in the 1950's and/or 1900's.

1996- Pine Mountain THP; 04-95-204-TUO-31, 130 acres of commercial thinning.

1998- Double L THP; 04-99-020-TUO Shelter wood removal step in 2002 in the SE region of the PMLFR boundary.

2011- EQIP Program, Project #749104112ZN, Practice 666 (Timber Stand Improvement).

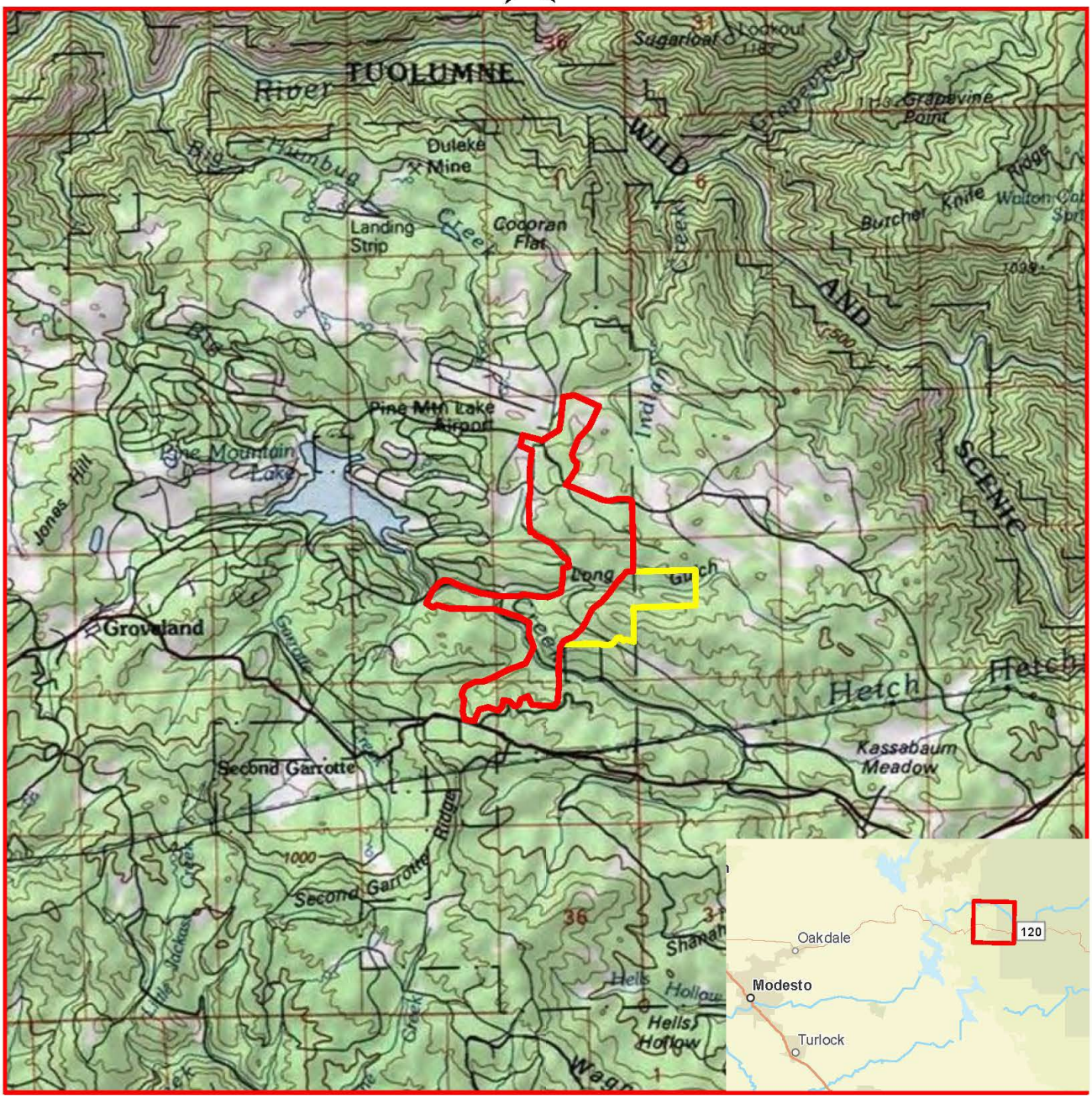
2012- Big-Long Fuel Reduction Project consists of shaded fuel breaks along two ridges in the Big Creek and Long Gulch areas near Groveland. The project was approximately 52 acres in size and links Big Creek Shaft Road off Highway 120 with Clinton Road off Ferretti Road.

Other notable fuel reduction projects within the immediate vicinity were completed on PMLA property in 2021-22.

General Location Map

Project: Pine Mtn. Lake Fuels Reduction Project
Legal: T1S, R16E, Sec 13, 23, 24, 25 & 26. T1S, R17E, Sec 19, MDBM
USGS Quad: Groveland 1:24000

N



Legend

- PML I Project Boundary
- PML II Project Boundary

Scale = 1:60000
1" = 5000'

Project Boundary Map

Project: Pine Mtn. Lake Fuels Reduction Project
Legal: T1S, R16E, Sec 13, 23, 24, 25 & 26. T1S, R17E, Sec 19, MDBM
USGS Quad: Groveland 1:24000

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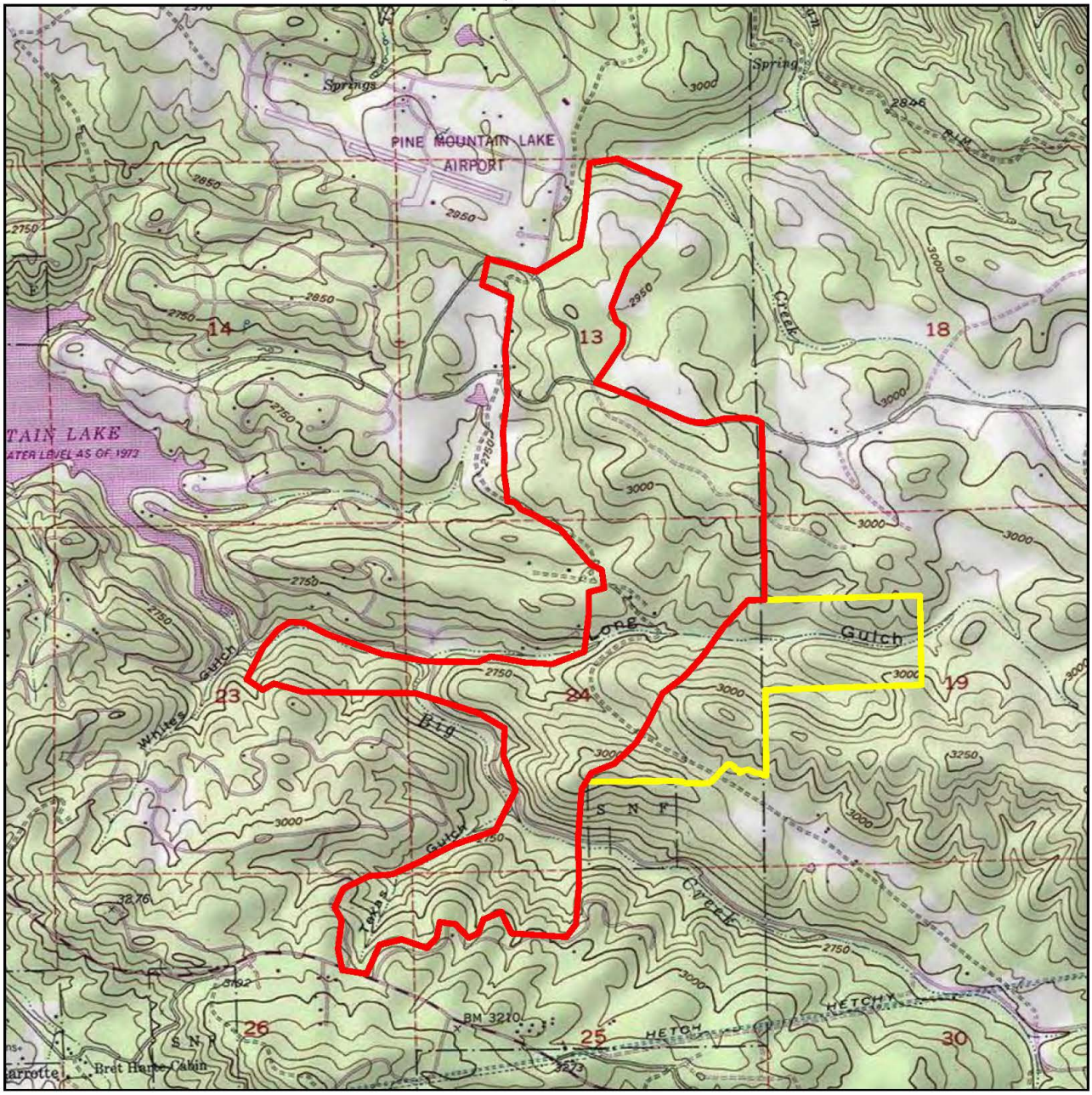

Legend

- PML I Project Boundary
- PML II Project Boundary

Scale = 1:24000
1" = 2000'

CONCLUSION OF THE MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Environmental Permits

The proposed Project will not require any environmental permits. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) was contacted by the Registered Professional Forester (RPF) of Record on March 14, 2025, asking for a field consultation concerning a Class I watercourse crossing possibly requiring a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement (LSA). The reply on March 20, 2025 stated that since none of the four conditions which trigger an LSA Agreement would occur an LSA, and thus a field visit, was not necessary.

QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR BIOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCE MEASURES

The biological and cultural resource mitigation measures detailed below require that qualified individuals implement components of the measures. The requirements listed below will be met to be considered qualified and may be performed by individuals of various titles (including biologist, botanist, ecologist, RPF, biological technician or supervised designees working under the direction of a qualified professional) as long as they are qualified for the task at hand.

Archaeologically Trained Resource Professional: To be qualified, an archaeologically trained resource professional would hold a valid Archaeological Training Certificate issued by CAL FIRE and the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection or equivalent state or local agency training or certification. Work performed by an archaeologically trained resource professional must be reviewed and approved by a qualified archaeologist.

Qualified RPF or Biological Technician: To be qualified, an RPF or biological technician would 1) be knowledgeable in relevant species life histories and ecology, 2) be able to correctly identify relevant species and habitats, 3) have experience conducting biological monitoring of relevant species or resources, and 4) be knowledgeable about state and federal laws regarding the protection of special-status species. The TCRCD will review the resume and approve the qualifications of RPFs or biological technicians.

Qualified RPF or Biologist: To be qualified, an RPF or biologist would hold a wildlife biology, botany, ecology, forestry, or other relevant degree from an accredited university and: 1) be knowledgeable in relevant species life histories and ecology, 2) be able to correctly identify relevant species and habitats, 3) have experience conducting field surveys of relevant species or resources, 4) be knowledgeable about survey protocols, 5) be knowledgeable about state and federal laws regarding the protection of special-status species and 6) have experience with CDFW's California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) and Biogeographic Information and Observation System (BIOS). The TCRCD will review the resume and approve the qualifications of RPFs or biologists. If species-specific protocol surveys are performed, surveys would be conducted by qualified RPFs or biologists with the minimum qualifications required by the appropriate protocols, including having CDFW or USFWS approval to conduct such surveys, if required by certain protocols.

Qualified RPF or Botanist: To be qualified, an RPF or botanist would 1) be knowledgeable about plant taxonomy, 2) be familiar with plants of the region, including special-status plants and sensitive natural

communities, 3) have experience conducting floristic botanical field surveys as described in CDFW "Protocols for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts to Special Status Native Plant Populations and Sensitive Natural Communities" (current version dated March 20, 2018), or experience conducting such botanical field surveys under the direction of an experienced botanical field surveyor, 4) be familiar with the California Manual of Vegetation (Sawyer et al. 2009 or current version, including updated natural communities data at http://vegetation.cnps.org/), and 5) be familiar with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to plants and plant collecting. The TCRCD will review the resume and approve the qualifications of RPFs or botanists.

MITIGATION MEASURES

The following mitigation measures will be implemented by the TCRCD to avoid or minimize environmental impacts. Implementation of these mitigation measures will reduce the environmental impacts of the proposed Project to a less than significant level.

Mitigation Measure #1: Foothill Yellow Legged Frog (FYLF). The Project area has an elevation range of about 2500 to 3100 feet and known populations of the FYLF occur approximately 3 miles to the east of the Project area. Prior to operations in any calendar year when fuels reduction will be conducted, an inspection of suitable habitat shall be made by a person familiar with frog species identification. The inspection shall take place within 30 days prior to the start of operations using a survey protocol that is appropriate for the types of life stages that are likely to be observed at that time of year. Visual Occupancy Surveys of the suitable habitat within the area may be performed using the UC Davis "Visual Encounter Survey Protocol for Rana boylii in Lotic Environments" (Peek, R.A., Yarnell, S.M., and Lind, A.J. 2017) protocol as a guide. If a positive FYLF detection occurs during surveys or at any time during project implementation all vegetation and ground disturbing operations shall cease at detection sight and adjacent suitable habitat. A buffer of 40 feet (Bourque 2008) during the seasonal dry period (May 1-Oct 15) and 130 feet during the seasonal wet period (Oct 15-May 1) shall be put in place at detection site and adjacent suitable habitat. These protection measures will be designated on the ground by the RPF using flagging. The color, meaning and location of the flagging will be communicated to all operators to create proper understanding of the protection measures of the Project.

Mitigation Measure #2: Bald Eagle. A general nesting bird survey will be conducted by a qualified RPF or biologist familiar with species identification and life history for work being performed from February 1 to September 15 prior to the start of operations during the appropriate survey window. If an active nest is found, a 0.5 mile no work buffer zone will be placed around the nest until the chicks have fledged. Unless the trees pose a hazard to the public or project workers nesting habitat and large prominent snags (especially ponderosa pine) will be retained.

Mitigation Measure #3: Great Gray Owl (GGO). A one-half mile no work buffer zone will be placed around the nest tree until chicks have fledged with an additional 15-day monitoring period to ensure that final fledglings are not active on or near the ground. This will be monitored by a qualified RPF and/or a biologist familiar with species identification and life history. Within the buffer zone lower limbs will be left to provide residual habitat characteristics to facilitate fledgling habitat. Due to there being a confirmed active GGO nest within the Project, any potential GGO nesting habitat within the Project where the species could be impacted shall be surveyed by a qualified RPF or biologist during the survey period, prior to operations, each year that operations may occur within the critical period. It is not possible to properly survey within .25 mile of the Project boundary due to the restraints of private land ownership. Unless the trees pose a hazard to the public or project workers nesting habitat will be retained (large live or dead trees with defects or decaying wood and cavities). Any nest tree shall be retained unless it poses an imminent danger and the removal of the nest tree will not result in a take as determined by CDFW.

Mitigation Measure #4: California Spotted Owl (CSO). Nesting surveys will occur within the Project footprint prior to operations when operations occur during the nesting period (February 1 to September

15). If active nest(s) are found within or adjacent to the Project footprint a .25 mile no work buffer will be placed around the nest tree until chicks have fledged. Suitable nest trees (i.e., large live or dead trees with defects, decaying wood, or cavities) will not be removed unless they pose a hazard to the public or project workers. The Project will retain nesting habitat (e.g., multistoried or complex structure, high canopy cover, large amounts of coarse woody debris).

Mitigation Measure #5: Crotch's Bumble Bee (CBB). Given the potential for Project treatment activities to improve conditions that may enhance habitat favorable for CBB the following protection measures and/or survey activities will occur during any year of planned operations.

A qualified biologist and/or RPF will identify suitable habitat for CBB to determine if the Project site and the immediate surrounding vicinity contain habitat suitable to support CBB. Potential nesting sites, which include all small mammal burrows, brush piles, old bird nests, dead trees and hollow logs would need to be documented as part of the assessment.

Once suitable habitat is identified, visual surveys will be conducted during the Colony Active Period (April-August) to detect foraging bees and potential nesting sites. A minimum of three focused visual surveys at 2-4 week intervals will be conducted during the Colony Active Period (April-August) within those areas deemed suitable for habitat. If a nest(s) of CBB are found within the Project area, the nest sites will be protected as stated below.

If a nest is detected the nest site will be protected with a 50-foot buffer from mechanical, herbicide and prescribed burn treatment activities. Manual clearing of vegetation between 10 and 50 feet from the nest site, without disturbing the nest, will be allowed. No activities of any kind will be allowed within 10 feet of the nest. Visual surveys will continue during Project implementation. If ground-disturbing activities will occur during the overwintering period (October through February), consultation with CDFW is warranted to discuss how to implement Project activities and avoid a take. Any detection of CBB prior to or during Project implementation warrants consultation with CDFW to discuss how to avoid take.

If take cannot be avoided, CDFW recommends acquiring a State Incidental Take Permit pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081(b), prior to initiating ground disturbing activities.

Any herbicide application(s) will be conducted as a targeted foliar spot treatment utilizing a backpack sprayer. Herbicides shall not be applied to flowering native plants within occupied or suitable habitat during the flight season (March through September). The targeted species shall be limited to currently resprouting species such as live oak, black oak, manzanita, toyon and ceanothus.

Prescribed burning within occupied or suitable habitat for CBB where feasible shall occur from October through February to avoid the flight season.

Treatment areas in occupied or suitable habitat will be divided into a sufficient number of treatment units to the extent feasible such that the entirety of the habitat is not treated within the same year. The objective of this measure is to provide refuge for CBB during treatment activities and temporary retention of suitable floral resources proximate to the treatment area.

Treatments shall be conducted in a patchy pattern to the extent feasible, in occupied or suitable habitat, such that all of the habitat is not removed, sprayed or burned and untreated portions of occupied or suitable habitat are retained.

Mitigation Measure #6: Western Pond Turtle (WPT). Focused visual surveys were completed during field layout on the Project by a qualified RPF and/or a biologist familiar with species identification and life history. No presence of this species was identified at the time of the surveys. If operations are planned to occur during the nesting period, visual surveys will be conducted each year of operations where nest sites could be impacted, prior to commencing activities in potential nesting habitat. If populations or individuals are detected a 50 foot no disturbance buffer will be placed around the WPT suitable habitat.

Mitigation Measure #7: Botanical Species of Concern. This mitigation measure includes Small's southern clarkia, Mariposa clarkia, yellow-lip pansy monkeyflower, slender-stemmed monkey flower and Tuolumne fawn lily. If populations or individuals are detected a 50-foot no disturbance buffer will be flagged for phases I-III and a temporary fence will be erected at the 50-foot buffer if herbivory is used during phase IV of the Project.

Mitigation Measure #8: Cultural Resources. Cultural sites may be assigned an Equipment Exclusion Zone (EEZ), as determined in consultation with a CAL FIRE State Archaeologist or consulting Archaeologist, to protect the integrity of the site.

- No ground disturbing operations of any kind shall occur within the EEZ of a cultural site.
- All site EEZ's will be flagged prior to operations.
- Trees/snags designated to be removed within striking distance will be directionally felled away from sites.
- Use of heavy equipment within EEZ boundaries may include, but is not limited to, existing
- roads, tractor trails, and/or landings.
- A CAL FIRE State Archaeologist or consulting Archaeologist may approve additional or
- alternative site-specific protection measures prior to project activities occurring.
- A meeting to discuss Project implementation details between the RPF and Contractor will be conducted prior to the start of operations.
- Contractors shall be required to protect the recorded sites described herein and any cultural resources uncovered during the Project operations.
- If any cultural resources are found during Project implementation activities within 100 feet of the newly discovered cultural resource shall be immediately halted and notification given to landowner and RPF.
- The RPF shall initiate site review and notify and consult with Registered Professional
- Archaeologist for site-specific protection measures, and site recording notification will be
- provided to the appropriate Native American tribal groups and Archaeologist.
- If human remains are discovered, the County Coroner and the CAL FIRE Archaeologist must be contacted within 24 hours. Work may not resume until clearance is granted by the CAL FIRE Archeologist.
- Site specific mitigation measures are detailed in the confidential Archaeological Survey Report (ASR).

Mitigation Measure #9: Geology and Soils

- No heavy equipment shall operate on excessively wet soil such that conditions produce areas of ponded water, wheel rutting, spinning or churning of wheels or tracks.
- Slopes greater than 50% shall not be mechanically treated.
- Prescribed herbivory will be timed to avoid saturated soils as well as overgrazing.
- Burn piles will not be created that exceed 20 feet in length, width or diameter, except when on landings or road surfaces. In addition, burn piles will not occupy more than 15 percent of the total treatment area (Busse et al. 2014). Piles will not be located in a hydrologic area.

Mitigation Measure #10: Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Maintain all diesel and gasoline-powered equipment per manufacturer's specifications, and in compliance with all state and federal emissions requirements.

- Equipment will be inspected for leaks on a daily basis until the equipment is removed from the site. Any equipment found leaking will be promptly repaired or removed from the site.
- Refueling shall be completed at least 100 feet from a watercourse.
- The herbicide contractor will conduct all herbicide applications based upon the following:
    - Be implemented consistent with recommendations prepared annually by a licensed PCA.
    - Comply with all appropriate laws and regulations pertaining to the use of pesticides and safety standards for employees and the public, as governed by the EPA, DPR and applicable local jurisdictions.
    - Adhere to label directions for application rates and methods, storage, transportation, mixing, container disposal and weather limitations to application such as wind speed, humidity, temperature, and precipitation.
    - Be applied by an applicator appropriately licensed by the State.

It is possible that petroleum product could be released to the environment, resulting in a minor hazardous waste spill. Spills could result from the transport of fuel or a leak/major malfunction of equipment. Equipment will be kept clean and inspected for leaks. Leaks will be repaired. Spill kits will be kept on site. Spills of chemicals will be contained and properly disposed of.

The TCRCD or herbicide contractor will prepare a Spill Prevention and Response Plan (SPRP) prior to beginning any herbicide treatment activities to provide protection to onsite workers, the public and the environment from accidental leaks or spills of herbicides, adjuvants or other potential contaminants. The SPRP will include (but not be limited to):

- A map that delineates staging areas, and storage, loading and mixing areas for herbicides.
- A list of items required in an onsite spill kit that will be maintained throughout the life of the activity.
- Procedures for the proper storage, use and disposal of any herbicides, adjuvants, or other chemicals used in vegetation treatment.

The herbicide contractor will coordinate pesticide use with the applicable County Agricultural Commissioner(s), and all required licenses and permits will be obtained prior to herbicide application.

The herbicide contractor shall triple rinse all herbicide and adjuvant containers with clean water at an approved site, and dispose of rinsate by placing it in the batch tank for application per 3 CCR Section 6684. The contractor shall puncture used containers on the top and bottom to render them unusable, unless said containers are part of a manufacturer's container recycling program, in which case the manufacturer's instructions will be followed. Disposal of non-recyclable containers will be at legal dumpsites. Equipment will not be cleaned, and personnel will not wash in a manner that would allow contaminated water to directly enter any body of water within the treatment area or adjacent watersheds. Disposal of all herbicides will follow label requirements and waste disposal regulations.

For herbicide applications occurring within 500 feet of public recreation areas, residential areas, schools, or any other public areas, the project proponent will post signs at each end of herbicide treatment areas and any intersecting trails notifying the public of the use of herbicides. The signs will include the signal word (i.e., Danger, Warning or Caution), product name and manufacturer, active ingredient, EPA registration number, target pest, treatment location, date and time of application, restricted entry interval if applicable per the label requirements, date which notification sign may be removed and a contact person with a telephone number. Signs will be posted prior to the start of treatment and the notification will remain in place for at least 72 hours after treatment ceases.

To maintain the high quality of the beneficial uses of water, the application of herbicide shall not occur within the WLPZ buffer of any watercourse. Herbicide may be applied within the ELZ of Class III watercourses which are dry at the time of application.

Mitigation Measure #11: Hydrology and Water Quality. Hydrological areas may be assigned an EEZ or an ELZ as determined by the RPF to protect the beneficial uses of water and riparian functions. These designations are referred to the Watercourse and Lake Protection Zone (WLPZ).

- Equipment Exclusion Zone (EEZ): Prohibits equipment from entering into the EEZ except where there is an established road, crossing or skid trail. No vegetation shall be treated by heavy equipment while in the EEZ. Equipment operators may reach-in and treat vegetation within the buffer as long as the tracks remain outside of the EEZ.
- Equipment Limitation Zone (ELZ): Limits equipment from entering into the ELZ except where noted in Class III protection measures listed below.
- Watercourse designation shall be indicated on a map which is located in **Appendix C**. The Contractor will be given a copy of the map and be made aware of the protection measure prior to the start of operations.
- All areas below the stream and lake transition line will be kept free of slash and debris.
- Accidental deposits of material in the watercourse, bed bank or channel shall be immediately removed.
- Watercourses shall be classified into one of the following categories or "classes":
    - **Class I**: Domestic Supplies, including springs, onsite and/or within 100 feet downstream of the operations area and/or fish always or seasonally present onsite, including habitat to sustain fish migration and spawning.
    - **Class II:** Fish always or seasonally present offsite within 1000 feet down stream and/or aquatic habitat form non-fish aquatic species.
    - **Class III:** No aquatic life present, watercourse showing evidence of being capable of sediment transport to Class I and II waters under normal high water flow conditions.
    - **Class IV:** Man-made watercourses, usually downstream, established domestic,

agricultural, hydroelectric, supply or other beneficial use.

- Watercourses shall have the following protection measures by classification:
  - **Class I:** 100 foot EEZ measured from the edge of the high water mark.
  - **Class II:** 50 foot EEZ measured from the edge of the high water mark.
  - **Class III:** 15 foot ELZ measured from the centerline of the watercourse. Equipment may make crossings perpendicularly to the watercourse which are dry at the time of operations but may not track up and down within the ELZ. Crossings should be limited to as few as possible.
  - **Class IV:** 15 Foot EEZ on the uphill side of the watercourse measured from the top of the cut bank and a ELZ on the downhill side of the watercourse starting at the tow of the fill slope. Operators my "reach-in" and masticate vegetation on the downhill fill slope as long as soil disturbance is limited.

Watercourse Designation:

- **Class I:** Shall be flagged in solid blue flagging at the edge of the EEZ
- **Class II:** Shall be flagging in solid blue flagging at the edge of the EEZ
- **Class III:** Shall be centerline flagged in blue and white candy-striped flagging.
- **Class IV:** Shall be flagged at the edge of the EEZ on the uphill side in solid blue flagging, the downhill side/toe of the slope will not be flagged.

A watercourse crossing of Long Gulch, a Class I watercourse, is required to provide equipment access to the southern portion of the Project area. The proposed crossing is existing, shallow, flat and will not require any of the activities which would normally trigger an LSA. Using this crossing will not:

- Divert or obstruct the natural flow of any river, stream or lake.
- Change the bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream or lake.
- Use material from any river, stream or lake.
- Deposit or dispose of material into any river, stream or lake.

The watercourse at this location normally dries up during the summertime. The crossing shall only be used under dry conditions. (Refer to the "Watercourse Crossing Map" in Appendix C).

There is also approximately 1400 feet of road within the WLPZ upstream of the crossing mentioned above which would facilitate access to the Project (Refer to the "Roads and Watercourses Map" above).

Upon completion of operations or before the winter period (November 15th-April 1st), whichever occurs first, the area(s) areas encroached upon within the WLPZ shall be straw mulched to a depth of 2 inches at the time of application and 90% coverage.

Mitigation Measure #12: Tribal Cultural Resources. Cultural sites may be protected by an Equipment Exclusion Zone (EEZ) or an Equipment Limitation Zone (ELZ) as determined in consultation with a Registered Professional Archaeologist to protect the integrity of the site.

- A 25-foot EEZ will be placed around the perimeter of a cultural site. No ground disturbing operation of any kind shall occur within the EEZ of a cultural site. Use of heavy equipment within EEZ boundaries may include, but is not limited to existing roads, tractor trails and/or landings.

- A 25-foot ELZ will be used on specific linear features (i.e. historic ditches, historic railroad grades). Equipment tracks shall not enter the ELZ except at existing crossings or breaches of the linear feature. The operator may reach into the ELZ with the boom to masticate material.
- All cultural EEZ's and ELZ's will be identified with blue and red flagging prior to operations.
- Trees/snags within striking distance will be directionally felled away from sites.
    - A CAL FIRE State Archaeologist may approve additional or alternative site-specific protection measures prior to Project activities occurring.
- Project planners will utilize site records to plan and designate protection measure placement to ensure adherence to prescribed protection measures.
- A meeting to discuss Project implementation details between the RPF and Contractor will be conducted prior to the start of operations.
- Contractors performing work shall be required to protect the recorded sites described herein and any cultural resources uncovered during Project operations.
- If any new cultural resources are found during Project implementation activities within 100 feet of the newly discovered cultural resource shall be immediately halted and notification given to the landowner and RPF.
- The RPF shall initiate site review and notify and consult with the CAL FIRE State Archaeologist for site specific protection measures. New sites will be required to be recorded and the ASR will be amended and reviewed by the Consulting or CAL FIRE State Archaeologist.
- If human remains are discovered, the Tuolumne County Coroner and a CAL FIRE State Archaeologist must be contacted within 24 hours. Work may not resume until clearance is granted by the CAL FIRE State Archaeologist.
- Site specific mitigation measures are detailed in the confidential ASR.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This IS-MND has been prepared to assess the Project's potential effects on the environment and an appraisal of the significance of those effects. Based on this IS-MND, it has been determined that the proposed Project will not have any significant effects on the environment after implementation of mitigation measures. This conclusion is supported by the following findings:

1. The proposed Project will have no effect related to Agricultural Resources, Energy, Land Use and Planning, Mineral Resources, Population and Housing, Public Servies, Transportation and Utilities and Service Systems
2. The proposed Project will have a less than significant impact on Aesthetics, Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Noise and Recreation.
3. Mitigation is required to reduce potentially significant impacts related to Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Tribal Cultural Resources, Wildfire and Mandatory Findings of Significance.

The Initial Study-Environmental Checklist included in this document discusses the results of resource-specific environmental impact analyses that were conducted by the Department. This initial study revealed that potentially significant environmental effects could result from the proposed project. However, CAL FIRE revised its project plans and has developed mitigation measures that will eliminate impact or reduce environmental impacts to a less than significant level. CAL FIRE has found, in consideration of the entire record, that there is no substantial evidence that the proposed project as

currently revised and mitigated would result in a significant effect upon the environment. The IS-MND is therefore the appropriate document for CEQA compliance.

INITIAL STUDY-ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this Project involving at least one impact that is a potentially significant impact as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

☒ Aesthetics	☒ Greenhouse Gas Emissions	☐ Public Services
☐ Agriculture Resources	☒ Hazards & Hazardous Materials	☒ Recreation
☒ Air Quality	☒ Hydrology and Water Quality	☐ Transportation
☒ Biological Resources	☐ Land Use and Planning	☒ Tribal Cultural Resources
☒ Cultural Resources	☐ Mineral Resources	☐ Utilities and Service Systems
☐ Energy	☒ Noise	☒ Wildfire
☒ Geology and Soils	☐ Population and Housing	☒ Mandatory Findings of Significance

Determination

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

☐ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION would be prepared.

☒ I find that although the proposed project COULD have a significant effect on the environment, there WOULD NOT be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION would be prepared.

☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

☐ I find that although the proposed project COULD have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

DocuSigned by:
John Melvin
B569EF653A04422...

6/3/2026

John Melvin, Assistant Deputy Director
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
Resource Management-Environmental Protection Program

Date

IMPACT ANALYSIS

AESTHETICS AND VISUAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Except as provided in Public Resources Code § 21099, would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact. The Project is proposed on properties which will not impact any public significant or prominent scenic vistas. The majority of the Project is not visible to the general public. The southern tip of the Project borders Highway 120 right of way and it does not provide any scenic vistas from this vantage. This section of the Project does not fall into Highway 120's scenic highway corridor. Ferretti Road and Clinton Road (both county maintained roads) serve as part of the Projects boundary and also cut through portions of the Project area. The Project includes the mechanical and manual treatment of suppressed, decadent and overstocked vegetation less than 12 inches DBH, prescribed burning, prescribed herbivory and the targeted ground application of herbicides. This may cause minor visual impacts due to the resulting chip layer, ground disturbance and dead vegetation. Although in the short-term after treatment, the removal of vegetation will be noticeable, mature vegetation will remain to provide partial screening of treatment areas. Project implementation will increase the aesthetic values on scenic vistas and in general by opening sightlines and improving the health and vigor of the residual vegetation. As such, visual impacts associated with the Project and associated temporary activities will result in less than significant impact on a scenic vista.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Except as provided in Public Resources Code § 21099, would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Project activities will be temporarily visible to adjacent residences and public roads and will not be located within view of any designated or known scenic vista. As such, visual impacts associated with Project implementation including the fuel reduction and maintenance activities proposed will result in no impact to a scenic vista.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Except as provided in Public Resources Code § 21099, in non-urbanized areas, would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact. The Project exists in the WUI. The footprint falls within both non-urbanized and urbanized areas. The Project will temporarily change the visual character in the short term due to the nature of mastication and fuel reduction. The Project inherently changes the composition of the vegetation through chipping. This altered visual character lasts for a few years after which the resulting forest stand structure has drastically increased the visual character by increasing the vigor of the remaining trees by increasing available water and nutrients. The Project as proposed will open up sight lines through the understory and canopy by decreasing the number of decadent trees and shrubs. Impacts resulting from altering the existing visual character or quality of public views of the Project site and the surrounding area will be less than significant.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Except as provided in Public Resources Code § 21099, would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. The Project will not produce a new source of substantial light or glare and thus would have no impact.

AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

In determining whether impacts on agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts on forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment Project and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Natural Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. The Project area includes conifer and hardwood forest. Vegetation treatment activities proposed within the Project area include mechanical and manual removal, prescribed burning, prescribed herbivory and targeted herbicide treatments. Treatments would include the removal of some trees in the overstory and mid-level canopy to improve forest health and reduce wildfire risk. Live trees less than 12 inches DBH will be thinned within a distance of approximately 1.5 times the dripline of overstory trees. In areas with a single canopy layer, trees would be thinned to roughly 20-30 foot spacing favoring trees with a dominant crown position and of good health.

According to the California Natural Resource Agencies data the majority of the Project lies on land designated as "Grazing Land" (refer to the California Important Farmland Map in **Appendix C**). Land on which the existing vegetation is suited to the grazing of livestock. This category is used only in California and was developed in cooperation with the California Cattlemen's Association, University of California Cooperative Extension and other groups. Therefore, implementation of the Project will result in no impact associated with conversion of designated Farmland or conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Would the project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. The Project will not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract and therefore will have no impact.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Would the project conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code §12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code §4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code §51104(g))?				

	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. The Project will not conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land and therefore will have no impact (refer to the Zoning Map in **Appendix C).**

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Would the project result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. The Project will not result in the loss of forest land or convert the forest land to non-forest uses. The project inherently will protect and improve forest land and will not have an impact.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
e) Would the project involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. The Project will not convert any land to non-agricultural uses and thus would have no impact.

AIR QUALITY

Where available, the significance criteria established by the Tuolumne County air quality management district or air pollution control district was relied upon to make the following determinations.

Project Setting:

The Project is situated in Tuolumne County within the Mountain Counties Air Basin (MCAB) and falls under the jurisdiction of the Tuolumne County Air Pollution Control District (TCAPCD). The TCAPCD consists of small towns and rural communities. The Tuolumne County portion of the MCAB is a nonattainment area for the state standards for ozone (CARB 2017) and is unclassified or in attainment for the federal standards for ozone and for the federal and state standards for CO_2, nitrogen dioxide, SO2, PM10, PM2.5, and lead (CARB 2015). TCAPCD is responsible for implementing emissions standards and other requirements of federal and state laws regarding most types of stationary emission sources. CARB has determined that the ozone levels in Tuolumne County are caused by “overwhelming transport” of emissions into the air district (CAPCOA 2015). Therefore, the TCAPCD is relieved from preparing an attainment plan for ozone and no other criteria air pollutant levels are high enough to require an attainment plan. Although there are no required attainment plans, or other local plans

specifically addressing air quality, Tuolumne County must conform to existing state and federal air quality standards (Tuolumne County General Plan Update Draft EIR).

Criteria air pollutants are substances regulated by federal and state governments with established outdoor concentration standards to safeguard public health. These pollutants include volatile organic compounds (VOCs), also known as reactive organic gases (ROGs), nitrogen oxides (NOx), carbon monoxide (CO), sulfur oxides (SOx), particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter equal to or less than 10 microns (PM10), and particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter equal to or less than 2.5 microns (PM2.5). VOCs and NOx are particularly significant as they contribute to the formation of ozone (O3). Construction activities typically generate criteria air pollutants through the operation of off-road construction equipment, on-road hauling and material delivery trucks and worker commuting. Motor vehicles are the primary sources of CO and NOx emissions, while mobile sources and agricultural operations contribute to ROG emissions.

A project would have a significant impact on air quality if, pursuant to TCAPCD regulations, it would result in project-generated emissions in excess of the following used by the TCAPCD:

- Reactive Organic Gases (ROG) – 1,000 lbs/day or 100 tons per year.
- Oxides of Nitrogen (NOx) – 1,000 lbs/day or 100 tons per year.
- Particulate Matter (PM10) – 1,000 lbs/day or 100 tons per year.
- Carbon Monoxide (CO) – 1,000 lbs/day or 100 tons per year (Tuolumne County Air Pollution Control District).

To assess the Project's impact on air quality, the significance criteria are determined based on the recommendations outlined in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. Additionally, Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines states that, if available, the significance criteria established by the relevant air quality management district can be used to determine whether a project would have a significant impact on air quality. The TCAPCD has set thresholds to evaluate the significance of air quality impacts resulting from a project stated above.

The Project's emissions will not cause or contribute to exceeding state or federal ambient CO emissions and therefore the impacts would be considered less than significant.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed Project will not conflict with or obstruct the implementation of the air quality act. The use of vehicles, mechanical equipment and prescribed burning will not result in emissions of criteria pollutants that could exceed Tuolumne County General Plan, California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) or National Ambient Quality Standards (NAAQS) thresholds.

Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) is the largest component adding to PM, CO, NOx and ROG now defined as volatile organic compounds (VOC) to the atmosphere are motor vehicles in this case heavy equipment. The proposed Project is not anticipated to conflict with the TCAPD threshold Plan because the Project is limited to vegetation management and fuels reduction activities. A temporary increase in VMT caused by worker vehicles, equipment and trucks will occur during the implementation of the Project. Crew rigs are anticipated to generate up to 3 vehicle trips per day for transportation and additional trips will be generated by other worker trucks, fuel trucks and service trucks. Heavy equipment will be stored on existing landings within the Project area and will not require daily trips to and from the site. The increase in VMT will be temporary in nature and will be reduced using carpooling to reduce individual worker trips to and from the Project site.

Implementation of the Project will result in a reduced risk for wildfire, which will release substantial pollutant emission in the event of a wildfire event. Additionally, the Project does not propose new buildings or expanded infrastructure that will facilitate population growth or increase VMT to the area. Implementation of the Project will result in a temporary increase of VMT. However, it will be temporary in nature and it is necessary to conduct Project activities to protect against wildfire. Therefore, impacts will be less than significant.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Would the project result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact. The Tuolumne County portion of the MCAB is a nonattainment area for the state standards for ozone (CARB 2017) and is unclassified or in attainment for the federal standards for ozone and for the federal and state standards for CO, nitrogen dioxide, SO2, PM10, PM2.5 and lead (CARB 2015).

Proposed activities will result in the temporary addition of pollutants to the local airshed caused by on-site sources (i.e., off-road construction equipment, soil disturbance, prescribed burning) and off-site sources (i.e., worker vehicle trips). Project emissions can vary substantially from day to day, depending on the level of activity, the specific type of operation and, for dust and smoke, the prevailing weather conditions.

The Project is not expected to result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard.

Although Project activities will result in short-term localized and mobile emissions, implementation of the Project will be beneficial in the long-term by reducing the risk for future catastrophic wildfire and associated pollutant emissions. As a result, impacts will be less than significant.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Would the project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact. Although Project activities will result in short-term localized and mobile emissions, implementation of the Project will be beneficial in the long-term by reducing the risk for future catastrophic wildfire and associated pollutant emissions.

The best available control measures will be utilized to minimize the short-term impacts of emissions from the Project.

- Limit vehicle speeds on unpaved roads to 15 miles per hour.
- Maintain all construction equipment in proper working condition according to manufacturer's specifications.

No long-term impact on air quality will result from this Project and impacts will be less than significant.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Would the project result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact. It is possible that odors could be released during implementation of the proposed treatment activities. Objectionable odors could be generated from vehicles and/or equipment exhaust emissions or smoke from prescribed burning. The proposed treatment activities will occur in areas located away from residences and other occupied facilities. The Project does not include activities that are expected to result in odors inconsistent with normal motor vehicle operation, a landscaping equipment operation or backyard burning operations which are common in the area surrounding the Project. As a result, adverse effects are not anticipated. The Project will comply with all applicable CARB and TCAPCD regulations. The potential release of odors associated with treatment activities and equipment will be minor, temporary and unlikely to be detectable from rural residential or public places in the vicinity of the Project due to the distance and therefore, impacts will be less than significant.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation. On 1/21/2025 a 9-quadrangle and 3-mile radius query of the CNDDB was conducted. A total of 26 animal and 19 plant endangered, threatened or sensitive species were identified within the 9-quad search. Of those 45 animal and plant species, 10 had potential habitat within the Project area, 10 species were found within the 3 mile radius and 1 was found within the Project area. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and United States Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS) were notified by email on 5/12/2025 and provided a description of mitigation measures. CDFW and USFWS were further consulted for species specific mitigation measures. USFWS responded on 5/13/2025 and 7/28/2025 that they had no comments at this time. CDFW responded on 7/24/2025 to a CSO update that they had no comments at this time. I was made aware of CDFW's general advisory comments on September 11, 2025. That language has been included in this document. A Biological Assessment was created by the RPF of record. With implementation of mitigation measures as described above, and as stated in **Appendix B**, the Project is not expected to have a substantial effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive or special status in local or regional plans, policies, or

regulation or by the CDFW or the USFWS. Refer to **Appendix B** for a summary of the CNDDB findings. Refer to **Mitigation Measures 1-6** for details.

Utilizing the CNDDB search and field surveys the list of species below were identified to be potentially affected by PMLFR Project. Mitigation measures have been utilized to achieve avoidance of specific species.

The species identified are: Foothill yellow legged frog, Bald Eagle, Great gray owl, California spotted owl, Crotch's bumble bee, Western pond turtle, Small's southern clarkia, Mariposa clarkia, yellow-lip pansy monkeyflower, slender-stemmed monkey flower and Tuolumne fawn lily.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation. The Project is not expected to have a substantial adverse impact on any riparian habitat, or other sensitive species/habitat within local or regional plans set forth by the CDFW or the USFWS. The Project will retain and improve nesting and foraging habitat for critical species. The Project proposes take and impact avoidance for any sensitive species. Refer to **Mitigation Measures 1-6** for details.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. There are no state or federal wetlands within the Project area.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Would the project interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact. The Project is not expected to have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites. As noted on the deer herd map located in **Appendix C**, a significant portion of the Project lies on key habitat for the Yosemite migrant deer herd. It should be noted that the Project should improve nesting, foraging and floristic diversity for a variety of species as well as reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire and complete stand replacement. The Project will cover 8 different wildlife habitats as mapped by the Tuolumne County General Plan's Wildlife Habitat relationships. Refer to the Tuolumne County Wildlife Habitat map in **Appendix C**.

No violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) or other applicable CDFW codes will occur as a result of the Project. If Project activities are planned to occur during the nesting bird season (which generally occurs from February through August) nesting surveys will be conducted during the appropriate timing by qualified RPF and/or biologist. Active nests will be avoided and protected from impacts. Active nests will be monitored by a qualified RPF and/or biologist. If disturbance of any nesting species protected under the MBTA is detected, the protection distance will be increased appropriately.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
e) Would the project conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. On April 1, 2008, the Board of Supervisors adopted Ordinance 2903 which added chapter 9.24 to the Tuolumne County Ordinance Code. Chapter 9.24 is intended to discourage the premature removal of oak trees by establishing procedures and penalties for such removal. However, this Project falls under exemption C: Removal of native oak trees in conjunction with a timber harvest plan or other plan approved by CAL FIRE.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
f) Would the project conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation. There is no conservation plan or easement for the properties under this Project. There are some restrictions set forth under the Mother Lode Land Trust lands which were obtained through a Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) Grant. 'The property shall be held and used for the purposes of protecting habitat that supports threatened and endangered species and for compatible public or private uses, all as may be consistent with wildlife habitat preservation and protection of sensitive biological resources (individually and collectively, the "Purposes of Grant".)'

The Project will protect nesting and foraging habitat for threatened, rare or endangered species as provided in **Appendix B** and **Mitigation Measures 1-6**. The impact will be less than significant with mitigations incorporated.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to § 15064.5?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation. Several historical sites are located on and adjacent to the Project area. The confidential ASR describes each in detail. Implementation of the protection measures within the ASR should prevent substantial adverse change to a historical resource. **Mitigation Measures 8 and 12** have been added to ensure that all potential impacts to historic and cultural resources are reduced to a less than significant level. As such, it is not expected the proposed Project will result in any significant damages to any historical resource.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation. Mitigation Measures 8 and 12 have been added to ensure that all potential impacts to historic and cultural resources are reduced to a less than significant level. As such, it is not expected the proposed Project will result in any significant damages to any archaeological resource.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Would the project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation. The Project is not expected to disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries. Archaeological procedures for projects were undertaken in the preparation of this Project. An archaeological records check was obtained on April 4,

2025. The Native American consultations were completed on 5/22-23/25 using a NAHC contact list dated 3/5/25. The ASR was submitted on June 17, 2025 and approved by a Sonoma State Archaeologist on January 8, 2026 after their review of the updated ASR that included the addition of 178 acres. No known burial or internment sites are located within the Project area. **Mitigation Measures 8 and 12** have been added to ensure that all potential impacts to any newly discovered burial or internment sites are reduced to a less than significant level. The confidential ASR describes each in detail, but specific site locations are confidential. No known cemeteries are known within the Project footprint. Implementation of the protection measures within the ASR should prevent substantial adverse change to a cultural resource. As such, it is not expected the proposed Project will result in any significant impacts on any archaeological or historic resources.

ENERGY

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Would the project conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable.

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

The Project area is located in the Sierra Nevada geomorphic province (CGS 2002). The Sierra Nevada province is characterized by high, rugged multiple scarps on the eastern side, where the high peaks are located, and gentle slopes that disappears under sediment that make up the Great Valley on the western side. The Sierra Nevada province formation occurred from an upfaulted, tilted block of the Earth's crust. This eastern side of the block tilted up and westward, making the high rugged peaks of the eastern Sierra Nevada. The western part of the Sierra Nevada range has a much gentler slope, allowing streams to flow slower which created massive alluvial fans that reach into the Central Valley.

The Project area is located on the western slope in the Sierra Nevada Foothills and contains metasedimentary and granitic rocks. Soils throughout the Project footprint are variable, and most are

formed from metamorphic rock, schist, or slate. There are also some soils formed from alluvium as well as granite and metasedimentary rock. Slopes are variable throughout the Project area.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? (Refer to California Geological Survey Special Publication 42.)	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. The Project will not result in any impact to earthquake faults.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Would the project directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. The Project is small in nature and does not have the capability to cause seismic ground shaking.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Would the project directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. No liquefaction zones are located within or near the Project site. The Project is small in nature and does not have the capability to cause any liquefaction events.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Would the project directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving landslides?				

☐	☒	☐	☐

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation. Treatment activities may include mechanical treatment, manual treatment, prescribed burning, prescribed herbivory and herbicide application. No areas with known landslide activity are identified within the Project area (USGS 2022). However, given the variable topography in some portions of the Project area, some steep terrain, and wet winter conditions there is the potential for landslides in the Project area.

Significant erosion from landslides will be prevented by avoidance of heavy equipment use on steep slopes (>50%), near watercourses detailed in the Mitigation Measures section or on saturated soils. Organic materials may be worked into the soil via mastication reducing the erosion hazard. Prescribed herbivory will be timed to avoid saturated soils. Operations shall not occur under saturated soil conditions. This condition will be determined by and enforced by the RPF. Refer to **Mitigation Measure #9** for details.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
e) Would the project result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation. Treatment activities will include mechanical treatment, manual treatment, prescribed burning, prescribed herbivory and herbicide application. These activities could result in varying levels of soil disturbance and have the potential to increase the rates of erosion and loss of topsoil. Mechanical treatments using heavy machinery are the most likely to cause soil disturbance that could lead to substantial erosion or loss of topsoil, especially in areas that contain steep slopes, or in areas that previously experienced fire.

Significant erosion from loss of topsoil will be prevented by restricting heavy equipment use on steep slopes (>50%), near watercourses detailed in the Mitigation Measures section or on saturated soils. Organic materials may be worked into the soil via mastication reducing erosion hazard. Prescribed herbivory will be timed to avoid saturated soils. Operations shall not occur under saturated soil conditions. This condition will be determined by and enforced by the RPF. Refer to **Mitigation Measure #9** for details.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
f) Would the project be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation. Significant erosion from on or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse will be prevented by avoiding heavy equipment use on steep slopes (>50%), near watercourses detailed in the **Mitigations Measures** section or on saturated soils. Organic materials may be worked into the soil via mastication reducing erosion hazard. Prescribed herbivory will be timed to avoid saturated soils. Operations shall not occur under saturated soil conditions. This condition will be determined by and enforced by the RPF. There are 2 geologic units within the Project area (refer to **Appendix C** for a map). No unstable soil types exist within the Project area. This Project should not result in any unstable soil. Refer to **Mitigation Measure #9** for details.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
g) Would the project be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994, as updated), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable. There are no expansive soils located within or near the Project area.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
h) Would the project have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable. The Project is not planning to support the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
i) Would the project directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable. The Project will not directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature.

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Treatment activities implemented under this Project would result in Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions directly generated by off-road equipment, on-road vehicles, machine-powered hand tools and from the

combustion of vegetation. Worker commute trips and hauling of equipment and materials associated with all treatment activities would also directly generate GHG emissions.

Mechanical treatments would be performed with heavy-duty off-road equipment such as crawler-type track excavators, chippers, masticators or other specially designed tractors with attached implements.

Manual treatments would typically be conducted by one or two hand crews (i.e., 10–20 crew members) using four to eight chainsaws. Masticators and chippers may also be used at some manual treatment sites to assist with biomass disposition during manual treatments.

Prescribed herbivory may require intermittent use of an all-terrain vehicle or utility vehicle for herding livestock or transporting temporary fencing. On-road trucks would be used to haul livestock to and from sites where prescribed herbivory would be conducted.

Herbicide application may require all-terrain vehicles to transport mix to the spray crew. A targeted application will be made by backpack sprayers so few pieces of GHG emission-generating equipment would be required.

Prescribed burning will be the most GHG-intensive treatment activity on a per-ace basis. This is because most of the carbon contained in fuels subject to prescribed burns is directly emitted into the air as either CO_2 or particulate matter, rather than staying in a sequestered state for an extended period after it is piled, chipped, masticated, killed with herbicide, digested by livestock, spread across the ground, and/or hauled offsite to be used as mulch, a soil amendment, or fuel at a biomass energy facility. (CalVTP PEIR December 2019).

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Less than Significant Impact. The understory vegetation (including manzanita, ceanothus, poison oak and saplings) and suppressed sub-merchantable trees will be the primary target of fuels reduction leaving intermediate, dominant and codominant trees, which should improve their ability to sequester carbon. The proposed practices are expected to make the residual stands more resilient to catastrophic stand replacing wildfires. Over time the carbon that is stored in vegetation will be released as part of the normal carbon cycle. Carbon will also be sequestered overtime as new vegetation grows if the land remains productive. Mechanical and herbivory treatments are tools to help maintain those carbon stocks over time. By reducing the probability of catastrophic wildfire prescribed fire can increase the probability of survival of the overstory trees allowing them to continue to sequester carbon. The carbon released by the treatments will be re-sequestered by the remaining living trees and new vegetation following fuel reduction. This has the potential to reduce the massive increase in short term emissions from wildfire and spread the emissions over a longer period while allowing sequestration to occur in the remaining vegetation. The amount of greenhouse gasses being emitted by this Project are less than significant, especially when compared to the alternative of a stand replacement intensity fire. The Project is expected

to generate less than 363 MT CO2e. A quantitative analysis submitted and approved under the original MND is located in **Appendix C.** Considering that this amended MND is treating significantly less acres, the Project as proposed will have a less than significant impact on greenhouse gases.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Would the project conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. The Project is designed to reduce the chance of a large catastrophic wildfire emitting large amounts of emissions. The Project is not expected to conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases.

HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation. Implementation of manual treatments, mechanical treatments, prescribed burning and herbicide application associated with the Project will require the transportation, use and storage of hazardous materials such as fuels, oils and lubricants. This section will address petroleum products. Herbicide use is addressed under item B.

Proposed treatment activities for this Project will use mechanical equipment and vehicles, such as chainsaws, large tractors, large trucks and personal vehicles which need fuel, oils, and lubricants to operate. These types of substances are considered household hazardous materials and can adversely impact human health or the environment if released in large quantities. Equipment and vehicles are likely to be fueled, lubricated and serviced as needed on-site during multi-day treatments.

The TCRCD will require the contactor to maintain all diesel and gasoline-powered equipment per manufacturer's specifications and follow all state and federal emissions requirements. Maintenance records should be available for verification. Prior to the start of treatment activities TCRCD will require the contactor to inspect all equipment for leaks and inspect everyday thereafter until equipment is removed from the site. Any equipment found leaking will be repaired or promptly removed.

The contractor shall control all fuel and lubricants used according to state regulations and shall not service or refuel equipment or store fuel or lubricants at any location where such materials could be transported into a watercourse.

Small amounts of petroleum product will be transported for the use of this Project. No fueling is allowed within 100 feet of a watercourse. No other hazardous materials will be transported or used.

Refer to **Mitigation Measure #10** for additional details.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and/or accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation.

Because of the large amount of resprouting woody vegetation present within the Project area, it is expected that at least one maintenance herbicide application will be necessary. Due to the localized and directed application of these chemicals, there will be little residual impact to wildlife or water resources. Herbicides are a subclass under the broad category known as pesticides. Examples of pesticides include insecticides, germicides, rodenticides as well as others. Herbicides are effective at controlling plant growth through the disruption of physiological processes that are unique to plants.

The California Department of Pesticide Regulation (CDPR) is responsible for pesticide regulation in California. The functional equivalent of an Environmental Impact Report (for herbicide use) is ensured by CDPR's program of registration, labelling and commercial application control processes. Any herbicide used in California must be registered with the CDPR and the US EPA and must be accompanied by a US EPA label with potential state specific additions. The labels show information such as the herbicide's active ingredient, signal word and permissible and recommended uses. Because CDPR requires a written recommendation by a licensed Pest Control Advisor (PCA), the process inherently ensures that no significant environmental impacts are incurred by the use of the herbicide as long as it is used in accordance with the recommendation. Finally, application by a Pest Control Business and applied by an individual with a Qualified Applicator's License (QAL) ensures that the PCA's recommendation is followed by trained personnel.

All herbicide treatments shall occur in accordance with local and state regulations. All required permits shall be obtained from the Tuolumne County Agricultural Commissioner’s office prior to application. Only herbicides that are registered by CDPR will be used. All herbicide applications will require a written recommendation provided by a licensed PCA and applied by an individual with a QAL. Federal and state regulations require that certain information be provided in a PCA recommendation. These include landowner information, the commodity to be treated, acres treated, the method of application, pest(s) to be controlled, the name and application rate of each pesticide applied, a statement of any hazards or restrictions, the criteria used for determining the need for an application, any crop and/or site restrictions and the PCA's information.

The potential impacts concerning herbicide use could include non-target hits and offsite movement of a chemical directly into a watercourse. These potential impacts shall be mitigated by various means including the preparation of a Spill Prevention and Response Plan, the restriction of herbicide

application within the WLPZ of any watercourse and by posting notification signs if applications occur within 500 feet of public recreation areas, residential areas, schools, or any other public areas.

Herbicide applications are typically only necessary once or twice during the maintenance period so the potential impact is quite low. Realistically, any herbicide application made on the Project area would entail a targeted foliar spot treatment utilizing a backpack sprayer. As opposed to a broadcast application, this method targets individual plants which minimizes the amount of chemical that may come in contact with undesirable surfaces such as the soil, water or non-target species. No aerial spraying of herbicides is proposed.

Considering the limited amount of herbicide use and the operational mitigations listed above, there is no reason to believe that the Project as proposed will result in any significant adverse impact on watershed or biological resources as a result of chemical contamination.

Refer to **Mitigation Measure #10** for additional details.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Would the project emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. The Project area is not within .25 miles of a school.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Would the project be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code § 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable. The Project is not located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code § 65962.5.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?				

☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact. Most of the Project lies within 2 miles of the Pine Mountain Lake Airport (Refer to **Appendix C** for zoning maps). Several of the parcels within the Project are zoned with a secondary zoning of Airport Influence Zone (AIR) Chapter 18.24 of the Tuolumne County Ordinance code. Noise will not be a factor for local workers or residents as this airport is rural and has a low volume of traffic. Noise impact will be limited to normal operating hours. Work will not be stationary and noise levels in any given area will be temporary in nature.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
f) Would the project impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable. The Project will not negatively affect the current emergency response or evacuation plan.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
g) Would the project expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable. The Project has been developed to reduce the fire hazard severity and fire potential in the area.

HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Defined by the California Interagency Watershed Map of 1999 the Project lies in the following designated watersheds: Pine Mountain Lake (6536.400503), Grapevine Creek (6536.400504), Hells Hollow Creek (6536.400502). The Project falls under the purview of the *Federal*- Clean Water Act, *State*- Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, *County*- Tuolumne-Stanislaus Integrated Regional Water Management Plan. The Central Valley Water Quality Control Board Region 5S is the governing body which oversees operations within the region. An email was sent to the Central Valley Water Board in Rancho Cordova notifying them of the Project on 5/12/2025 which is available in Appendix C. There **has been no response as of 8/11/2025.**

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?				

☐	☐	☐	☒

Less than Significant Impact. The Project will not violate any water quality standards, waste discharge requirements and will not substantially degrade surface or ground water quality. If prescribed herbivory is used exclusion fencing will be installed to protect riparian and sensitive botanical resources. The fencing will be removed immediately following herbivory activities.

b) Would the project substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable. The Project may increase short term ground water availability by reducing surface vegetation.

c) Would the project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would result in substantial on- or off-site erosion or siltation?

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact. The reduction in understory vegetation through mastication and prescribed herbivory should increase groundwater availability. Mastication will retain organic material in the surface soils mitigating surface runoff. The Project is not expected to substantially alter watercourse or drainage patterns.

d) Would the project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in on- or off-site flooding?

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact. The reduction in surface level vegetation may result in a slight increase in surface runoff. Adequate residual vegetation and embedded organic matter will be retained to minimize surface runoff. The Project is not expected to substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in on- or off-site flooding.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
e) Would the project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable. This Project is located in a rural area with no existing stormwater systems which would be affected. No additional sources of polluted runoff are expected to result from this

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
f) Would the project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would impede or redirect flows?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation. The reduction in understory vegetation through mastication and herbivory may increase surface runoff. Mastication will retain organic material in the surface soils mitigating surface runoff. Drainage patterns of the site or area will not be substantially altered. Watercourses are designated into separate classifications and have an EEZ/ELZ flagged to enforce these buffers. Additionally, any accidental deposits of material deposited into a watercourse shall be immediately removed and all areas below the stream and lake transition line will be kept free of slash and debris. Details for the previously stated EEZ/ELZ and mitigations are detailed in **Mitigation Measure #11**. After mitigation the Project is not expected to substantially alter watercourse or drainage patterns.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
g) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, would the project risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable. The Project is not located within a flood, tsunami or seiche zone.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
h) Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact. The most recent draft of the Tuolumne County Water Quality Plan (TCWQP) was in 2007. The relevant priorities were soil erosion and sediment delivery to waterways. "The improvement of forest health, including the reduction of factors which may contribute to the severity of wildfires in the watershed." was listed on the priority list. This Project is in line with the goals of the TCWQP.

LAND USE AND PLANNING

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable. The Project is in the WUI area east of the community of Pine Mountain Lake and will not divide the community but protect it.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Would the project cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable. The MLLT, major landowners within the Project, have a Notice of Unrecorded Grant Agreement (NUGA) with the California Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB). This NUGA states "The

Property shall be held and used for the purposes of protecting habitat that supports threatened and endangered species and for the compatible public or private uses all as may be consistent with the wildlife habitat preservation and protection of sensitive biological resources (individually and collectively, the "Purposes of Grant"). The Project will not impact this agreement and is in line with protecting habitat that supports threatened and endangered species.

MINERAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable. There is no known significant mineral resource within the Project boundaries that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Would the project result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable. The Project is not expected to result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site.

NOISE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project result in generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or in other applicable local, state, or federal standards?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact. Tuolumne County does not have a noise ordinance. Project activities would include large trucks hauling crews and heavy equipment to the site as well as mechanical and manual treatment activities. Haul trucks will need to pass by residential areas and the event of each

truck passing will increase the single event noise levels. Most haul trips will occur during daytime hours, which avoids the potential to cause sleep disturbance to residents. The Project setting is in a WUI. The majority of the Project is located at a distance far enough away from residences and topographic features will diminish or impede the sound from travelling far distances. The areas which are adjacent to the residential areas will temporarily increase the ambient noise within the residential zones. This noise level increase will be transient and temporary. This will not warrant mitigations outside of the normal operating procedures for working around residential areas. When working within the vicinity of the residential homes the hours of operation will be limited to 7:00 am to 7:00 pm Monday through Saturday. Noise generating activities will be prohibited on Sunday and County Holidays.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Would the project result in generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact. Some minor noise and vibration is expected from the mastication equipment however it is not expected to generate excessive groundborne vibration or noise levels.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed Project lies within 2 miles of the Pine Mountain Lake Airport. Several of the parcels within the Project are zoned with a secondary zoning of Airport Influence Zone (AIR) Chapter 18.24 of the Tuolumne County Ordinance code. The noise level increase will be transient and temporary. This will not warrant mitigations outside of the normal operating procedures for working around residential areas.

POPULATION AND HOUSING

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?				

☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable. This Project will not induce substantial unplanned population growth.

b) Would the project displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable. This Project will not displace any people or housing.

PUBLIC SERVICES

a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for fire protection?	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable. No governmental facilities or services will be impacted by this Project.

b) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for police protection?	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable. No governmental facilities or services will be impacted by this Project.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for schools?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable. No governmental facilities or services will be impacted by this Project.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for parks?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable. No governmental facilities or services will be impacted by this Project.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
e) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for other public facilities?				

No Impact. Not applicable. No governmental facilities or services will be impacted by this Project.

RECREATION

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact. Currently the MLLT portion of the Project area has been working with the community of Groveland to offer equestrian, hiking and other recreation opportunities on their property. Trails on the property are visible but are in a state of disrepair. Fuels reduction activities will reduce vegetation and open up access to these trails, increasing the use of these facilities. No physical facilities exist within this trail network. The only effect would be increased use of the trails. The PMLA has gated access roads which are used as walking trails for the local community which access the Long Gulch Ranch Trail system. Substantial physical deterioration to existing neighborhoods, regional parks or other recreational facilities is not expected to result from this Project. Other properties within this Project area are private and do not have public recreation facilities.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Would the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable. This Project does not propose or require the construction or expansion of recreation facilities.

TRANSPORTATION

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable. The Project as proposed does not conflict with any program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3(b)?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable. This Project is small in nature and will not affect greenhouse gas emissions thresholds.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Would the project substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable. The proposed Project will have no effect on traffic patterns.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Would the project result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable. This Project will increase access for emergency fire access across the area. It will not negatively affect any other emergency access.

TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code § 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local				

register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code § 5020.1(k)?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation. An archaeological records check was obtained on April 4, 2025. The Native American consultations were completed on 5/22-23/25 using a NAHC contact list dated 3/5/25. The ASR was submitted on June 17, 2025 and approved by a Sonoma State Archaeologist on January 8, 2026 after their review of the updated ASR that included the addition of 178 acres.

The Project contains several historic sites and prehistoric sites. The ASR describes these sites in detail, but specific site locations are confidential. Implementation of the protection measures within the ASR will prevent substantial adverse change to any tribal cultural resource. Mitigation measures have been added to ensure that all potential impacts to historic and cultural resources are reduced to less than significant levels. Refer to **Mitigation Measure #12** for details.

The implementation of protection measures within the ASR will prevent substantial adverse change to the significance of a tribal cultural resource.

b) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code § 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is: A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code § 5024.1? In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code § 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
☐	☐	☐	☒

An archaeological records check was obtained on April 4, 2025. The Native American consultations were completed on 5/22-23/25 using a NAHC contact list dated 3/5/25. The ASR was submitted on

June 17, 2025 and approved by a Sonoma State Archaeologist on January 8, 2026 after their review of the updated ASR that included the addition of 178 acres.

Several prehistoric sites are recorded within the Project area. The ASR describes these sites in detail, but specific site locations are confidential. Implementation of the protection measures within the ASR will prevent substantial adverse change to any tribal cultural resource. Mitigation measures have been added to ensure that all potential impacts to historic and cultural resources are reduced to less than significant levels. Refer to **Mitigation Measure #12** for details.

The implementation of protection measures within the ASR will prevent substantial adverse change to the significance of a tribal cultural resource.

UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable. The proposed Project will not result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas or telecommunications facilities.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Would the project have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable. The proposed Project will not result in needed changes to water development. Only limited water use will be needed for the Project.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Would the project result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand, in addition to the provider's existing commitments?				

☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable. There is no wastewater treatment provider that serves or may serve the Project.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Would the project generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable. The proposed Project will not generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
e) Would the project comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable. There are no solid waste statutes or regulations involved with this Project.

WILDFIRE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable. The Project has been developed to reduce fire hazard severity. The Project will not substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact. The Project area is within state responsibility area and also within a very high fire hazard severity zone (CAL FIRE 2022). Temporary increases in risk associated with uncontrolled fire from prescribed burns could occur. Vegetation treatment involving mechanical equipment poses a risk of accidental ignition. Masticating machinery is routinely equipped with fire extinguishers and hand tools. Mechanized hand tools will have federal or state approved spark arrestors which prevent the emissions of flammable debris. During manual treatment activities crews will carry one fire extinguisher per chainsaw and one long-handle shovel and one Pulaski or ax to quickly respond to any accidental ignition if one occurs.

Implementing a prescribed burn requires extensive planning including the preparation of a burn plan, smoke management plan, site-specific weather monitoring, public notification, safety considerations and favorable weather conditions so a burn can occur as scheduled. It is anticipated that pile burning, as opposed to broadcast burning, will be the primary prescribed burning treatment. However, broadcast burning is included as an option.

Prior to implementing a broadcast burn, fire containment lines need to be established to help prevent the accidental escape of fire. Containment lines will be constructed manually using a crew equipped with chainsaws and hand tools or mechanically using a dozer which may be equipped with a brush rake. Water tenders and safety equipment need to be staged on site as deemed necessary. Increased wildfire risk associated with the use of heavy equipment in vegetated areas and with prescribed burns is within the scope of this Project because the types of equipment, treatment duration and the types of prescribed burn methods proposed are consistent with those commonly used when implementing fuel reduction projects.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No Impact. Not applicable. The Project is designed to reduce the fire hazard by reducing flammable fuels. No new roads, water sources, power lines or other utilities are proposed.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact. The Project area is within state responsibility area and also within a very high fire hazard severity zone (CAL FIRE 2022). There have been several fires within a 50 mile radius of the Project boundary, the most recent being the 2013 Rim Fire (CAL FIRE 2021). Proposed vegetation treatment activities include mechanical and manual fuels reduction, herbicide application, prescribed herbivory and prescribed burning treatments. It is anticipated that pile burning, as opposed to broadcast burning, will be the primary prescribed burning treatment. However, broadcast burning is included as an option.

The Project is designed to reduce fire risk. Fuels treatment will temporarily increase surface level runoff due to a decrease in understory vegetation. WLPZ and EEZ limitations, saturated & erosive soils and slope limitations will mitigate post fire downstream flooding and landslides. See **Mitigation Measure #9 (Geology) and 11 # (Hydrology)** for protection measures. The Project will not expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability or drainage changes.

MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare, or threatened species, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation. On 1/21/2025 a 9-quadrangle and 3-mile radius query of the CNDDB was conducted. A total of 26 animal and 19 plant endangered, threatened or sensitive species were identified within the 9-quad search. Of those 45 animal and plant species, 10 had potential habitat within the Project area, 10 species were located within the 3 mile radius and 1 was located within the Project area. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and United States Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS) were notified by email on 5/12/2025 and provided a description of mitigation measures. CDFW and USFWS were further consulted for species specific mitigation measures. USFWS responded on 5/13/2025 and 7/28/2025 that they had no comments at this time. CDFW responded on 7/24/2025 to a CSO update that they had no comments at this time. I was made aware of CDFW's advisory language on September 11, 2025. That language has been included in this document. A Biological Assessment was created by the RPF of record. The Project is not expected to have a substantial effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive or special status in local or regional plans, policies, or regulation or by the CDFW or the USFWS.

An archaeological records check was obtained on April 4, 2025. The Native American consultations were completed on 5/22-23/25 using a NAHC contact list dated 3/5/25. The ASR was submitted on June 17, 2025 and approved by a Sonoma State Archaeologist on January 8, 2026 after their review of the updated ASR that included the addition of 178 acres.

Several historic prehistoric sites are recorded within the Project area. The ASR describes these sites in detail, but specific site locations are confidential. Implementation of protection measures within the ASR should prevent substantial adverse change to a historical resource. Implementation of this Project will not eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Would the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact. Cumulative effects are not anticipated for the proposed Project. The Project was designed to be complimentary to allow the Lead Agency to coordinate treatments over an increasingly large area. Doing so allows agencies flexibility to tailor treatments across the landscape. Fuel treatment activities are typically scheduled during normal working hours (7am–7pm) so nocturnal animals will not be affected by activities and noise from proposed activities will deter wildlife from entering the area during Project implementation. This Project is being prepared by an RPF. Consultation with resource professionals from CAL FIRE, CDFW, USFWS, RWQCB, NAHC and the Tuolumne County Resource Conservation District was part of the scoping process for this Project to ensure that any negative cumulative effects are avoided.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Would the project have environmental effects that would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No impact. Not applicable. The Project will not have environmental effects that would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly.

Appendix A – Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines § 15074(d), when adopting a mitigated negative declaration, the lead agency will adopt a mitigation monitoring and reporting plan (MMRP) that ensures compliance with mitigation measures required for project approval. CAL FIRE is the lead agency for the above-listed Project and has developed this MMRP as a part of the final IS-MND supporting the project. This MMRP lists the mitigation measures developed in the IS-MND that were designed to reduce environmental impacts to a less-than-significant level. This MMRP also identifies the party responsible for implementing the measure, defines when the mitigation measure must be implemented and which party or public agency is responsible for ensuring compliance with the measure.

Potentially Significant Effects and Mitigation Measures

The following is a list of the resources that will be potentially affected by the Project and the mitigation measures made part of the Initial Study-Mitigated Negative Declaration.

Mitigation Measure #1: FYLF. If a positive FYLF detection occurs during surveys or at any time during Project implementation all vegetation and ground disturbing operations shall cease at detection sight and adjacent suitable habitat. A buffer of 40 feet (Bourque 2008) during the seasonal dry period (May 1-Oct 15) and 130 feet during the seasonal wet period (Oct 15-May 1) shall be put in place at the detection site and adjacent suitable habitat. These protection measures will be designated on the ground by the RPF using flagging. The color, meaning and location of the flagging will be communicated to all operators to create proper understanding of the protection measures of the Project.

Schedule: Each year of operations prior to project-related activities.

Responsible Party: A Registered Professional Forester (RPF), RPF supervised designee, or biologist.
Verification of Compliance:

Monitoring Party: TCRCD

Initials _____

Date _____

Mitigation Measure #2: Bald Eagle. A general nesting bird survey will be conducted by a qualified RPF or biologist familiar with species identification and life history for work being performed from February 1 to September 15 prior to the start of operations during the appropriate survey window. If an active nest is found, a 0.5 mile no work buffer zone will be placed around the nest until the chicks have fledged. Unless the trees pose a hazard to the public or project workers nesting habitat and large prominent snags (especially ponderosa pine) will be retained.

Schedule: Each year of operations prior to project-related activities.

Responsible Party: A Registered Professional Forester (RPF) or RPF designee.

Verification of Compliance:

Monitoring Party: TCRCD

Initials _____

Date _____

Mitigation Measure #3: Great Gray Owl (GGO). There is a known roost/nest tree within the Project boundary. A one half mile no work buffer zone will be placed around the nest tree until chicks have fledged with an additional 15 day monitoring period to ensure that final fledglings are not active on or near the ground. This will be monitored by a qualified RPF and/or a biologist familiar with species identification and life history. Due to there being a confirmed active GGO nest within the Project, any potential GGO nesting habitat within the Project where the species could be impacted shall be surveyed by a qualified RPF or biologist during the survey period, prior to operations, each year that operations may occur within the critical period. It is not possible to properly survey within .25 mile of the Project boundary due to the restraints of private land ownership. Unless the trees pose a hazard to the public or project workers nesting habitat will be retained (large live or dead trees with defects or decaying wood and cavities). Any nest tree shall be retained unless it poses an imminent danger and the removal of the nest tree will not result in a take as determined by CDFW.

Schedule: Each year of operations prior to project-related activities.

Responsible Party: A Registered Professional Forester (RPF) or RPF designee.
Verification of Compliance:

Monitoring Party: TCRCD

Initials _____

Date _____

Mitigation Measure #4: California Spotted Owl. Nesting surveys will occur within the Project footprint prior to operations when operations occur during the nesting period (February 1 to September 15). If active nest(s) are found within or adjacent to the Project footprint a .25 mile no work buffer will be placed around the nest tree until the chicks have fledged. Suitable nest trees (i.e., large live or dead trees with defects, decaying wood, or cavities) will not be removed unless they pose a hazard to the public or project workers. The Project will retain nesting habitat (e.g., multistoried or complex structure, high canopy cover, large amounts of coarse woody debris).

Schedule: Each year of operations prior to project-related activities.

Responsible Party: A Registered Professional Forester (RPF) or RPF designee.
Verification of Compliance:

Monitoring Party: TCRCD

Initials _____

Date _____

Mitigation Measure #5: Crotch's Bumble Bee. Given the potential for Project treatment activities to improve conditions that may enhance habitat favorable for CBB, the following protection measures and/or survey activities will occur during any year of planned operations.

A qualified biologist and/or RPF will identify suitable habitat for CBB. Potential nesting sites, which include all small mammal burrows, perennial bunch grasses, thatched annual grasses, brush piles, old bird nests, dead trees and hollow logs would need to be documented as part of the assessment.

Once suitable habitat is identified, visual surveys will be conducted during the Colony Active Period (April-August) to detect foraging bees and potential nesting sites. A minimum of three focused visual surveys at 2-4 week intervals will be conducted during the Colony Active Period within those areas deemed suitable for habitat. If a nest(s) of CBB are found within the Project area, the nest sites will be protected as stated below.

If a nest is detected the nest site will be protected with a 50 foot buffer from mechanical, herbicide and prescribed burn treatment activities. Manual clearing of vegetation between 10 and 50 feet from the nest site, without disturbing the nest, will be allowed. No activities of any kind will be allowed within 10 feet of the nest. Visual surveys will continue during Project implementation. If ground-disturbing activities will occur during the overwintering period (October through February), consultation with CDFW is warranted to discuss how to implement Project activities and avoid a take. Any detection of CBB prior to or during Project implementation warrants consultation with CDFW to discuss how to avoid take.

If take cannot be avoided, CDFW recommends acquiring a State Incidental Take Permit pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081(b), prior to initiating ground disturbing activities.

Any herbicide application(s) will be conducted as a targeted foliar spot treatment utilizing a backpack sprayer. Herbicides shall not be applied to flowering native plants within occupied or suitable habitat during the flight season (March through September). The targeted species shall be limited to currently resprouting species such as live oak, black oak, manzanita, toyon and ceanothus.

Prescribed burning within occupied or suitable habitat for special-status CBB where feasible shall occur from October through February to avoid the flight season.

Treatment areas in occupied or suitable habitat will be divided into a sufficient number of treatment units to the extent feasible such that the entirety of the habitat is not treated within the same year. The objective of this measure is to provide refuge for CBB during treatment activities and temporary retention of suitable floral resources proximate to the treatment area.

Treatments shall be conducted in a patchy pattern to the extent feasible, in occupied or suitable habitat, such that all of the habitat is not removed, sprayed or burned and untreated portions of occupied or suitable habitat are retained.

Schedule: Each year of operations prior to vegetation or ground disturbing activities

Responsible Party: A Registered Professional Forester (RPF) or RPF designee.
Verification of Compliance:

Monitoring Party: TCRCD

Initials _____

Date _____

Mitigation Measure #6: Western Pond Turtle. Focused visual surveys were completed on the Project by a qualified RPF and/or a biologist familiar with species identification and life history. No presence of this species was identified at the time of the survey. If operations are planned to occur during the nesting period, visual surveys will be conducted each year of operations where nest sites could be impacted, prior to commencing activities in potential nesting habitat. If populations or individuals are detected a 50 foot no disturbance buffer will be placed around the WPT suitable habitat.

Schedule: Each year of operations prior to ground disturbing activities

Responsible Party: A Registered Professional Forester (RPF) or RPF designee.
Verification of Compliance:

Monitoring Party: TCRCD

Initials _____

Date _____

Mitigation Measure #7: Botanical Species of Concern. This mitigation measure includes Small's southern clarkia, Mariposa clarkia, yellow-lip pansy monkeyflower, slender-stemmed monkey flower and Tuolumne fawn lily. Botanical surveys were completed during the floristic period on the Project by a qualified RPF and/or a botanist familiar with species identification and life history. If populations or individuals are detected a 50 foot no disturbance buffer will be flagged for phases I-II and a temporary fence will be erected at the 50 foot buffer if herbivory is used during phase III of the Project.

Schedule: Each year of operations prior to ground disturbing activities

Responsible Party: A Registered Professional Forester (RPF) or RPF designee.
Verification of Compliance:

Monitoring Party: TCRCD

Initials _____

Date _____

Mitigation Measure #8: Cultural Resources. Cultural sites may be assigned an Equipment Exclusion Zones (EEZ), as determined in consultation with a CAL FIRE State Archaeologist or consulting Archaeologist, to protect the integrity of the site.

- No ground disturbing operations of any kind shall occur within the EEZ of a cultural site.
- Heavy equipment within EEZ boundaries is limited to existing roads, tractor trails and/or landings.
- All cultural EEZ's and ELZ's will be identified with blue and red flagging prior to operations.
- Operations within the flagged boundary of a cultural EEZ or ELZ will be limited to cutting brush by hand and removing the cut brush by hand from within the flagged boundary for treatment outside of the flagged boundary.
- Trees/snags designated to be removed within striking distance will be directionally felled away from site(s).
- A CAL FIRE State Archaeologist or consulting Archaeologist may approve additional or alternative site-specific protection measures prior to project activities occurring.
- A meeting between the RPF and Contractor will be conducted prior to the start of operations to review site locations and protection measures.
- Contractors shall be required to protect the recorded sites described herein and any cultural resources uncovered during the Project operations.
- If any cultural resources are found during Project implementation activities within 100 feet of the newly discovered cultural resource shall be immediately halted and notification given to landowner and RPF.
- The RPF shall initiate site review and notify and consult with Registered Professional
- Archaeologist for site-specific protection measures, and site recording notification will be
- provided to the appropriate Native American tribal groups and Archaeologist.
- If human remains are discovered, the County Coroner and the CAL FIRE Archaeologist must be contacted within 24 hours. Work may not resume until clearance is granted by the CAL FIRE Archeologist.
- Site specific mitigation measures are detailed in the confidential ASR.

Schedule: Each year of operations prior to project-related activities
Responsible Party: A Registered Professional Forester (RPF) or RPF designee.

<u>Verification of Compliance</u>:

Monitoring Party: TCRCD

Initials _____

Date _____

Mitigation Measure #9: Geology and Soils

No heavy equipment shall operate on excessively wet soil such that conditions produce areas of ponded water, wheel rutting, spinning or churning of wheels or tracks.

- Slopes greater than 50% shall not be mechanically treated.

- Prescribed herbivory will be timed to avoid saturated soils as well as overgrazing.
- Burn piles will not be created that exceed 20 feet in length, width or diameter, except when on landings or road surfaces. In addition, burn piles will not occupy more than 15 percent of the total treatment area (Busse et al. 2014). Piles will not be located in a hydrologic area.

Schedule: Each year of operations prior to project-related activities

Responsible Party: A Registered Professional Forester (RPF) or RPF designee.

Verification of Compliance:

Monitoring Party: TCRCD

Initials _____

Date _____

Mitigation Measure #10: Hazards and Hazardous Materials.

Maintain all diesel and gasoline-powered equipment per manufacturer's specifications, and in compliance with all state and federal emissions requirements.

- Equipment will be inspected for leaks on a daily basis until the equipment is removed from the site. Any equipment found leaking will be promptly fixed or removed.
- Refueling shall be completed at least 100 feet from a watercourse.
- The herbicide contractor will prepare all herbicide applications to do the following:
    - Be implemented consistent with recommendations prepared annually by a licensed PCA.
    - Comply with all appropriate laws and regulations pertaining to the use of pesticides and safety standards for employees and the public, as governed by the EPA, DPR and applicable local jurisdictions.
    - Adhere to label directions for application rates and methods, storage, transportation, mixing, container disposal and weather limitations to application such as wind speed, humidity, temperature, and precipitation.
    - Be applied by an applicator appropriately licensed by the State.

The application of herbicide shall not occur within the WLPZ buffer of any Class I or II watercourse. Herbicide may be applied within the ELZ of Class III watercourses when they are dry.

Herbicides shall not be applied to flowering native plants within occupied or suitable habitat to the extent feasible during the flight season (March through September). The targeted species shall be limited to currently resprouting species such as live oak, black oak, manzanita, toyon and ceanothus.

It is possible that petroleum product could be released to the environment, resulting in a minor hazardous waste spill. Spills could result from the transport of fuel or a leak/major malfunction of equipment. Equipment will be kept clean and inspected for leaks. Leaks will be repaired. Spill kits will be on site, spills of chemicals will be contained and properly disposed of.

The TCRCD or herbicide contractor will prepare a Spill Prevention and Response Plan (SPRP) prior to beginning any herbicide treatment activities to provide protection to onsite workers, the public and the environment from accidental leaks or spills of herbicides, adjuvants, or other potential contaminants. The SPRP will include (but not be limited to):

- A map that delineates staging areas, and storage, loading, and mixing areas for herbicides.
- A list of items required in an onsite spill kit that will be maintained throughout the life of the activity.
- Procedures for the proper storage, use, and disposal of any herbicides, adjuvants, or other chemicals used in vegetation treatment.
- The herbicide contractor will coordinate pesticide use with the applicable County Agricultural Commissioner(s), and all required licenses and permits will be obtained prior to herbicide application.

The herbicide contractor shall triple rinse all herbicide and adjuvant containers with clean water at an approved site, and dispose of rinsate by placing it in the batch tank for application per 3 CCR Section 6684. The contractor will puncture used containers on the top and bottom to render them unusable, unless said containers are part of a manufacturer's container recycling program, in which case the manufacturer's instructions will be followed. Disposal of non-recyclable containers will be at legal dumpsites. Equipment will not be cleaned, and personnel will not be washed in a manner that would allow contaminated water to directly enter any body of water within the treatment area or adjacent watersheds. Disposal of all herbicides will follow label requirements and waste disposal regulations.

For herbicide applications occurring within or adjacent to public recreation areas, residential areas, schools, or any other public areas within 500 feet, the project proponent will post signs at each end of herbicide treatment areas and any intersecting trails notifying the public of the use of herbicides. The signs will include the signal word (i.e., Danger, Warning or Caution), product name, and manufacturer, active ingredient, EPA registration number, target pest, treatment location, date and time of application, restricted entry interval if applicable per the label requirements, date which notification sign may be removed and a contact person with a telephone number. Signs will be posted prior to the start of treatment and notification will remain in place for at least 72 hours after treatment ceases.

To maintain the high quality of the beneficial uses of water, the application of herbicide shall not occur within the WLPZ buffer of any watercourse. Herbicide may be applied in the ELZ of Class III watercourses which are dry.

Schedule: During operations.

Responsible Party: A Registered Professional Forester (RPF) or RPF designee.

Verification of Compliance:

Monitoring Party: TCRCD

Initials _____

Date _____

Mitigation Measure #11: Hydrology and Water Quality. Hydrological areas may be assigned an EEZ or an ELZ as determined by the RPF to protect the beneficial uses of water and riparian functions. These designations are referred to the Watercourse and Lake Protection Zone (WLPZ).Equipment

Exclusion Zones (EEZ): Prohibits equipment from entering into the EEZ except where there is an established road, crossing or skid trail. No vegetation shall be treated by heavy equipment while in the EEZ. Equipment operators may reach-in and treat vegetation within the buffer as long as the tracks remain outside of the EEZ.

- Equipment Limitation Zone (ELZ): Limits equipment from entering into the ELZ except where noted in Class III protection measures listed below.
- Watercourse designation shall be indicated on a map, located in **Appendix C**. The Contractor will be given a copy of the map and be made aware of the protection measure prior to the start of operations.
- All areas below the stream and lake transition line will be kept free of slash and debris.
- Accidental deposits of material in the watercourse, bed bank or channel shall be immediately removed.
- Watercourses shall be classified into one of the following categories or "classes":
    - **Class I**: Domestic Supplies, including springs, onsite and/or within 100 feet downstream of the operations area and/or fish always or seasonally present onsite, including habitat to sustain fish migration and spawning.
    - **Class II:** Fish always or seasonally present offsite within 1000 feet down stream and/or aquatic habitat form non-fish aquatic species.
    - **Class III:** No aquatic life present, watercourse showing evidence of being capable of sediment transport to Class I and II waters under normal high water flow conditions.
    - **Class IV:** Man-made watercourses, usually downstream, established domestic, agricultural, hydroelectric, supply or other beneficial use.
- Watercourses shall have the following protection measures by classification:
    - **Class I:** 100 foot EEZ measured from the edge of the visible flood channel.
    - **Class II:** 50 foot EEZ measured from the edge of the visible flood channel.
    - **Class III:** 15 foot ELZ measured from the centerline of the watercourse. Equipment may make crossings perpendicularly to the watercourse which are dry at the time of operations but may not track up and down within the ELZ. Crossings should be limited to as few as possible.
    - **Class IV:** 15 Foot EEZ on the uphill side of the watercourse measured from the top of the cut bank and a ELZ on the downhill side of the watercourse starting at the tow of the fill slope. Operators my "reach-in" and masticate vegetation on the downhill fill slope as long as soil disturbance is limited.
- Watercourse Designation:
    - **Class I:** Shall be flagged in solid blue flagging at the edge of the EEZ
    - **Class II:** Shall be flagging in solid blue flagging at the edge of the EEZ
    - **Class III:** Shall be centerline flagged in blue and white candy-striped flagging.
    - **Class IV:** Shall be flagged at the edge of the EEZ on the uphill side in solid blue flagging, the downhill side/toe of the slope will not be flagged.
- A watercourse crossing of Long Gulch, a Class I watercourse, is required to provide equipment access to the southern portion of the Project area. The proposed crossing is existing, shallow, flat and will not require any of the activities which would normally trigger an LSA. Using this

crossing will not:

- Divert or obstruct the natural flow of any river, stream or lake.
- Change the bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream or lake.
- Use material from any river, stream or lake.
- Deposit or dispose of material into any river, stream or lake.

The watercourse at this location normally dries up during the summertime. The crossing shall only be used under dry conditions.

There is also approximately 1400 feet of road within the WLPZ upstream of the crossing mentioned above which will facilitate access to the Project if used.

Upon completion of operations or before the winter period (November 15th-April 1st), whichever occurs first, the area(s) encroached upon within the WLPZ shall be straw mulched to a depth of 2 inches at the time of application and 90% coverage.

Schedule: Each year of operations prior to project-related activities

Responsible Party: A Registered Professional Forester (RPF) or RPF designee.

Verification of Compliance:

Monitoring Party: TCRCD

Initials _____

Date _____

Mitigation Measure #12: Tribal Cultural Resources. Cultural sites may be protected by an Equipment Exclusion Zone (EEZ) or an Equipment Limitation Zone (ELZ) as determined in consultation with a Registered Professional Archaeologist to protect the integrity of the site.

- A 50-foot EEZ will be placed around the perimeter of a cultural site. No ground disturbing operation of any kind shall occur within the EEZ of a cultural site. Heavy equipment within EEZ boundaries is limited to existing roads, tractor trails and/or landings.
- A 25-foot ELZ will be used on specific linear features (i.e. historic ditches, historic railroad grades). Equipment tracks shall not enter the ELZ except at existing crossings or breaches of the linear feature. The operator may reach into the ELZ with the boom to masticate material.
- All cultural EEZ's and ELZ's will be identified with blue and red flagging prior to operations.
- Operations within the flagged boundary will be limited to cutting brush by hand, pruning trees by hand and removing the cut brush by hand from within the flagged boundary for treatment outside of the flagged boundary.
- Trees/snags within striking distance will be directionally felled away from sites.
    - A CAL FIRE State Archaeologist may approve additional or alternative site-specific protection measures prior to Project activities occurring.
- Project planners will utilize site records to plan and designate protection measure placement to ensure adherence to prescribed protection measures.

- A meeting between the RPF and Contractor will be conducted prior to the start of operations to review site locations and protection measures.
- Contractors performing work shall be required to protect the recorded sites described herein and any cultural resources uncovered during Project operations.
- If any new cultural resources are found during Project implementation activities within 100 feet of the newly discovered cultural resource shall be immediately halted and notification given to the landowner and RPF.
- The RPF shall initiate site review and notify and consult with CAL FIRE State Archaeologist for site specific protection measures. New sites will be required to be recorded and the ASR will be amended and reviewed by the Consulting or CAL FIRE State Archaeologist.
- If human remains are discovered, the Tuolumne County Coroner and a CAL FIRE State Archaeologist must be contacted within 24 hours. Work may not resume until clearance is granted by the CAL FIRE State Archaeologist.
- Site specific mitigation measures are detailed in the confidential ASR.

Schedule: Each year of operations prior to project-related activities

Responsible Party: A Registered Professional Forester (RPF) or RPF designee.

Verification of Compliance:

Monitoring Party: TCRCD

Initials _____

Date _____

A copy of the completed MMRP will be forwarded to: CAL FIRE Environmental Protection Program, P.O. Box 944246, Sacramento, CA 94244.

Docusign Envelope ID: AF629A2A-E2E0-808A-8109-07F49F2A57DF

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Appendix B - Biological Scoping

CNDDB: Bios- 3-mile Radius & Rare Find- 9-Quadrangle Search: 1/21/2025

Quads: Groveland, Standard, Tuolumne, Duckwall Mountain, Jawbone Ridge, Buckhorn Peak, Coulterville, Penon Blanco Peak, Moccasin.

Amphibians

Scientific Name	Federal Status	State Status	CDFW	CDF Sensitive	Habitat in Project	CNDDB 3-Mile	Discussion
Rana boylii pop. 5 (foothill yellow-legged frog - south Sierra DPS)	Endangered	Endangered	None	None	Y	Y	Y
Hydromantes brunus (limestone salamander)	None	Threatened	FP	None	N	N	N
Rana draytonii (California red legged frog)	Threatened	None	SSC	None	N	N	N

Birds

Scientific Name	Federal Status	State Status	CDFW	CDF Sensitive	Habitat in Project	CNDDB 3-Mile	Discussion
Vireo bellii pusillus (Least Bell's vireo)	Endangered	Endangered	None	None	N	N	N
Haliaeetus leucocephalus (Bald eagle)	Delisted	Endangered	FP	S	N	N	Y
Strix nebulosa (Great gray owl)	None	Endangered	None	S	Y	Y	Y
Falco mexicanus (Prairie falcon)	None	None	WL	None	N	N	N
Athene cunicularia (Burrowing owl)	None	None	SSC	None	N	N	N
Strix occidentalis occidentalis (California spotted owl)	Proposed Threatened	None	SSC	None	Y	Y	Y
Accipiter atricapillus (American goshawk)	None	None	SSC	S	Y	N	N
Accipiter cooperii (Coopers hawk)	None	None	WL	None	N	N	N
Aquila chrysaetos (Golden eagle)	None	None	FP/WL	S	N	N	N
Circus hudsonius (Northern harrier)	None	None	SSC	None	N	N	N
Icteria virens (Yellow breasted chat)	None	None	SSC	None	N	N	N
Pandion haliaetus (Osprey)	None	None	None	S	N	N	N

Fish

Scientific Name	Federal Status	State Status	CDFW	CDF Sensitive	Habitat in Project	CNDDB 3-Mile	Discussion
Hesperoleucus symmetricus symmetricus (Central California roach)	None	None	SSC	None	N	N	N
Lavinia exilicauda exilicauda (Sacramento hitch)	None	None	SSC	None	N	N	N

Insects

Scientific Name	Federal Status	State Status	CDFW	CDF Sensitive	Habitat in Project	CNDDB 3-Mile	Discussion
Desmocerus californicus dimorphus (Valley elderberry longhorn beetle)	Threatened	None	None	None	N	N	N
Bombus crotchii (Crotch's bumble bee)	None	Candidate Endangered	None	None	Y	N	Y

Mammals

Scientific Name	Federal Status	State Status	CDFW	CDF Sensitive	Habitat in Project	CNDDB 3-Mile	Discussion
Antrozous pallidus (pallid bat)	None	None	SSC	None	N	N	N
Corynorhinus townsendii (Townsend's big-eared bat)	None	None	SSC	None	N	Y	Y
Euderma maculatum (Spotted bat)	None	None	SSC	None	N	N	N
Eumops perotis californicus (Western mastiff bat)	None	None	SSC	None	N	N	N
Lasiurus frantzii (Western red bat)	None	None	SSC	None	N	N	N
Bassariscus astutus raptor (Northern California ringtail)	None	None	FP	None	N	N	N
Taxidea taxus (American badger)	None	None	SSC	None	N	N	N

Reptiles

Scientific Name	Federal Status	State Status	CDFW	CDF Sensitive	Habitat in Project	CNDDB 3-Mile	Discussion
Emys marmorata (Western pond turtle)	Proposed Threatened	None	SSC	None	Y	Y	Y
Phrynosoma blainvillii (Coast horned lizard)	None	None	SSC	None	N	N	N

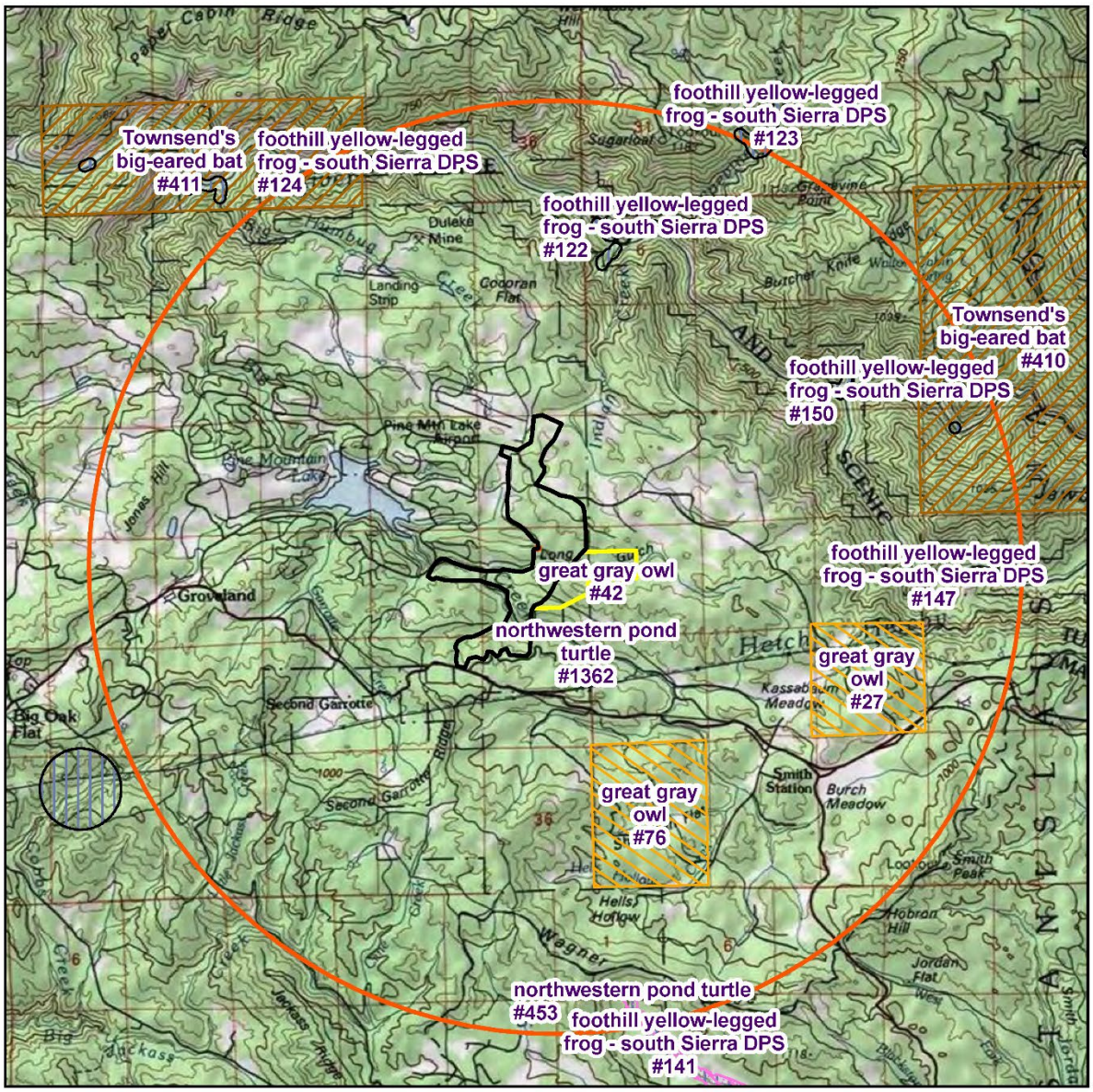
Plants

Scientific Name	Federal Status	State Status	CRPR	Habitat in Project	CNDDB 3-Mile	Discussion
Packera layneae (Layne's ragwort)	Threatened	Rare	1B.2	N	N	N
Allium tuolumnense (Rawhide Hill onion)	None	None	1B.2	N	N	N
Balsamorhiza macrolepis (Big-scale balsamroot)	None	None	1B.2	N	N	N
Camissonia lacustris (Grassland suncup)	None	None	1B.2	N	N	N
Clarkia australis (Small's southern clarkia)	None	None	1B.2	Y	N	Y
Clarkia biloba ssp. Australis (Mariposa clarkia)	None	None	1B.2	Y	Y	Y
Diplacus pulchellus (Yellow-lip pansy monkeyflower)	None	None	1B.2	Y	Y	Y
Eryngium pinnatisectum (Tuolumne button-celery)	None	None	1B.2	N	N	N
Erythranthe filicaulis (Slender-stemmed monkeyflower)	None	None	1B.2	Y	Y	Y
Erythronium tuolumnense (Tuolumne fawn lily)	None	None	1B.2	Y	Y	Y
Horkelia parryi (Parry's horkelia)	None	None	1B.2	N	N	N
Lomatium congdonii (Congdon's lomatium)	None	None	1B.2	N	N	N
Lupinus spectabilis (Shaggyhair lupine)	None	None	1B.2	N	N	N
Navarretia miwukensis (Mi-Wuk navarretia)	None	None	1B.2	N	N	N
Senecio clevelandii var. heterophyllus (Red Hills ragwort)	None	None	1B.2	N	N	N
Clarkia rostrata (Beaked clarkia)	None	None	1B.3	N	N	N
Cryptantha mariposae (Mariposa cryptantha)	None	None	1B.3	N	N	N
Cryptantha spithamaea (Red Hills cryptantha)	None	None	1B.3	N	N	N
Rhynchospora capitellata (Brownish beaked-rush)	None	None	2B.2	N	N	N

CNDDB Map

Project: Pine Mtn Lake Fuels Reduction Project
Legal: T1S, R16E, Portions of Sections 13, 23, 24 25 & 26
T1S, R17E, Portions of Section 19, MDBM
USGS Quad: Groveland 1:24000

N



Legend

- PML I Project Boundary
- PML II Project Boundary

CNDDB

- Aquatic Species
- Birds
- Fish
- Insects
- Mammals
- Reptiles
- Plants

Scale = 1:84000
1" = 7000'

California Rare Plant Rank

The *California Rare Plant Rank* (CRPR) status applies to plants only. The CRPR is a ranking system originally developed by the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) to better define and categorize rarity in California's flora. These ranks were previously known as the CNPS lists but were renamed to the CRPR to better reflect the joint effort among the CNPS, the CNDDB, and a wide range of botanical experts, who work together to assign a rarity ranking. All plants tracked by the CNDDB are assigned to a *California Rare Plant Rank* category. These categories are:

CA Rare Plant Rank	Description
1A	Plants presumed extinct in California and rare/extinct elsewhere
1B.1	Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere; seriously threatened in California
1B.2	Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere; fairly threatened in California
1B.3	Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere; not very threatened in California
2A	Plants presumed extirpated in California, but more common elsewhere
2B.1	Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California, but more common elsewhere; seriously threatened in California
2B.2	Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California, but more common elsewhere; fairly threatened in California
2B.3	Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California, but more common elsewhere; not very threatened in California

California Department of Fish and Wildlife Status

The *California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Status* applies to animals only. The possible values for *CDFW Status* are:

Status	Description
FP	Fully Protected: This classification was the State of California's initial effort to identify and provide additional protection to those animals that were rare or faced possible extinction. Lists were created for fish, amphibians and reptiles, birds and mammals. Most of the species on these lists have subsequently been listed under the state and/or federal endangered species acts.
SSC	Species of Special Concern: It is the goal and responsibility of the Department of Fish and Wildlife to maintain viable populations of all native species. To this end, the Department has designated certain vertebrate species as "Species of Special Concern" because declining population levels, limited ranges, and/or continuing threats have made them vulnerable to extinction. The goal of designating species as "Species of Special Concern" is to halt or reverse their decline by calling attention to their plight and addressing the issues of concern early enough to secure their long-term viability.
WL	Watch List: The Department of Fish and Wildlife maintains a list consisting of taxa that were previously designated as "Species of Special Concern" but no longer merit that status, or which do not yet meet SSC criteria, but for which there is concern and a need for additional information to clarify status.

Element Type

The *Element Type* indicates the general taxonomic group that an element falls within. The following *Element Types* are currently used by the CNDDB:

Animals	Amphibians
	Arachnids
	Birds
	Crustaceans
	Fish
	Insects
	Mollusks
	Reptiles
Community	Aquatic
	Terrestrial
Plants	Bryophytes
	Lichens
	Vascular

Federal Status

The United States legal status under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Listing Status	Description
Endangered	The classification provided to an animal or plant in danger of extinction within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.
Threatened	The classification provided to an animal or plant which is likely to become an Endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.
Proposed Endangered	The classification provided to an animal or plant that is proposed for federal listing as Endangered in the Federal Register under Section 4 of the Endangered Species Act.
Proposed Threatened	The classification provided to an animal or plant that is proposed for federal listing as Threatened in the Federal Register under Section 4 of the Endangered Species Act.

Candidate	The classification provided to an animal or plant that has been studied by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Service has concluded that it should be proposed for addition to the Federal Endangered and Threatened species list.
None	The plant or animal has no federal status.
Delisted	The plant or animal was previously listed as Endangered or Threatened, but is no longer listed on the Federal Endangered and Threatened species list.

(Please see the Federal Register for the current legal definitions of Federal status.)

State Status

The State of California legal status.

Listing Status	Description
Endangered	The classification provided to a native species or subspecies of a bird, mammal, fish, amphibian, reptile, or plant which is in serious danger of becoming extinct throughout all, or a significant portion, of its range due to one or more causes, including loss of habitat, change in habitat, overexploitation, predation, competition, or disease.
Threatened	The classification provided to a native species or subspecies of a bird, mammal, fish, amphibian, reptile, or plant that, although not presently threatened with extinction, is likely to become an endangered species in the foreseeable future in the absence of special protection and management efforts.
Rare	The classification provided to a native plant species, subspecies, or variety when, although not presently threatened with extinction, it is in such small numbers throughout its range that it may become endangered if its present environment worsens. This designation stems from the Native Plant Protection Act of 1977.
None	The plant or animal has no state status.
Delisted	The plant or animal was previously listed as Endangered, Threatened or Rare but is no longer listed by the State of California.
Candidate Endangered	The classification provided to a native species or subspecies of a bird, mammal, fish, amphibian, reptile, or plant that the Fish and Game Commission has formally noticed as being under review by the Department of Fish and Wildlife for addition to the list of endangered species, or a species for which the commission has published a notice of proposed regulation to add the species to the list of endangered species.
Candidate Threatened	The classification provided to a native species or subspecies of a bird, mammal, fish, amphibian, reptile, or plant that the Fish and Game Commission has formally noticed as being under review by the Department of Fish and Wildlife for addition to the list of threatened species, or a species for which the commission has published a notice of proposed regulation to add the species to the list of threatened species.

(See Fish and Game code, sections 1901, 2062, 2067, and 2068 for legal definitions of California State status.)

Discussion:

Rana boylii - foothill yellow-legged frog

Habitat: Partially shaded, shallow streams and riffles with a rocky substrate in a variety of habitats. Needs at least some cobble sized substrate for laying and at least 15 weeks to attain metamorphosis.

Potential for Occurrence: May occur. Found along the edges within a three-mile radius of the Project in 4 locations: Grapevine Creek, Clavey River, Tuolumne River (near Grapevine Creek) and Tuolumne River (near Humbug Creek).

Field Survey: Focused visual surveys were conducted on: 2/25/2025, 3/25/2025, 4/15/2025 and 4/24/2025 with no presence found during the surveys. Surveys were conducted by a qualified RPF and/or biologist familiar with species identification and life history.

Protection Measures: If a positive FYLF detection occurs during surveys or at any time during Project implementation all vegetation and ground disturbing operations shall cease at detection sight and adjacent suitable habitat. A buffer of 40 feet (Bourque 2008) during the seasonal dry period (May 1-Oct 15) and 130 feet during the seasonal wet period (Oct 15-May 1) shall be put in place at detection site and adjacent suitable habitat. These protection measures will be designated on the ground by the RPF using flagging. The color, meaning and location of the flagging will be communicated to all operators to create proper understanding of the protection measures of the Project.

Haliaeetus leucocephalus - Bald Eagle

Habitat: General habitat includes ocean shore, lake margins and rivers for both nesting and wintering with most nests within 1 mile of water. Nests in large, old-growth, or dominant live tree with open branches, especially ponderosa pine. Roosts communally in winter.

Potential for Occurrence: Not expected to occur. There are known sightings around Pine Mountain Lake and apparently a nest was also seen. However, the time frame and locations are unknown. The southern portion of the PML 1 is within .5 mile from Pine Mountain Lake. This unit has been masticated. PML 2 is approximately 1.2 miles from the lake and has not been treated. To date there have been no sightings and no suitable nesting habitat has been observed.

Field Survey: Focused visual surveys were conducted on 4/15/2025 and 4/24/2025 and did not result in the detection of any nests.

Protection Measure: A general nesting bird survey will be conducted by a qualified RPF or biologist familiar with species identification and life history for work being performed from February 1 to September 15 prior to the start of operations during the appropriate survey window. If an active nest is found, a 0.5 mile no work buffer zone will be placed around the nest until the chicks have fledged. Unless the trees pose a hazard to the public or project workers nesting habitat and large prominent snags (especially ponderosa pine) will be retained.

Strix nebulosa - Great Gray Owl

Habitat: Resident of mixed conifer or red fir forest habitat, in or on the edge of meadows. Requires large diameter snags in a forest with high canopy closure. This provides a cool sub-canopy microclimate.

Potential for Occurrence: Does occur. Historic occurrence from 1993 records a nest to the east of the Project. An occupied nest was identified within Project boundary during the 2023 nesting season.

Field survey: During a botanical survey on 4/12/23, an adult great gray owl (GGO) was sighted and a roost/nest tree was located. The roost/nest tree was confirmed on 4/13/23. Surveys during the 2024 season did not detect any GGO's. Surveys for the 2025 season are in progress. As of 6/2/2025 there have been no detections.

Protection Measures: A one half mile no work buffer zone will be placed around the nest tree until chicks have fledged with an additional 15 day monitoring period to ensure that final fledglings are not active on or near the ground. This will be monitored by a qualified RPF and/or a biologist familiar with species identification and life history. Within the buffer zone lower limbs will be left to provide residual habitat characteristics to facilitate fledgling habitat. Due to there being a confirmed active GGO nest within the Project in 2023, any potential GGO nesting habitat within the Project where the species could be impacted shall be surveyed by a qualified RPF or biologist during the survey period, prior to operations, each year that operations may occur within the critical period. It is not possible to properly survey within .25 mile of the Project boundary due to the restraints of private land ownership. Unless the trees pose a hazard to the public or project workers nesting habitat will be retained (large live or dead trees with defects or decaying wood and cavities). Any nest tree shall be retained unless it poses an imminent danger and the removal of the nest tree will not result in a take as determined by CDFW.

Note: Mastication and fuel reduction will increase forage habitat.

Strix occidentalis - California spotted owl

Habitat: Mixed conifer forest, often with an understory of black oaks and other deciduous hardwoods. Canopy closure greater than 40%. Most often found in deep-shaded canyons, on north-facing slopes and within 900 feet of water.

Potential for Occurrence: May occur. A CNDDB search resulted in a recent (2021) activity center near Project as well as 2 sightings of pairs from 1991.

Field Surveys: Field surveys were conducted by a qualified RPF and/or a biologist familiar with species identification and life history on:

4/16/2025: No detections.

4/24/2025: A single, four note hoot was heard during field layout.

4/25/2025: A male CSO responded to calls.

5/8/2025: A male and female verbally responded to calls. The male was observed. No nest was found.

6/5/2025: Visual detection of 2 fledglings roosting in Ponderosa pine tree. No nest found.

6/22/2025 and 7/3/2025: No detections and no nest found.

Follow up surveys are continuing.

Protection Measures: Nesting surveys will occur within the Project footprint prior to operations when operations occur during the nesting period (February 1 to September 15). If active nest(s) are found within or adjacent to the Project footprint a .25 mile no work buffer will be placed around the nest tree until chicks have fledged. Suitable nest trees (i.e., large live or dead trees with defects, decaying wood, or cavities) will not be removed unless they pose a hazard to the public or project workers. The Project will retain nesting habitat (e.g., multistoried or complex structure, high canopy cover, large amounts of coarse woody debris).

Bombus crotchii – Crotch's bumble bee (CBB)

Habitat: Xeric and coastal sites in southern California and the Central Valley. Forages on flowering plants in open grassland and scrub habitats. Once common and widespread, the species has declined precipitously from central California to southern British Columbia. The largest population declines have been documented to be occurring in the center of its historic range, the Central Valley. Factors or threats affecting the ability of bumble bee species to survive and reproduce fall into four main categories: present or threatened modification or destruction of their habitat including agricultural and urban conversion, fire suppression and livestock grazing; competition with other species; disease; and other natural and human-related factors, including pesticide use, genetic factors, and climate change (CDFW, 2019).

According to a CDFW report (California Department of Fish and Wildlife, 2019) CBB construct their nests underground and often rely on sufficient availability of rodent and other animal burrows as well as ground level tufts of grass, rock piles, cavities of dead trees, or man-made structures to provide potential nesting sites. Plant families most commonly visited in California include *Fabaceae, Apocynaceae, Asteraceae, Lamiaceae, Hydrophyllacae, Asclepiadaceae* and *Boraginaceae* (Thorp, Horning and Dunning, 1983) (Vickruck, J. L., & Richards, M. H., 2017).

Pollination ecology that may be found on the Project could include: Apples, Cherries, black berries as well as a large variety of wildflowers (Evans E, Thorp R, Jepsen S, Black SH, 2008).

Visual surveys conducted concurrently with other biological and botanical surveys during the colony active period and during peak bloom for floristic surveys so far have not resulted in any detections of the presence of individuals or of any colonies.

Potential for Occurrence: Not expected to occur; however, potential foraging habitat and nesting sites do occur within the Project Area. Approximately 89% of the Project area is composed of the Ponderosa pine, Blue oak-Foothill pine, Montane Hardwood Conifer and mixed chaparral vegetation types, which do not provide suitable habitat (refer to CWHR table on page 9). Roughly 6% of the Project area is classified as annual grassland, so some suitable habitat does exist. No CBB colonies are formally known within the Project boundary or within a 3-mile radius of the Project, nor is it identified as occurring in Bios within the Groveland quad. It is, however, identified as occurring within the Jawbone

Ridge and Standard quads. CNDDB indicates that this species was last seen in 1927 in the vicinity of Oakland Recreation Camp along the middle fork of the Tuolumne River. While the Project area is located within the historic range of this species, the current range is largely restricted to coastal areas in southern California and the Central Valley.

Potential Project Impact: There is a low potential for impact to this species. Mechanical and manual vegetation removal activities are not expected to disturb nesting or foraging habitat because these activities will occur in forested stands overgrown with brush. This is a habitat that CBB's generally do not forage or nest in. Opening up these stands should provide more habitat for this species to expand if there are any colonies in the general vicinity.

The proposed herbicide application maintenance treatment(s) is expected to have a net positive impact on habitat quality and floral resources by maintaining an open grown stand condition instead of its current overgrown condition.

Prescribed fire treatments are also expected to have a net positive impact on habitat quality and floral resources. This is due to their lower intensity compared to wildfires which will maintain seedbank integrity and promote native plant biodiversity.

In summary, impact to this species in the short term will not be significant with mitigation and the long term effect of the Project on this species is expected to be a net benefit through habitat creation and improvement.

Protection Measures: A qualified biologist and/or RPF will identify suitable habitat for CBB. Potential nesting sites, which include all small mammal burrows, perennial bunch grasses, thatched annual grasses, brush piles, old bird nests, dead trees and hollow logs would need to be documented as part of the assessment.

Once suitable habitat is identified, visual surveys will be conducted during the Colony Active Period (April-August) to detect foraging bees and potential nesting sites. A minimum of three focused visual surveys at 2-4 week intervals will be conducted during the Colony Active Period (April-August) within those areas deemed suitable for habitat. If a nest(s) of CBB are found within the Project area, the nest sites will be protected as stated below.

If a nest is detected the nest site will be protected with a 50 foot buffer from mechanical, herbicide and prescribed burn treatment activities. Manual clearing of vegetation between 10 and 50 feet from the nest site, without disturbing the nest, will be allowed. No activities of any kind will be allowed within 10 feet of the nest. Visual surveys will continue during Project implementation. If ground-disturbing activities will occur during the overwintering period (October through February), consultation with CDFW is warranted to discuss how to implement Project activities and avoid a take. Any detection of CBB prior to or during Project implementation warrants consultation with CDFW to discuss how to avoid take.

If take cannot be avoided, CDFW recommends acquiring a State Incidental Take Permit pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081(b), prior to initiating ground disturbing activities.

Any herbicide application(s) will be conducted as a targeted foliar spot treatment utilizing a backpack sprayer. Herbicides shall not be applied to flowering native plants within occupied or suitable habitat

during the flight season (March through September). The targeted species shall be limited to currently resprouting species such as live oak, black oak, manzanita, toyon and ceanothus.

Prescribed burning within occupied or suitable habitat for CBB where feasible shall occur from October through February to avoid the flight season.

Treatment areas in occupied or suitable habitat will be divided into a sufficient number of treatment units to the extent feasible such that the entirety of the habitat is not treated within the same year. The objective of this measure is to provide refuge for CBB during treatment activities and temporary retention of suitable floral resources proximate to the treatment area.

Treatments shall be conducted in a patchy pattern to the extent feasible, in occupied or suitable habitat, such that all of the habitat is not removed, sprayed or burned and untreated portions of occupied or suitable habitat are retained.

Corynorhinus townsendii - Townsend's big-eared bat

Habitat: Found throughout California in a wide variety of habitats. Most common in mesic sites. Roosts in the open, hanging from walls and ceilings. Extremely sensitive to human disturbance.

Potential for Occurrence: Not expected to occur. Found within 3 mile radius, last sighting was in 1997 at the "Ellen Winton Mine" The Ellen Winton Mine is located on the south bank of the Tuolumne River just east of Big Humbug Creek. (Ellen Winton mine. Western Mining History. n.d.). None formally known within Project boundary. Occupied dwellings in the south of the Project did not exhibit the potential for roosting sites. General biological surveys were completed on the Project by a qualified RPF and/or a biologist familiar with species identification and life history. No roosting habitat or presence of the species was identified.

Protection Measures: Project activities are not expected to impact this species and no active mitigations are proposed. If the species is discovered within the Project area a 100 foot no work buffer zone will be placed around the roosting site.

Emys marmorata - Western pond turtle

Habitat: Aquatic turtle of ponds, marshes, rivers, streams and irrigation ditches, usually with aquatic vegetation, below 6000 feet in elevation. Needs basking sites and suitable (sandy banks or grassy open fields) upland habitat up to 0.3 miles from water for egg-laying.

Potential for Occurrence: May occur. There is one occurrence within a 3 mile radius in Big Creek about 0.7 miles NE of highway 120 at Sprague Road and 3.7 miles SE of Groveland, vicinity of Stanislaus National Forest. Focused visual surveys were completed on the Project by a qualified RPF and/or a biologist familiar with species identification and life history. No presence of this species was identified at the time of the survey.

Protection Measures: If operations are planned to occur during the nesting period, visual surveys will be conducted each year of operations where nest sites could be impacted, prior to commencing activities in potential nesting habitat. If populations or individuals are detected a 50 foot no work buffer zone will

be placed around the WPT suitable habitat.

Clarkia australis - Small's southern clarkia

Habitat: Found within chapparal and cismontane woodlands and lower montane coniferous forests.

Potential for Occurrence: May occur. Not mapped within 3 miles of Project boundary. Botanical surveys are currently being conducted on the Project during the floristic period by a qualified RPF and/or a botanist familiar with species identification and life history. There have been no detections as of 6/2/2025. Other varieties of clarkia were found within the Project footprint (*Clarkia purpurea, Clarkia dudleyana* and *Clarkia virgata).*

Protection Measures: If populations or individuals are detected, a 50 foot no work buffer will be flagged for phases I-II and a temporary fence will be erected at the 50 foot buffer if herbivory is used during phase III of the Project.

Clarkia biloba ssp. Australis - Mariposa Clarkia

Habitat: Found on serpentine substrates within chapparal and cismontane woodlands. Several sites occur in the foothill woodland/riparian ecotone. 1300-1600 feet.

Potential for Occurrence: May occur. Bios indicates a location inside of the Project boundary. Occurrence Detail states the exact location is unknown. Mapped by Cal Flora within the Project area near Long Gulch. Mapped by CNDDB around Long Gulch, east of McKinley Way, based on 1995 Michael Brandman Associates Coordinates (accuracy of coordinates unknown), in the NE ¼ of section 24. The only source of information for this site is a 1995 Michael Bradman Associates collection. Botanical surveys are currently being conducted on the Project during the floristic period by a qualified RPF and/or a botanist familiar with species identification and life history.

A population was located on 7/3/2025 within the previously treated area along Long Gulch near the crossing. The population is located within the WLPZ and shall not be affected.

Protection Measures: If populations or individuals are detected, a 50 foot no work buffer will be flagged for phases I-II and a temporary fence will be erected at the 50 foot buffer if herbivory is used during phase III of the Project.

Diplacus pulchellus - yellow-lip pansy monkeyflower

Habitat: Vernally wet sites. Lower montane coniferous forests, meadows and seeps. Soil can be clay, volcanic or granitic; 2200-6400 feet.

Potential for Occurrence: May occur. There are multiple occurrences within 3 miles of the One site is 0.5 mile east of Pine Mountain Lake Airport near Indian Creek and North of highway 120 between Smith Station and Buck Meadows Forest Service Station. Botanical surveys are currently being conducted on the Project during the floristic period by a qualified RPF and/or a botanist familiar with species identification and life history. There have been no detections as of 6/2/2025.

Protection Measures: If populations or individuals are detected, a 50 foot no work buffer will be flagged for phases I-II and a temporary fence will be erected at the 50 foot buffer if herbivory is used during phase III of the Project.

Erythranthe filicaulis - slender-stemmed monkey flower

Habitat: Cismontane woodland, lower montane coniferous forest, meadows and seeps, and upper montane coniferous forest. Within the transition zone of the Sierra Nevada; moist granitic sand and meadow edges; vernally mesic sites. 2000-5500 feet.

Potential for Occurrence: May occur. There are multiple occurrences within 3 miles of the Project area. One is .1 miles north of Highway 120 at a point 0.3-0.4 miles NNW from Smith Station Road. Another is East of Pine Mountain Lake Airport, about 0.7 mile east of springs at the head of Big Humbug Creek. The third is North of Highway 120 between Smith Station and Buck Meadows US Forest Service Station. The fourth is North of the Hetch Hetchy aqueduct, north of Kassabaum Meadow, east of Groveland. Botanical surveys are currently being conducted on the Project during the floristic period by a qualified RPF and/or a botanist familiar with species identification and life history. There have been no detections as of 6/2/2025.

Avoidance measures: If populations or individuals are detected, a 50 foot no work buffer will be flagged for phases I-III and a temporary fence will be erected at the 50 foot buffer if herbivory is used during phase IV of the Project.

Erythronium tuolumnense - Tuolumne fawn lily

Habitat- Broad-leafed upland forest, chaparral, cismontane woodland, lower montane coniferous forest. Often on clay soils, on cliffs and near drainages. 1590-4610 feet.

Potential for Occurrence: There is one occurrence located along Grapevine Creek east of Sugarloaf and about 1.5 air miles south of Round Meadow. This occurrence is less than 1 mile from the Project boundary. Botanical surveys are currently being conducted on the Project during the floristic period by a qualified RPF and/or a botanist familiar with species identification and life history. There have been no detections as of 6/2/2025.

Protection Measures: If populations or individuals are detected, a 50 foot no work buffer will be flagged for phases I-II and a temporary fence will be erected at the 50 foot buffer if herbivory is used during phase III of the Project.

Citations:

Vickruck, J. L., & Richards, M. H. (2017). Nesting habits influence population genetic structure of a bee living in anthropogenic disturbance. https://doi.org/10.1111/mec.14064

Thorp, Horning and Dunning (1983) Bumble bees and cuckoo bumble bees of California (Hymenoptera, Apidae). https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:82933450

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (2019). Evaluation of the petition from the Xerces Society, Defenders of Wildlife, and the Center for Food Safety to list four species of bumble bee as endangered under the California endangered species act. https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=166804&inline

Evans E, Thorp R, Jepsen S, Black SH. (2008) Status review of three formerly common species of bumble bee in the subgenus Bombus. Xerces Society. https://www.xerces.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/xerces_2008_bombus_status_review.pdf

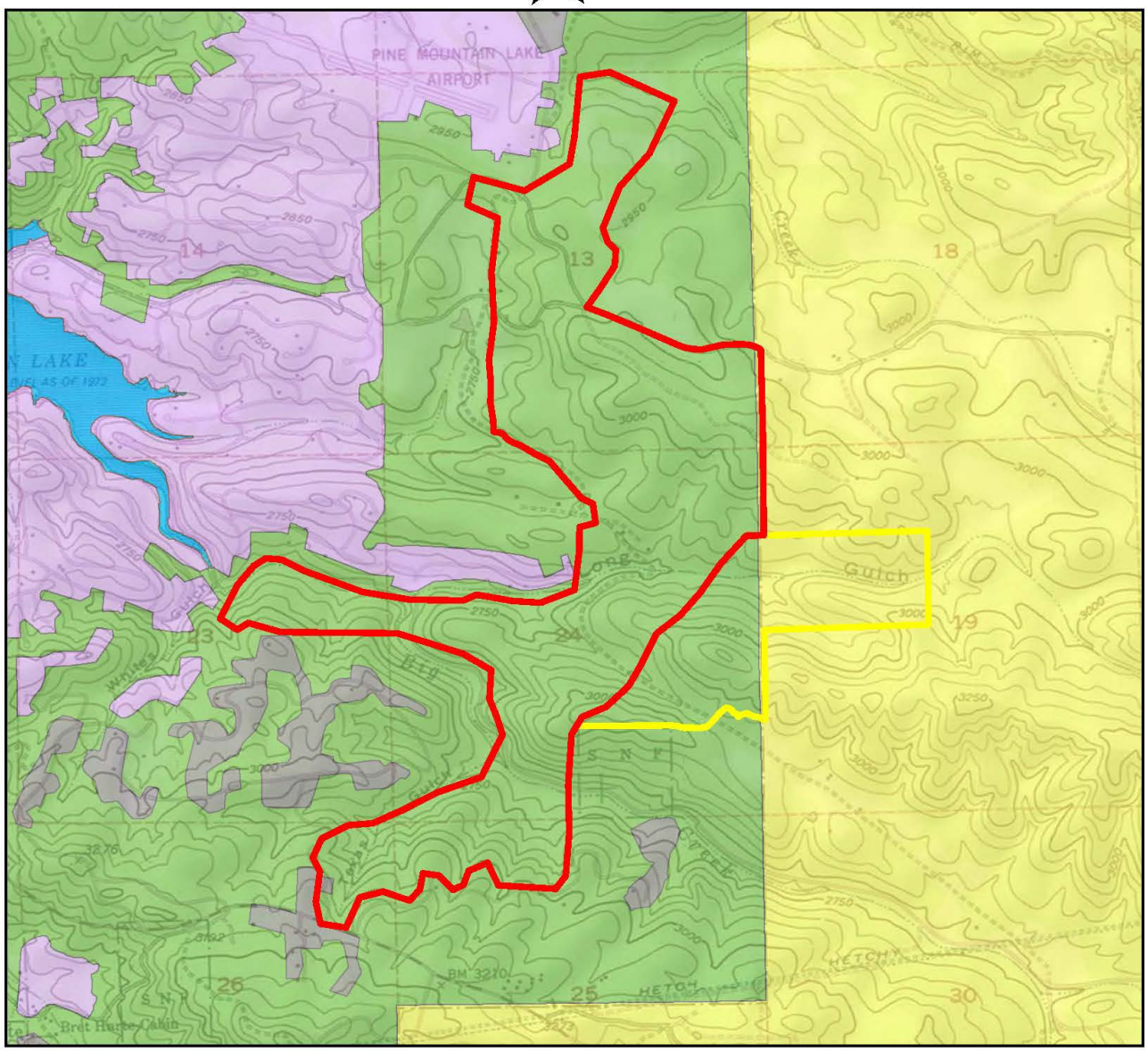
Ellen Winton mine. Western Mining History. (n.d.). https://westernmininghistory.com/mine-detail/10262786/

APPENDIX C – MAPS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

California Important Farmland Map

Project: Pine Mtn. Lake Fuels Reduction Project
Legal: T1S, R16E, Sec 13, 23, 24, 25 & 26. T1S, R17E, Sec 19, MDBM
USGS Quad: Groveland 1:24000

N



Legend

- PML I Project Boundary
- PML II Project Boundary

California Important Farmland

- Urban Areas
- Grazing Land
- Water
- Other Land
- Area not Mapped

Scale = 1:48000
1" = 4000'

General Plan Zoning Map

Project: Pine Mtn. Lake Fuels Reduction Project
Legal: T1S, R16E, Sec 13, 23, 24, 25 & 26. T1S, R17E, Sec 19, MDBM
USGS Quad: Groveland 1:24000

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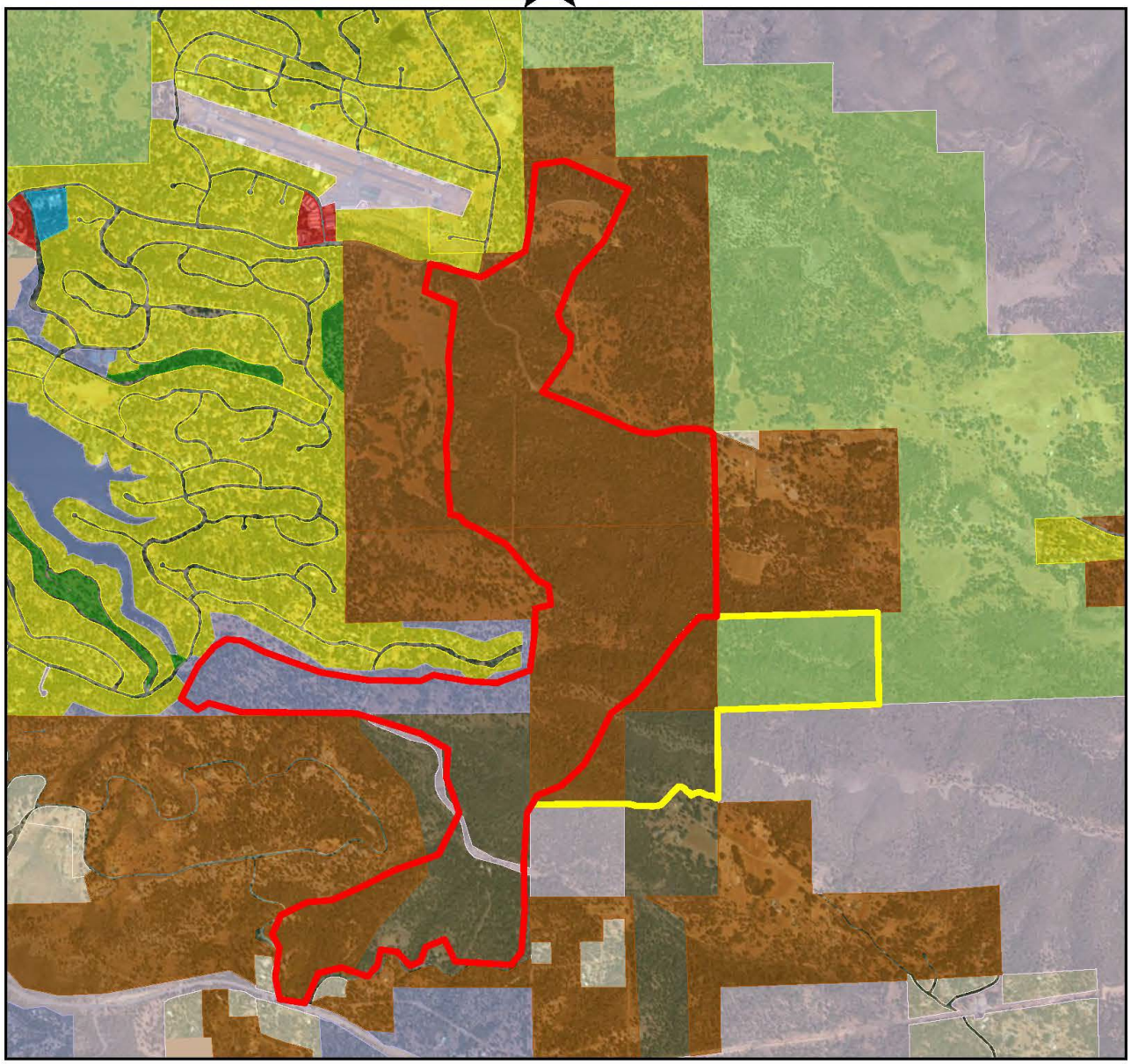

Legend

PML I Project Boundary
PML II Project Boundary

General Plan Zoning
AG - Agricultural
ER - Estate Residential
GC - General Commercial
HR - Homestead Residential
LDR - Low Density Residential
LI - Light Industrial
LR - Large Lot Residential
O - Open Space
P - Public
R/P - Parks and Recreation
RR - Rural Residential

Scale = 1:24000
1" = 2000'

Tuolumne County Parcels with Zoning

Project: Pine Mtn. Lake Fuels Reduction Project
Legal: T1S, R16E, Sec 13, 23, 24, 25 & 26. T1S, R17E, Sec 19, MDBM
USGS Quad: Groveland 1:24000

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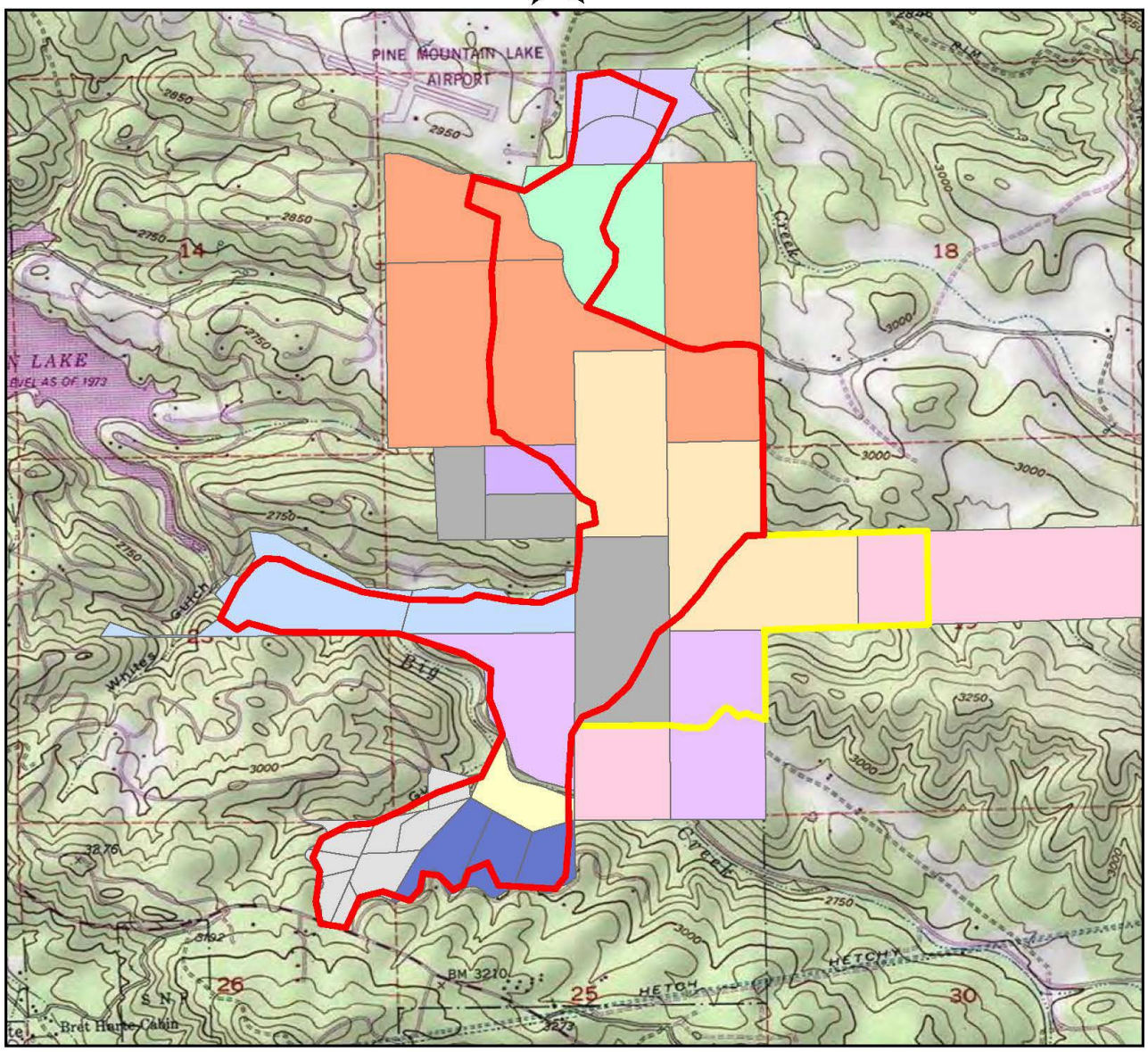

Legend

- PML I Project Boundary
- PML II Project Boundary

ZONING

- A-10:AIR
- A-20
- A-20 & A-20:AIR
- A-20 & A-20:MX:PD & A-20:MX:PD:AIR
- A-20:AIR
- AE-37:AIR
- AE-37 & AE-37:AIR
- AE-37:AIR & A-20:AIR
- K:MX:AIR
- RE-5
- RE-5 & O:AIR
- RE-5:AIR & O:AIR

Scale = 1:24000
1" = 2000'

Airport Land Use Zoning Map

Project: Pine Mtn. Lake Fuels Reduction Project
Legal: T1S, R16E, Sec 13, 23, 24, 25 & 26. T1S, R17E, Sec 19, MDBM
USGS Quad: Groveland 1:24000

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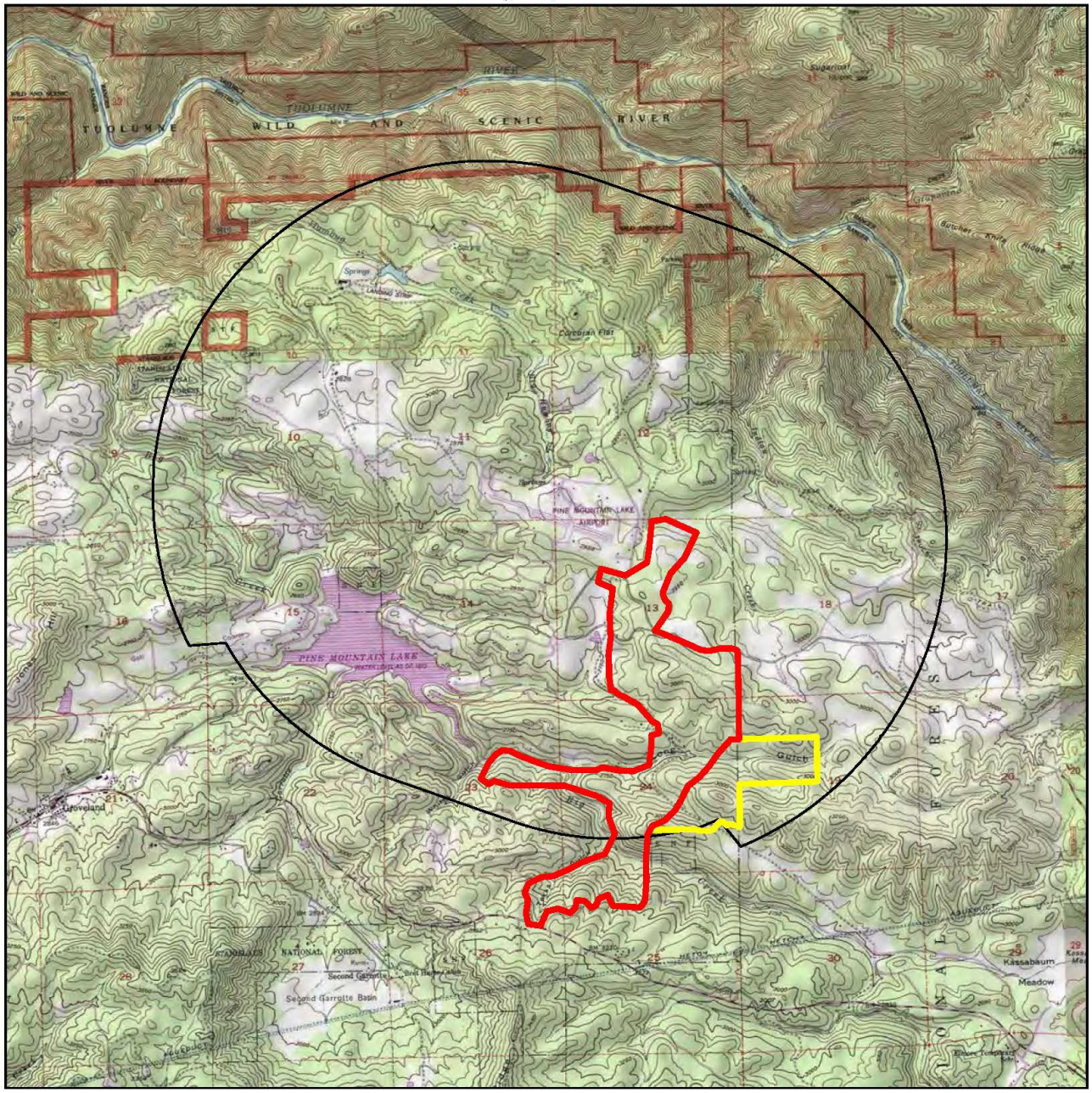

Legend

- PML I Project Boundary
- PML II Project Boundary
- Airport Land Use Zoning

Scale = 1:48000
1" = 4000'

Wildlife Habitat Relationships Map

Project: Pine Mtn. Lake Fuels Reduction Project
Legal: T1S, R16E, Sec 13, 23, 24, 25 & 26. T1S, R17E, Sec 19, MDBM
USGS Quad: Groveland 1:24000

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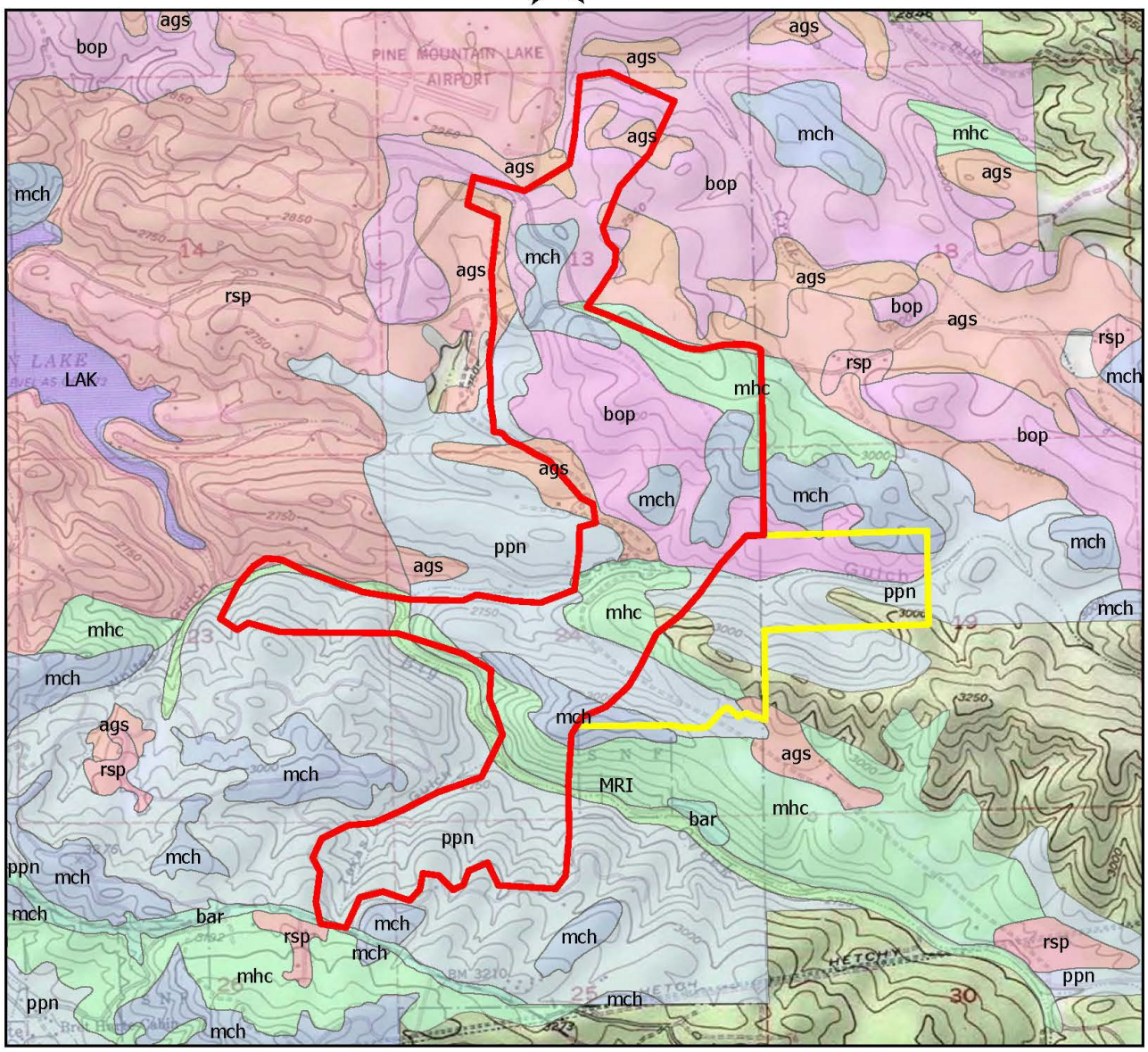


Legend

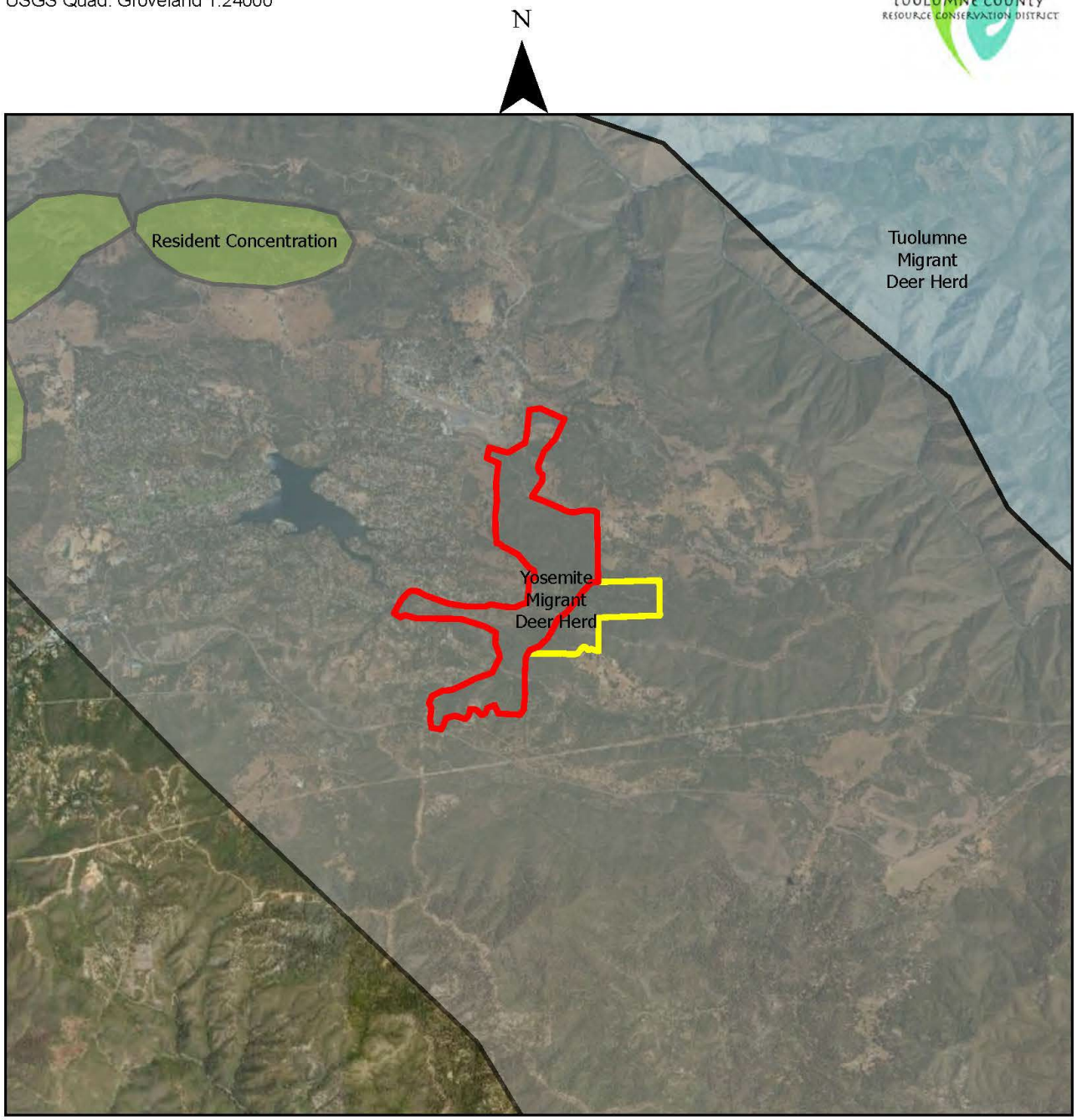
PML I Project Boundary
PML II Project Boundary

HABITAT
- LAK: Lake
- MRI: Montane Riparian Woodland
- ags: Annual Grassland
- bar: Barren
- bop: Blue oak-Foothill Pine
- mch: Mixed Chaparral
- mhc: Montane Hardwood Conifer
- ppn: Ponderosa Pine
- rsp: Residential Park

Scale = 1:24000
1" = 2000'

Deer Herd Map

Project: Pine Mtn. Lake Fuels Reduction Project
Legal: T1S, R16E, Sec 13, 23, 24, 25 & 26. T1S, R17E, Sec 19, MDBM
USGS Quad: Groveland 1:24000



Legend

PML I Project Boundary
PML II Project Boundary

Deer Herds Type

Resident Concentration
Tuolumne Migrant Deer Herd
Yosemite Migrant Deer Herd

Scale = 1:60000
1" = 5000'

Landslide Susceptibility Map

Project: Pine Mtn Lake Fuels Reduction Project
Legal: T1S, R16E, Portions of Sections 13, 23, 24 25 & 26
T1S, R17E, Portions of Section 19, MDBM
USGS Quad: Groveland 1:24000

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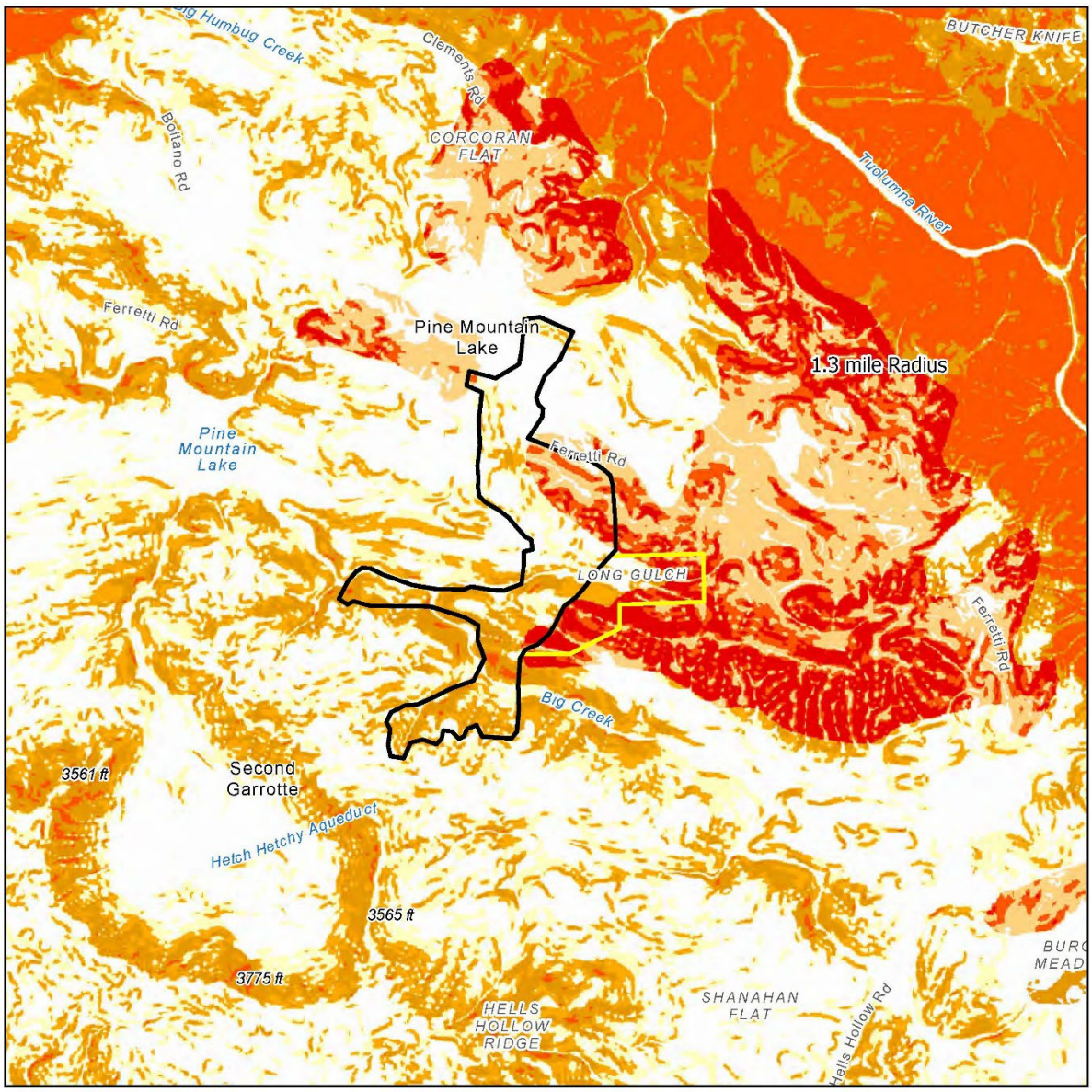


Legend

PML I Project Boundary
PML II Project Boundary

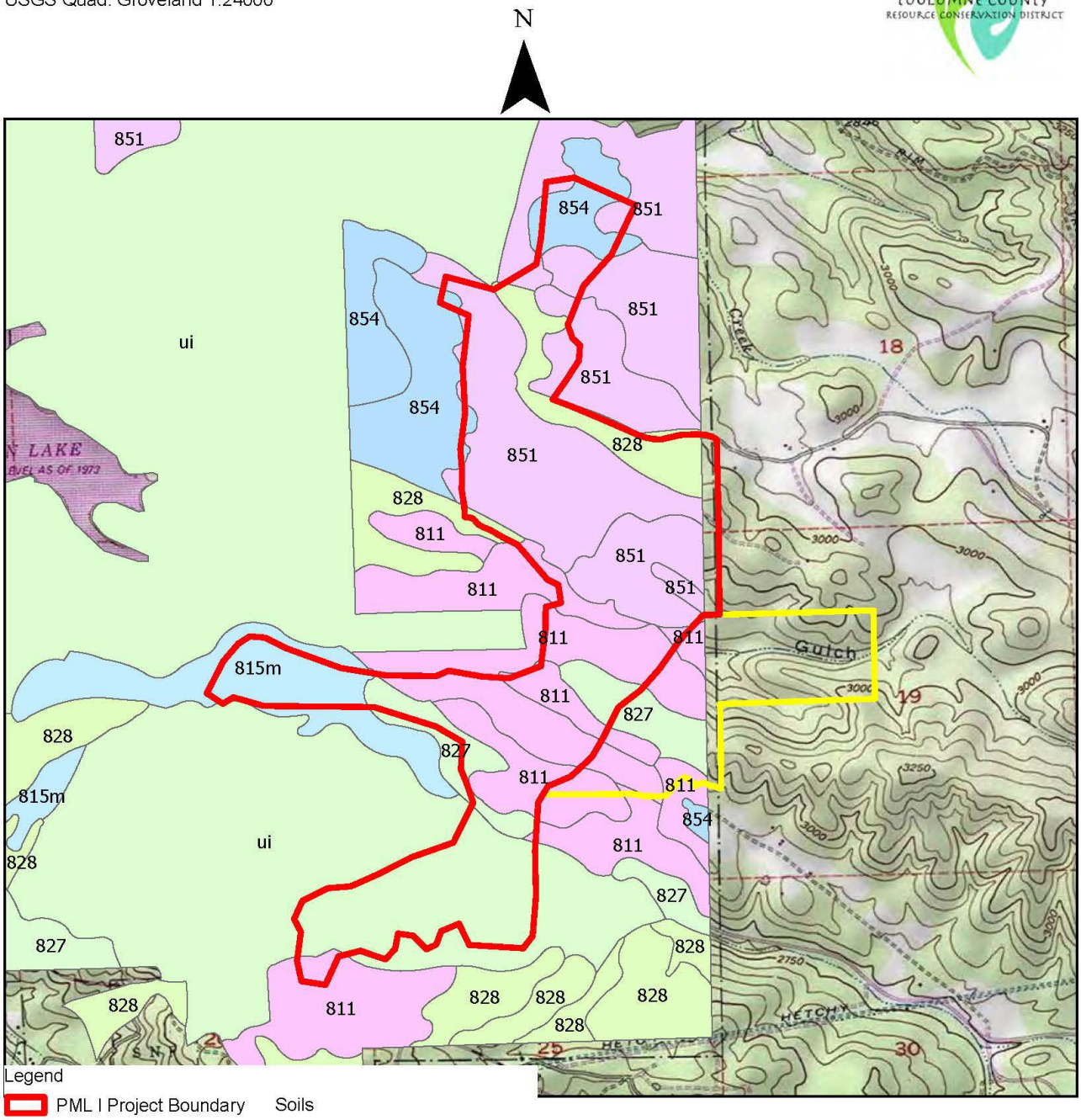
Landslide Susceptiblity Classes

Class
0
III
V
VI
VII
VIII
IX
X

Scale = 1:48000
1" = 4000'

Tuolumne County Soils Map

Project: Pine Mtn. Lake Fuels Reduction Project
Legal: T1S, R16E, Sec 13, 23, 24, 25 & 26. T1S, R17E, Sec 19, MDBM
USGS Quad: Groveland 1:24000



Legend

PML I Project Boundary
PML II Project Boundary

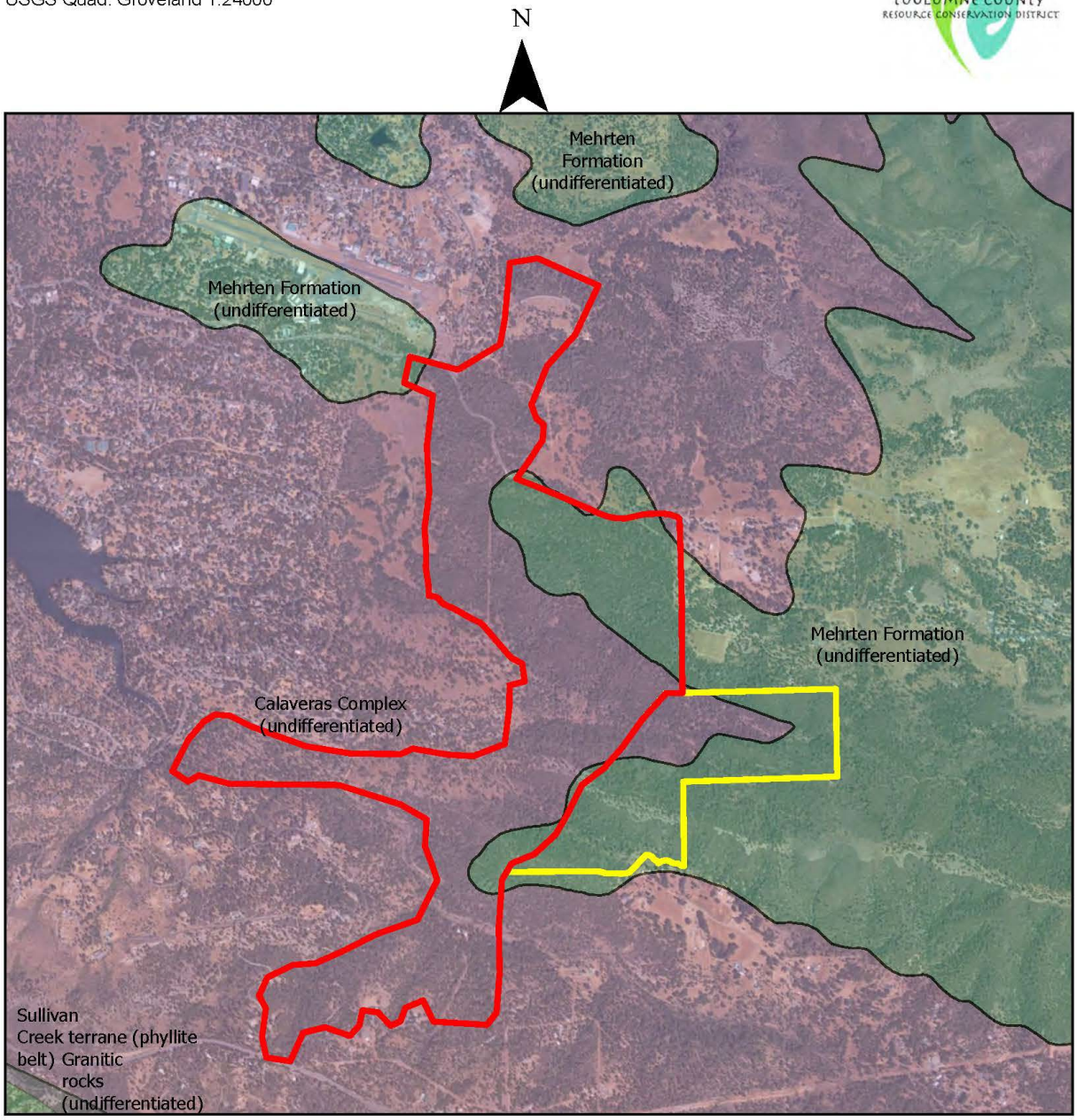
Soils
SOIL_SERIE

- 811 - Marpa
- 815m - Josephine (schist)
- 827 - Mariposa
- 828 - Bandarita
- 851 - Coarsegold
- 854 - Secata
- ui - Unidentified

Scale = 1:24000
1" = 2000'

Geologic Units Map

Project: Pine Mtn. Lake Fuels Reduction Project
Legal: T1S, R16E, Sec 13, 23, 24, 25 & 26. T1S, R17E, Sec 19, MDBM
USGS Quad: Groveland 1:24000



Legend

PML I Project Boundary
PML II Project Boundary

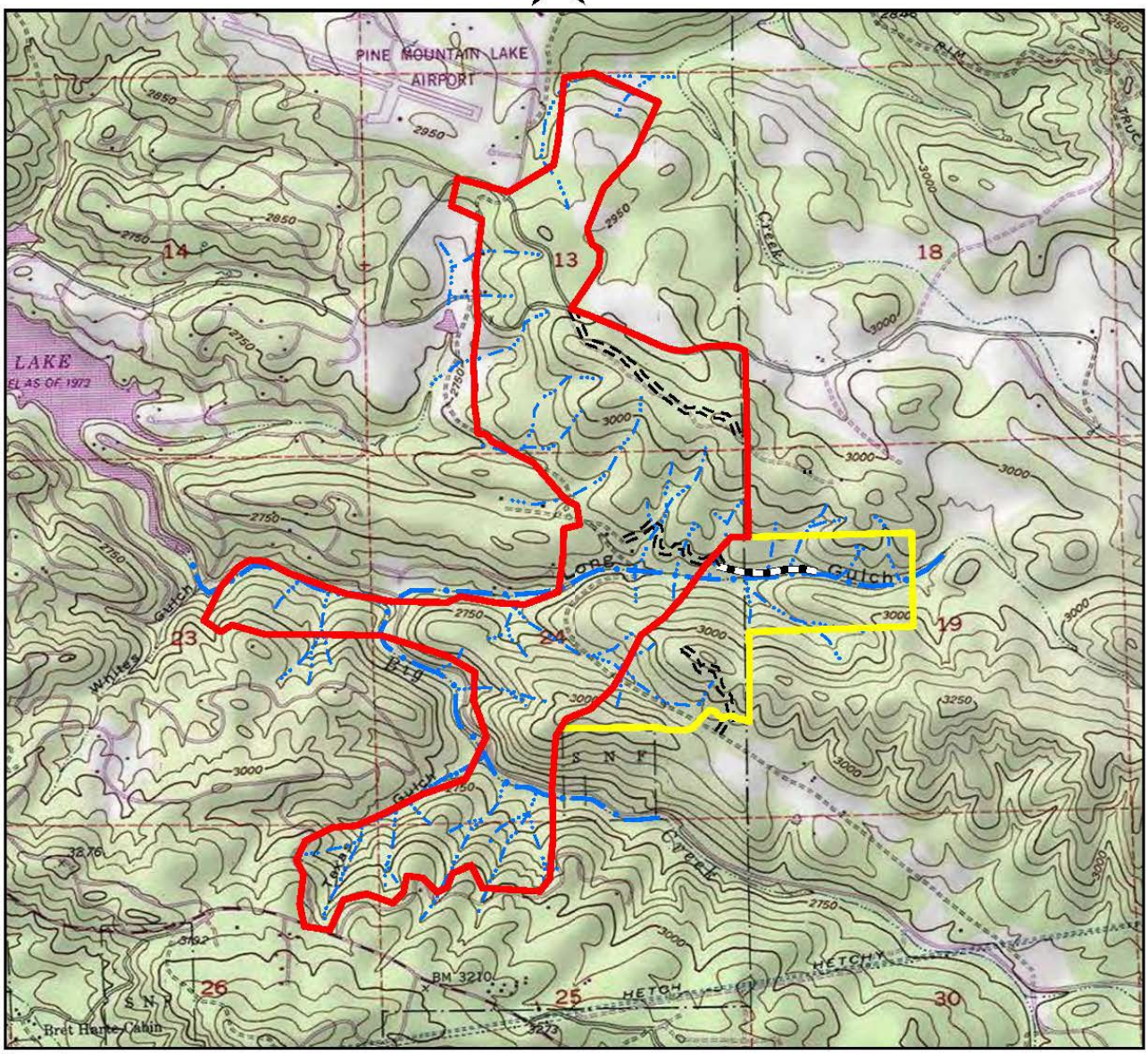
Geologic Units
NAME
Calaveras Complex (undifferentiated)
Granitic rocks (undifferentiated)
Mehrten Formation (undifferentiated)
Sullivan Creek terrane (phyllite belt)

Scale = 1:24000
1" = 2000'

Roads and Watercourses Map

Project: Pine Mtn. Lake Fuels Reduction Project
Legal: T1S, R16E, Sec 13, 23, 24, 25 & 26. T1S, R17E, Sec 19, MDBM
USGS Quad: Groveland 1:24000

N



Legend

PML I Project Boundary
PML II Project Boundary

Roads
Dirt/Gravel Road
WLPZ Road

Watercourses
Class I
Class II
Class III

Scale = 1:24000
1" = 2000'

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Worksheet

Transportation Vehicles	Year 1			Years 2 - 5		
	Number of Trips	Miles Roundtrip	Total	Number of Trips per Year	Total	Total Miles
Staff Vehicle - Gas	10	80	800	2	640	1440
Other Vehicle - Gas			0		0	0
Other Vehicle - Gas			0		0	0
Staff Vehicle - Diesel			0		0	0
Dozer Transport - Diesel	3	80	240	1	320	560
Crew Vehicle - Diesel	660	80	52800	2	640	53440
Stake Side Truck - Diesel			0		0	0
Fire Engine - Diesel	4	60	240	2	480	720
Other Vehicle - Diesel			0		0	0
Other Vehicle - Diesel			0		0	0

Construction Equipment	Year 1			Years 2 - 5		
	Number of Days	Hours Per Day	Total Hours	Number of Days Per Year	Total	Total Hours
Dozer/Loader/Grader	330	10	3300		0	3300
Misc. Equipment - Diesel			0		0	0
Misc. Equipment - Gas			0		0	0
Chainsaw /Weedeater/ Etc.	150	10	1500		0	1500
Misc. Handheld Gas			0		0	0

Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Worksheet			
Transportation Vehicles	**MILES**	**MPG**	**GAL. OF FUEL**
Staff Vehicle - Gas	1,440	15	96
Other Vehicle Gas	0	10	0
Other Vehicle Gas	0	10	0
Staff vehicle - Diesel	0	15	0
Dozer Transport - Diesel	560	10	56
Crew Vehicle - Diesel	53,440	10	5,344.00
Stake Side Trk. - Diesel	0	10	0
Engine FTH- Diesel	720	10	72
Other Vehicle Diesel	0	10	0
Other Vehicle Diesel	0	10	0
Construction Equipment	**HOURS**	**GPH**	**GAL. OF FUEL**
Dozer/Loader/Grader - Diesel	3,300.00	8	26,400.00
Misc. Equipment - Diesel	0	10	0
Misc. Equipment - Gas	0	1.5	0
Chainsaw /Weedeater/ Ect.	1,500.00	3	4,500.00
Misc. Handheld Gas	140	2	280
	TOTALS	**CF**	**KILOGRAMS**
Total Gasoline Consumption	4,876.00	8.18	39,885.68
Total Diesel Consumption	31,872.00	10.15	323,500.80
Total Metric Tons CO2e - Gas	39.89		
Total Metric Tons CO2e - Diesel	323.5		
Total Metric Tons CO2e	**363.39**		

APPENDIX D – WATERCOURSE PROTECTION STANDARDS

Hydrological areas may be assigned an EEZ or an ELZ as determined by the RPF to protect the beneficial uses of water and riparian functions.

- Equipment Exclusion Zones (EEZ): Prohibits equipment from entering into the EEZ except where there is an established road, crossing or skid trail. No vegetation shall be treated by heavy equipment while in the EEZ. Equipment operators may reach-in and treat vegetation within the buffer as long as the tracks remain outside of the EEZ.
- Mechanical or manual treatment within a watercourse EEZ shall be limited to all brush and trees less than 6" DBH. Riparian species of any size (alder, willow, etc) shall be retained.
- Equipment Limitation Zone (ELZ): Limits equipment from entering into the ELZ except where noted in Class III protection measures listed below.
- Watercourse designation shall be indicated on a map, located in **Appendix C**. Contractor will be given a copy of the map and be made aware of the protection measure prior to the start of operations.
- All areas below the stream and lake transition line will be kept free of slash and debris.
- Accidental deposits of material in the watercourse, bed bank or channel shall be immediately removed.
- Watercourses shall be classified into one of the following categories or "classes":
    - **Class I**: Domestic Supplies, including springs, onsite and/or within 100 feet downstream of the operations area and/or fish always or seasonally present onsite, including habitat to sustain fish migration and spawning.
    - **Class II:** Fish always or seasonally present offsite within 1000 feet down stream and/or aquatic habitat form non-fish aquatic species.
    - **Class III:** No aquatic life present, watercourse showing evidence of being capable of sediment transport to Class I and II waters under normal high water flow conditions.
    - **Class IV:** Man-made watercourses, usually downstream, established domestic, agricultural, hydroelectric, supply or other beneficial use.

Watercourses shall have the following protection measures by classification:

- **Class I:** 100 foot EEZ measured from the edge of the visible flood channel.
- **Class II:** 50 foot EEZ measured from the edge of the visible flood channel.
- **Class III:** 15 foot ELZ measured from the centerline of the watercourse. Equipment may make crossings perpendicularly to the watercourse which are dry at the time of operations but may not track up and down within the ELZ. Crossings should be limited to as few as possible.
- **Class IV:** 15 Foot EEZ on the uphill side of the watercourse measured from the top of the cut bank and a ELZ on the downhill side of the watercourse starting at the tow of the fill slope. Operators my "reach-in" and masticate vegetation on the downhill fill slope as long as soil disturbance is limited.

Watercourse Designation:

- **Class I:** Shall be flagged in solid blue flagging at the edge of the EEZ
- **Class II:** Shall be flagging in solid blue flagging at the edge of the EEZ

- **Class III:** Shall be centerline flagged in blue and white candy-striped flagging.
- **Class IV:** Shall be flagged at the edge of the EEZ on the uphill side in solid blue flagging, the downhill side/toe of the slope will not be flagged.

A watercourse crossing of Long Gulch, a Class I watercourse, is required to provide equipment access to the southern portion of the Project area. The proposed crossing is existing, shallow, flat and will not require any of the activities which would normally trigger an LSA. Using this crossing will not:

- Divert or obstruct the natural flow of any river, stream or lake.
- Change the bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream or lake.
- Use material from any river, stream or lake.
- Deposit or dispose of material into any river, stream or lake.

The watercourse at this location normally dries up during the summertime. The crossing shall only be used under dry conditions.

There is also approximately 1400 feet of road within the WLPZ upstream of the crossing mentioned above which will facilitate access to the Project.

Upon completion of operations or before the winter period (November 15th -April 1st), whichever occurs first, the area(s) encroached upon within the WLPZ shall be straw mulched to a depth of 2 inches at the time of application and 90% coverage.