

Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044
County Clerk / County of Butte
155 Nelson Ave
Oroville, CA 95965-3411

From: (Public Agency) Butte County Resource Conservation District
150 Chuck Yeager Way, Ste A
Oroville, CA 95965

Project Title: SFLAP (Small Forest Landowner Assistance Program): Feather Falls 2024

Project Applicant: Butte County Resource Conservation District

Project Location - Specific: The project's 20 units comprise a total of 170 acres across the Berry Creek, Oroville Dam and Forbestown USGS quadrangles, including parts of T20N, ROSE sections 21, 25, and 36; T20N, R06E sections 14, 29, and 31; and T21N ROSE sections 28, and 34.

Project Location - City: Feather Falls (95966)

Project Location - County: Butte

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The project area experienced 90-100% mortality during the 2020 North Complex Fire emergency. The purpose of the project is to manage vegetation and reduce hazards so the small forest landowners can safely rebuild, maintain ingress-egress routes, utilize their land, and reduce the likelihood of a future disaster. To achieve this, standing dead trees and brush would be removed, using manual and mechanical means, logs would be decked using e.g. feller-bunchers, and excess woody biomass would be scattered, removed, burned on site, and/or (where safe) piled for wildlife habitat, as dictated by fuels levels on each unit. Pile-burns or underburns may be conducted on some properties. Where natural regeneration is not sufficient, native conifers and hardwoods would be re-planted. Herbicide may be sprayed, in accordance with label directions, on invasive species. The direct beneficiaries of the project are the forestlands' owners and their immediate families and neighbors. The project would also benefit mid-seral-forest-dependent wildlife.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Butte County Resource Conservation District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Butte County Resource Conservation District

Exempt Status:

☐ Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);

☐ Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));

☒ Categorical Exemption (Sec. 20184; 15300-15322); Minor alterations to land (§15304)

☐ Statutory exemption: 14 CCR 15269 (emergency projects);

Reasons why project is exempt: This project is exempt because the project consists of minor alterations to vegetation. The project involves shallow ground disturbance due to equipment that will shred or remove hazardous vegetation; accordingly, full cultural resources studies with avoidance measures for all located resources are an integrated feature of the project. The project buffers riparian and wetland zones and involves no channel disturbance, excluding some rare and incidental addition of coarse woody debris to streams (in cases where fire-weakened hazard trees collapse into streams). Work will occur outside of nesting season (Feb 1-August 15), unless pre-implementation surveys are completed. Archaeological and botanical surveys were completed and this project will cause less than significant impact. Project implementation, as designed, would have less than significant impact in each resource area, and an exemption pursuant to § 15304 is indicated.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Thad Walker, District Manager

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 693-3173

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.

☒ Yes ☐ No

2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project:

Signature: <u>David E. Lee</u>	Date: <u>8/15/24</u>	Title: <u>Chairman, Board of Directors</u>
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Signed by Lead Agency

☐

Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.

Date received for filing at OPR: ____

Reference: Sections 21108, 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.



State of California - Department of Fish and Wildlife

2024 ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT FILING FEE

CASH RECEIPT

DFW 753.5a (REV. 01/01/24) Previously DFG 753.5a

RECEIPT NUMBER:

04-08152024-065

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NUMBER *(If applicable)*

SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON REVERSE. TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY.

LEAD AGENCY	LEAD AGENCY EMAIL	DATE
BUTTE COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION		08/15/2024
COUNTY/STATE AGENCY OF FILING		DOCUMENT NUMBER
BUTTE		157
PROJECT TITLE		

SFLAP (SMALL FORST LANDOWNER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM)

PROJECT APPLICANT NAME	PROJECT APPLICANT EMAIL	PHONE NUMBER
BUTTE COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION		(530) 693-3173
PROJECT APPLICANT ADDRESS	CITY	STATE
150 CHUCK YEAGER WAY SUITE A	OROVILLE	CA
		ZIP CODE
		95965

PROJECT APPLICANT *(Check appropriate box)*

☒ Local Public Agency ☐ School District ☐ Other Special District ☐ State Agency ☐ Private Entity

CHECK APPLICABLE FEES:

<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Impact Report (EIR)	\$4,051.25	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Mitigated/Negative Declaration (MND)(ND)	\$2,916.75	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Certified Regulatory Program (CRP) document - payment due directly to CDFW	\$1,377.25	\$ _____

☒ Exempt from fee

☒ Notice of Exemption (attach)

☐ CDFW No Effect Determination (attach)

☐ Fee previously paid (attach previously issued cash receipt copy)

<input type="checkbox"/> Water Right Application or Petition Fee (State Water Resources Control Board only)	\$850.00	\$ _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> County documentary handling fee	\$50.00	\$ _____ \$50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Other		\$ _____

PAYMENT METHOD:

☐ Cash ☐ Credit ☐ Check ☒ Other **TOTAL RECEIVED** \$ _____ \$50.00

SIGNATURE	AGENCY OF FILING PRINTED NAME AND TITLE
X	Wendy Schroeder, Deputy County Clerk-Recorder

DECLARATION OF FEES DUE

(California Fish and Wildlife Code Section 711.4)

FOR CLERK USE ONLY

NAME AND ADDRESS OF LEAD AGENCY/APPLICANT

Butte County Resource Conservation District
1500 C. Harvey - Winton, CA
Croy, CA, 95959

Project Title: FLAP (State Fish and Wildlife Code Section 711.4) Pre-3r-G(v'i): fe.,}er Fa)/5 2etli.J
FILING NO.

CLASSIFICATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT:

1. NOTICE OF EXEMPTION/STATEMENT OF EXEMPTION

☒ A Statutorily or Categorically Exempt

\$50.00 (Fifty Dollars) Butte County Clerk's Fee

2. NOTICE OF DETERMINATION - FEE REQUIRED

☐ A Negative Declaration

\$2,406.75 (Two Thousand Four Hundred and Six Dollars and Seventy-Five Cents) State Filing Fee

\$50.00 (Fifty Dollars) Butte County Clerk's Fee

B. Environmental Impact Report

\$3,343.25 (Three Thousand Three Hundred and Forty-Three Dollars and Twenty-Five Cents) State Filing Fee

\$50.00 (Fifty Dollars) Butte County Clerk's Fee

3. OTHER (Specify) General Rule Exemption

☐ \$50.00 (Fifty Dollars) Butte County Clerk's Fee

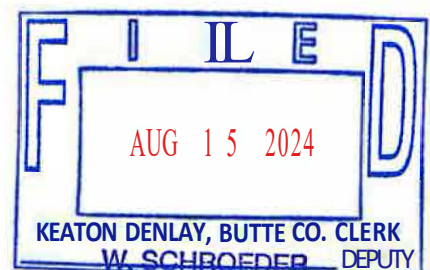
This form must be completed and submitted with all environmental documents filed with the Butte County Clerk's Office.

All applicable fees must be paid at the time of filing any environmental documents with the Butte County Clerk's Office.

One original and two (2) copies of all necessary documents are required for filing purposes.

The \$50.00 (Fifty Dollars) handling fee is required per filing in addition to the filing fee specified in Fish and Game Code Section 711.4 (d).

Make checks payable to Butte County Clerk-Recorder.



Butte County

Keaton Denlay, County Clerk-Recoi::dec
155 Nelson Avenue

Oroville, CA 95965
(530) 552-3400, Option 2

Receipt: 24-2406B

Product	Name	Extended
CEQA	CEQA FISH AND WILDLIFE	\$50.00
# Pages		1
Document #		04-08152024-065
Document Info:	BUTTE COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT	
Filing Type		NOE
State Fee Prev		false
Charged		
No Charge		false
clerk Fee		
Total		\$50.00
Tender (Credit Card (VitalCheck))		\$50.00
Paid By	BUTTE COUNTY P.E.S.O.U.P.C CONSERVATION DISTRICT	
Approval code	1234	

Thank You

B/15/24 11:55 AM PST wschroeder

Butte County Resource Conservation District
SFLAP (Small Forest Landowner Assistance Program): Feather Falls 2024

Author:	Rhianna Dutra
Title:	Planning Manager, Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve
Address:	35 Main Street STE 103, Chico, CA 95928
Phone:	(530) 258-9222
Email:	ridutra@csuchico.edu

Project Name: SFLAP: Feather Falls 2024

County: Butte

Acres: 170

Legal Location: T20N, R05E sections 21, 25, and 36; T20N, R06E sections 14, 29, and 31; and T21N R05E sections 28, and 34.

Name of USGS 7.5' Quad Map(s): Berry Creek, Oroville Dam, and Forbestown

Elevation: 1,000' - 3,000'

Attachments:

- ☒ Project Vicinity Map
- ☒ Project Location Map
- ☒ Photos
- ☒ Wildlife Reconnaissance-Level Survey Report

Other Public Agency Review/Permit Required:

Would the project result in:

- ☐ Alterations to a watercourse (DFG - Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement)
- ☐ Conversion of timberland (Cal Fire - Conversion Permit or Exemption)
- ☐ Demolition (Local Air District - Demolition Permit)
- ☐ Soil disturbance over 1 acre (RWQCB SWPPP)
- ☐ Fill of possible wetlands (404 Permit - USACE)
- ☐ Other:
- ☒ None/Not applicable

Project Description and Environmental Setting:

The Small Forest Landowner Assistance Program (SFLAP) from the Butte County RCD is a program that provides low-cost or no-cost treatments toward fire recovery and resilience for small, non-industrial, private landowners. The treatments can include tree and brush thinning, re-planting, pruning, fuels reduction, large hazard tree removal, or whatever other services will make the greatest improvement in landowner and community safety. The program is currently funded by grant agreements with CARCD (technical assistance) and Sierra Nevada Conservancy (implementation).

Each landowner will be eligible for no-cost work on 1 to 10 acres that best contribute to wildfire safety and resilience on their property. There is no cap to property size, however, properties smaller than 250 acres will be prioritized. For the 2024 season, this program will only serve 20 landowners or up to 160 acres. Properties are within the North Fire Complex footprint. SFLAP will provide landowners with a forest management plan prepared by a Registered Professional Forester and the necessary surveys to

complete the environmental compliance required for CEQA. During this initial phase of SFLAP, the BCRCD will also select qualified contractors and fund 100% of the cost of implementing the selected treatments.

The project area is the approximately 170-acres across 20 landowners, all affected by the 2020 North Complex. Many of the properties are still vacant because their homes burned down and it is not safe to return due to the amount of snags present. Some landowners have modular homes back on their properties; others reside in trailers or other post-fire temporary housing.

The area experiences a Mediterranean climate with a wet winter season when up to 61" of rain can fall (some of it as snow) and a hot-dry summer season when no rain usually falls for at least four months. Accordingly, the area is subject to wildfires during the dry season. The project area was catastrophically burned during the 2020 North Complex, with most trees and homes destroyed. The majority of the resultant heavy woody debris, such as dead trees and brush, are still present on the land four years later. Without intervention (i.e., under a no-project alternative), this heavy woody debris could form logjams that could increase the risk of winter flooding, hazards to the landowners from falling timber, and additional fuel for the next fire. After the fire, the landscape was converted in many places from forest to brush, including several invasive species (e.g., French and Scotch brooms). The project would manage this brush regrowth to reduce invasive species and, especially, to promote horizontal and vertical discontinuity of fuels. The project would also reduce the dead woody debris and snags which otherwise would act as fuel to intensify future wildfires, resulting in further impacts to soil, biodiversity, and residents' ability to rebuild.

The project will use masticator(s), tracked chipper(s) and skid steers, to reduce horizontal and vertical continuity of fuels in this post-fire resprouting landscape. This includes removing standing snags, hazardous trees, thick brush and non-native vegetation. A strong resprouting tree would be retained about every 25 feet. A hand crew would follow the machines to clean up the site, cutting and piling by hand what machines miss. Some areas would be off-limits to machines and would be treated by hand crews alone.

Equipment would be allowed on slopes up to 40% within the safe limits of operation. However, equipment may reach into areas of over 40% as long as the boom arm reaches. A small tracked masticator and tracked chipper would be preferred. The tracked chipper, if available, is fed by people on the ground.

Watercourses - Ephemeral streams (or wetlands) will be buffered 25' from the streambank (or, for a wetland, from the outer edge of wetland obligate vegetation). Within the buffer, no heavy equipment will enter, but may reach into the buffer as long as the boom arm reaches. If a dense infestation of invasive plants exists within the buffered area, chipping of invasives is acceptable provided chips are broadcast outside the buffered area. Equipment may establish a single perpendicular crossing (if none exists) for each ephemeral stream, and continue to use it for the life of the project.

Perennial streams (or wetlands) will be buffered from the streambank: 40' if under 30% slope, 50' if 30-50%, 60' if over 50% . Perennial wetlands will be buffered the same distance from the outer edge of wetland obligate vegetation. Within the buffer, no heavy equipment will enter, but may reach into the buffer as long as the boom arm reaches. Machines and vehicles can use existing roads/driveways, landings and crossings within the stream buffer, but cannot create new ones.

Within stream/wetland buffers, hand work is acceptable to the saturated soil line, and hand crews may reach to the waterline with pole saws or loppers if they are able. Hand crews would leave 100% of native riparian adapted species (e.g. bigleaf maple, dogwood, elder, all willow, cottonwood, mugwort, native rose). Hand crews would prune native plants, lopping-and-scattering them. Most or all deerbrush (*Ceanothus integerrimus*) and broom (*Genista*, *Cytisus*) would be removed in riparian buffers, and hazard trees would be felled. (The bole would be left in place; if desired, it could be cut at the buffer boundary). Nothing would be skidded out of buffer areas, but material may be chunked or hand-carried out to meet fuel loading objectives. Light brush may be pulled out with ropes and winches.

In stream/wetland buffers, piles would not be left for later burning. Any piles constructed would either be burned immediately, or left as habitat piles (at a rate of 2-3 habitat piles per acre¹). No piles would be placed in the streambed directly. If more material is cut within a wetland/riparian zone than can safely be piled and left for habitat, then the extra material would be either a) scattered so as to not pile it or b) pulled out of the zone to be burned.

In upland areas that utilize hand treatment due to slope limitations, the project would remove and pile or chip all fuels, living and dead, with the exception of a hardwood resprout (or dominant conifer, if a surviving one exists) every 25'. Species to keep are, in order of descending preference: Elderberry, willow, deciduous oaks, dogwood, California nutmeg (*Torreya*), cottonwood/big leaf maple/alder/madrone, all other conifers over 5' tall, buckeye, small conifers under 5' tall.

Note: certain burl-resprouting native species, such as Toyon, California Bay-Laurel and live oak, would not be cut to the ground because they are better managed by leader-training (leaving one main resprout).

Herbicide (glyphosate or imazapyr, in combination with the adjuvants methylated spray oil, modified vegetable oil concentrate and/or a dye) may be used in accordance with label directions on broom species (*Genista* and *Cytisus*). Operationally, the broom herbicide application must be completed prior to the first rain. Broom can be masticated two or more days after the treatment.

Leave 6 trees/acre where they exist and are not hazards, preferring hardwood snags for habitat. In areas where snags are threatening to strike structures, fences, roads, etc, fewer than 6 snags/acre may be left, but additional snags will be left in more remote areas where they exist, to meet a target of 30 snags/5 acres.

Wet weather rules: Equipment would cease operations after any rainfall of more than 1/4", and would not resume until a drying period of at least 24 hrs has passed, or as much additional time as it takes after 24 hours for the soil to no longer be saturated, or at the discretion of the RPF or designee. A hand crew can work regardless of weather as long as conditions are safe for them.

¹ For maximum wildlife benefit/diversity, habitat piles are about 15 feet by 15 feet, by 10 feet high.

Environmental Impacts Analysis

Aesthetics:

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- ☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:
- ☐ Based on the above analysis, an exemption *is not appropriate for this project*
- ☒ No unusual circumstances exist. Project qualifies as exempt under CEQA Guidelines §15304.

Agriculture and Forest Resources:

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- ☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

No commercially viable timber will be removed from the landscape.

- ☐ Based on the above analysis, an exemption *is not appropriate for this project*
- ☒ No unusual circumstances exist. Project qualifies as exempt under CEQA Guidelines §15304.

Air Quality

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- ☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Pile burning will be accomplished with appropriate permits from Cal Fire and Butte County Air Quality Management District.

- ☐ Based on the above analysis, an exemption *is not appropriate for this project*
- ☒ No unusual circumstances exist. Project qualifies as exempt under CEQA Guidelines §15304.

Biological Resources:

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- ☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

For each quad where project work will occur, BCRCD conducted a nine-quad search of CNDDDB resources to develop a list of all sensitive plant, animal, and fungal species with the potential to occur in the project area. For animal species, BCRCD conducted a desktop exercise in July 2024 to confirm no special-status animal species could be harmed by the project, due to the project's integrated design features, the project's seasonality, and/or the species' habitat needs and life history. For plant species, BCRCD conducted a floristic-level field survey of each treatment unit between April 23 and May 20, 2024. The results were compiled property-by-property (with adjacent ownerships sometimes treated as a single survey unit) and detailed in 15 separate botany reports furnished to 15 separate individual landowners (or, in a few cases, groups of adjacent landowners). BCRCD found no special-status

plant species within the treatment boundaries with the potential to be harmed by the project.

BCRCD found that the proposed project will adequately avoid any significant impacts on rare or common wildlife and that the project is likely to be beneficial, on the whole, to native plant communities.

- ☐ Based on the above analysis, an exemption *is not appropriate for this project*
- ☒ No unusual circumstances exist. Project qualifies as exempt under CEQA Guidelines §15304.

Cultural Resources:

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- ☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Archaeological surveys have been conducted by a certified archaeologist. Mooretown Rancheria of Maidu Indians of California were present and participated in the surveys.

- ☐ Based on the above analysis, an exemption *is not appropriate for this project*
- ☒ No unusual circumstances exist. Project qualifies as exempt under CEQA Guidelines §15304.

Energy:

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- ☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:
- ☐ Based on the above analysis, an exemption *is not appropriate for this project*
- ☒ No unusual circumstances exist. Project qualifies as exempt under CEQA Guidelines §15304.

Geology and Soils:

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- ☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

The project does not propose ground-disturbing activities on steep slopes that will result in destabilized soil, or expose humans to any soil-related hazards. Hand and mechanical treatments are limited to 40% slope where there's no watercourse present. A small tracked masticator and tracked chipper are preferred tools for treatment. Machines with boom arms may reach into areas beyond the 40% slope.

- ☐ Based on the above analysis, an exemption *is not appropriate for this project*
- ☒ No unusual circumstances exist. Project qualifies as exempt under CEQA Guidelines §15304.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions:

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- ☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

The greenhouse gas emissions from hazardous fuels reduction activities are negligible and likely to be offset over time by the reduced risk of future wildfire emissions.

- ☐ Based on the above analysis, an exemption *is not appropriate for this project*
- ☒ No unusual circumstances exist. Project qualifies as exempt under CEQA Guidelines §15304.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials:

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- ☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

BCRCD conducted a search of all hazardous facilities meeting the definition of California Government Code section 65962.5, including the DTSC's Envirostor Database, the State Water Board's GeoTracker database, and the [other data resources provided by CalEPA](#) as pertinent to section 65962.5. No hazardous material or hazardous waste sites tracked by these resources are in or near the project area. All the properties burned in the North Complex, generating hazardous waste; however, most or all properties have already been subject to a comprehensive, state- or privately funded hazardous waste removal. Minor on-site hazards (e.g. scrap piles, old cars) have been GPSed so contractors can avoid them.

The project as designed will not expose people to additional hazards or hazardous materials. Debris, soil, silt, sand, rubbish, project waste, cement or concrete or washings thereof, asphalt, paint, oil or other petroleum products or any other substances which could be hazardous to aquatic life, or other organic or earthen material from project activities will not be stored where it may pass into waters of the state the stream bed, bank, or channel (including but not limited to dry, ponded, flowing, or wetland areas), drainages, lakes, other sensitive habitat. Staging and storage areas for equipment, materials, fuels, lubricants and solvents, will be located more than 150 feet from the waters of the state, the stream bed, bank, or channel (including but not limited to dry, ponded, flowing, or wetland areas), drainages, lakes, or other sensitive habitat. Proper spill cleanup materials (absorbent pads, sealed containers, booms, etc.) would be located on site ready to contain the movement of any spilled substances. All debris shall be disposed of properly and typical BMPs will be employed to accomplish these requirements.

- ☐ Based on the above analysis, an exemption *is not appropriate for this project*
- ☒ No unusual circumstances exist. Project qualifies as exempt under CEQA Guidelines §15304.

Hydrology and Water Quality:

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- ☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

The project's integrated design features are sufficient to protect watercourses. The project's prescription ensures that enough woody/organic debris will be left on the ground to protect soils, slopes, and water quality.

- ☐ Based on the above analysis, an exemption *is not appropriate for this project*
- ☒ No unusual circumstances exist. Project qualifies as exempt under CEQA Guidelines §15304.

Land Use and Planning:

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- ☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:
- ☐ Based on the above analysis, an exemption *is not appropriate for this project*
- ☒ No unusual circumstances exist. Project qualifies as exempt under CEQA Guidelines §15304.

Mineral Resources:

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- ☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:
- ☐ Based on the above analysis, an exemption *is not appropriate for this project*

- ☒ No unusual circumstances exist. Project qualifies as exempt under CEQA Guidelines §15304.

Noise:

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Use of fuel-powered equipment (e.g. chain saws, chipper, masticator) would be part of the project. The area is a high to extreme wildfire risk zone, where equipment operation carries some risk of unintentional ignition. Therefore, in some cases, it may be safest to operate equipment late at night, when relative humidities are highest; this is a not uncommon feature of fuels reduction work in Butte County. Due to the sparsely settled rural nature of the fire-affected project area, few residents are present to be disturbed by nighttime noise, but if nighttime operations are necessary, the community will be notified using social media and (when feasible) direct communications to neighbors. Notifying every neighbor is not always possible or practical. No sensitive receptors (e.g. hospitals, daycares) are within ¼ mile for this project.

- ☐ Based on the above analysis, an exemption *is not appropriate for this project*
☒ No unusual circumstances exist. Project qualifies as exempt under CEQA Guidelines §15304.

Population and Housing:

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:
☐ Based on the above analysis, an exemption *is not appropriate for this project*
☒ No unusual circumstances exist. Project qualifies as exempt under CEQA Guidelines §15304.

Public Services:

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:
☐ Based on the above analysis, an exemption *is not appropriate for this project*
☒ No unusual circumstances exist. Project qualifies as exempt under CEQA Guidelines §15304.

Recreation:

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:
☐ Based on the above analysis, an exemption *is not appropriate for this project*
☒ No unusual circumstances exist. Project qualifies as exempt under CEQA Guidelines §15304.

Transportation/Traffic:

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:
☐ Based on the above analysis, an exemption *is not appropriate for this project*
☒ No unusual circumstances exist. Project qualifies as exempt under CEQA Guidelines §15304.

Tribal Cultural Resources:

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Mooretown Rancheria of Maidu Indians of California were present and participated in the surveys with

the archaeological surveyors, as well as designed the avoidance/mitigation measures for the 15 cultural resource sites that were identified. Mooretown Rancheria is among the tribes of record for this project area and is in close communication/collaboration with Berry Creek Rancheria, the other main Tribe of record.

- ☐ Based on the above analysis, an exemption *is not appropriate for this project*
- ☒ No unusual circumstances exist. Project qualifies as exempt under CEQA Guidelines §15304.

Utilities and Service Systems:

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- ☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:
- ☐ Based on the above analysis, an exemption *is not appropriate for this project*
- ☒ No unusual circumstances exist. Project qualifies as exempt under CEQA Guidelines §15304.

Wildfire:

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- ☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

The project will include pile-burning as a method of fuels reduction and nutrient cycling. The use of fire as a restoration and management tool always carries some risk, but the risk is balanced by the benefits, which include the significant reduction of future wildfire risk. Burning will be in compliance with all applicable State and local laws, regulations and permits. Regulations reduce the very small risk of prescribed fire escape to below the threshold of significance. The project could include the use of some gasoline- or battery-powered equipment that could generate a spark, such as chainsaws. The use of gasoline- or battery-powered equipment always carries some risk, but the risk is balanced by the benefits, which include the significant reduction of future wildfire risk. The project's compliance with all applicable State and local laws and permits reduces the very small risk of inadvertent fire ignition to below the threshold of significance.

- ☐ Based on the above analysis, an exemption *is not appropriate for this project*
- ☒ No unusual circumstances exist. Project qualifies as exempt under CEQA Guidelines §15304.

Mandatory Findings of Significance:

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- ☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

The project does not have the potential to 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, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory. The project does not have impacts that are cumulatively considerable (i.e., incremental effects that become considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects). The project does not have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly.

- ☐ Based on the above analysis, an exemption *is not appropriate for this project*
- ☒ No unusual circumstances exist. Project qualifies as exempt under CEQA

References

Calflora: a non-profit database providing information on wild California plants. 2024. Accessed in March, April, May and June 2024. <https://www.calflora.org>

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Amphibians and Reptiles		
Species	Status	Reason No Effect
foothill yellow-legged frog - north coast DPS	CDFW SSC	Stays close to water. Project work will not occur during breeding season.
foothill yellow-legged frog - Feather River DPS	Fed threatened; State threatened	Stays close to water. Project work will not occur during breeding season.
foothill yellow-legged frog - north Sierra DPS	State threatened	Stays close to water. Project work will not occur during breeding season.
California red-legged frog	Fed threatened; CDFW SSC	Stays close to water; no critical habitat in project area. Project work will not occur during breeding season.
Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog	Fed endangered; State threatened; CDFW WL	Stays close to water. Project work will not occur during breeding season.
western spadefoot	Fed proposed threatened; CDFW SSC	Open areas with sandy gravelly soils are not present in the project area. No suitable habitat exists. Project work will not occur during breeding season.
northwestern pond turtle	Fed proposed threatened; CDFW SSC	Stays very close to water; if present, would be protected by EEZ.
coast horned lizard	CDFW SSC	Nests in burrows in friable soil, maternity April-Aug. Project won't adversely affect habitat. Individuals could be incidentally harmed by machinery. If a horned lizard is sighted during implementation, work will pause until the lizard leaves the area. Project work will not occur during breeding season.
Birds		
Species	Status	Reason No Effect
American goshawk	CDFW SSC	No mature stands of forest are present within project area due to moderate to high severity wildfires. Suitable habitat does not exist. If a nest is incidentally observed the tree containing the nest will be marked to leave. No live trees will be affected by project work and 6 snags per acre will be retained. Project work will not occur during nesting season.

golden eagle	CDFW FP / WL	No mature stands of forest are present within project area due to moderate to high severity wildfires. Suitable habitat does not exist. If a nest is incidentally observed the tree containing the nest will be marked to leave. No live trees will be affected by project work and 6 snags per acre will be retained. Project work will not occur during nesting season.
Swainsons hawk	State threatened	Project work will not occur during nesting season.
bald eagle	State endangered; CDFW FP	Nesting typically occurs near lakes or watercourses. No live trees within riparian corridors will be affected by project work. Project work will not occur during nesting season.
black swift	CDFW SSC	Nesting typically occurs on cliff ledges near water. Project work will not effect this habitat. Project work will not occur during nesting season.
great egret	NA	Nesting typically occurs near wet areas. No live trees within riparian corridors will be affected by project work. Brush growing along banks of wet areas and watercourses will be minimally impacted. Project work will not occur during nesting season.
great blue heron	NA	Nesting typically occurs near wet areas. No live trees within riparian corridors will be affected by project work. Brush growing along banks of wet areas and watercourses will be minimally impacted. Project work will not occur during nesting season.
snowy egret	NA	Nesting typically occurs near wet areas. No live trees within riparian corridors will be affected by project work. Brush growing along banks of wet areas and watercourses will be minimally impacted. Project work will not occur during nesting season.
black-crowned night heron	NA	Nesting typically occurs on islands or in groves and thickets directly above water. Project work will not impact this habitat. Project work will not occur during nesting season.
prairie falcon	CDFW WL	Nesting typically occurs on ledges or sheer rocky cliffs. Project work will not impact this habitat. Project work will not occur during nesting season.

American peregrine falcon	NA	Nesting typically occurs on ledges or sheer rocky cliffs. Project work will not impact this habitat. Project work will not occur during nesting season.
purple martin	CDFW SCC	Nesting typically occurs on large snags. 6 snags per acre will be retained favoring the largest present. If a nest is incidentally observed, the tree containing the nest will be marked to leave. Project work will not occur during nesting season.
bank swallow	State threatened	Nesting typically occurs in steep, sandy river banks. Project work will not impact habitat. Project work will not occur during nesting season.
tricolored blackbird	State threatened; CDFW SSC	Wetland habitat will be retained. Project work will not occur during nesting season.
osprey	CDFW WL	Nesting typically occurs near lakes or watercourses. No live trees within riparian corridors will be impacted by project work. Project work will not occur during nesting season.
California black rail	State threatened; CDFW FP	Nesting typically occurs near wet areas. Would be protected by EEZ. Project work will not occur during nesting season.
burrowing owl	CDFW SSC	Nesting typically occurs in grasslands. Habitat will not be impacted by project work. Project work will not occur during nesting season.
great gray owl	State endangered	No mature stands of forest are present within project area due to moderate to high severity wildfires. Suitable habitat does not exist. If a nest is incidentally observed the tree containing the nest will be marked to leave. No live trees will be affected by project work and 6 snags per acre will be retained. Project work will not occur during nesting season.
California Spotted Owl	Fed proposed endangered; CDFW SSC	No mature stands of forest are present within project area due to moderate to high severity wildfires. Suitable habitat does not exist. If a nest is incidentally observed the tree containing the nest will be marked to leave. No live trees will be affected by project work and 6 snags per acre will be retained. Project work will not occur during nesting season.

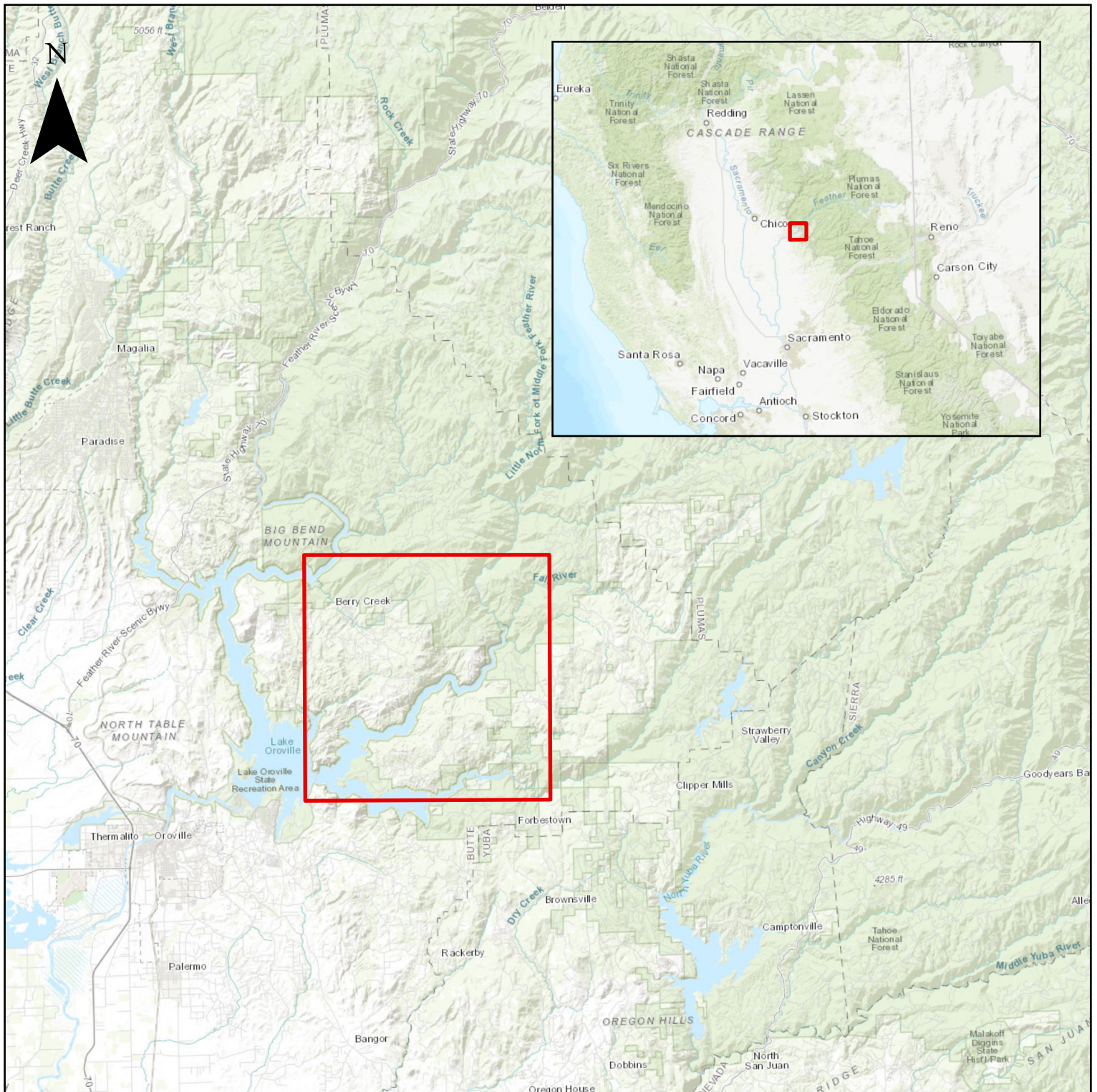
Crustaceans		
Species	Status	Reason No Effect
vernal pool fairy shrimp	Fed threatened	No suitable habitat in project area
California linderiella	NA	No suitable habitat in project area
vernal pool tadpole shrimp	Fed endangered	No suitable habitat in project area
Fish		
Species	Status	Reason No Effect
green sturgeon - southern DPS	Fed threatened; CDFW SSC	No suitable habitat in project area
riffle sculpin	CDFW SSC	Aquatic species; if present, would be protected by EEZ
hardhead	CDFW SSC	Aquatic species; if present, would be protected by EEZ
steelhead - Central Valley DPS	Fed threatened; CDFW SSC	No suitable habitat in project area
chinook salmon - Central Valley spring-run ESU	CDFW SSC	No suitable habitat in project area
Insects		
Species	Status	Reason No Effect
Crotch's bumble bee	State candidate endangered	Nests often underground in abandoned rodent nests, but also above ground in tufts of grass, old bird nests, rock piles, or cavities in dead trees. Project would only spray herbicide using a hack-and-squirt application to invasives; impacts to floral resources will therefore be transient. Bees will be able to avoid disturbances by flying to other nearby areas. Trees with cavities will be left standing (unless infrastructure is at risk).
western bumble bee	State candidate endangered	Nests underground in rodent burrows. Project would only spray herbicide using a hack-and-squirt application to invasives; impacts to floral resources will therefore be transient. Bees will be able to avoid disturbances by flying to other nearby areas.
valley elderberry longhorn beetle	Fed threatened	No suitable habitat in project area. project is out of species' range.
Wawona riffle beetle	NA	Typically occur in shallow, swift flowing streams. Habitat will not be impacted by project work.

Mammals		
Species	Status	Reason No Effect
Sierra Nevada mountain beaver	CDFW SSC	If a den or nursery site of this animal is discovered, CDFW protocol will be followed to buffer and avoid the site appropriately.
gray wolf	Fed endangered; State endangered	If a den or nursery site of this animal is discovered, CDFW protocol will be followed to buffer and avoid the site appropriately.
North American porcupine	NA	If a den or nursery site of this animal is discovered, CDFW protocol will be followed to buffer and avoid the site appropriately.
western mastiff bat	CDFW SSC	Roosts under exfoliating granite slabs; but with entrance usually at least 9 ft above ground level; therefore, will not be affected by project
Sierra marten	NA	If a den or nursery site of this animal is discovered, CDFW protocol will be followed to buffer and avoid the site appropriately.
Fisher	NA	If a den or nursery site of this animal is discovered, CDFW protocol will be followed to buffer and avoid the site appropriately.
northern California ringtail	CDFW FP	If a den or nursery site of this animal is discovered, CDFW protocol will be followed to buffer and avoid the site appropriately.
pallid bat	CDFW SSC	This species roosts singly to gregariously in a variety of structures including dead trees (e.g. under sloughing bark) year-round; maternity season is April-Aug. If a bat maternity site is discovered, CDFW protocol will be followed to buffer and avoid the site appropriately.
Townsend's big-eared bat	CDFW SSC	Cave and mine roosting species; does not roost in trees so will not be affected by project.

silver-haired bat	NA	Females form small maternity colonies of up too 70 individuals, almost exclusively in trees - inside natural hollows or under loose bark of large diameter snags at least 45 ft above ground. Maternity is April through Aug. Species needs large snag-patches left on the landscape. The mosaic nature of the SFLAP project and the economic conditions of the Berry Creek area make it likely that large snag patches will be left standing adjacent to the project site, probably indefiniely until the snags eventually fall of their own accord. If a bat maternity site is discovered, CDDFW protocol will be followed to buffer and avoid the site appropriately.
western red bat	CDFW SSC	Roosts singly in live trees in edge habitats where intact, leafy trees border open fields; especially associated with intact riparian habitats such as sycamore-willow; roosts in leaf litter e.g. thick oak litter in winter. Due to the 2020 fire, which top-killed 90-100% of oaks and hardwoods, niether roosting habitat is now present in the project area.
western small-footed myotis	NA	Does not roost in trees; therefore, will not be affected by project.
fringed myotis	NA	Roosts in crevices in large, decadent trees/snags; maternity is April through July. If a bat maternity site is discovered, CDFW protocol will be followed to buffer and avoid the site appropriately.
long-legged myotis	NA	Roosts during the day in crevices in decadent trees and snags; maternity is April through Sept. If a bat maternity site is discovered, CDFW protocol will be followed to buffer and avoid the site appropriately.
Yuma myotis	NA	Associated with permanent sources of water; trees are not as important for roosting as rocks/buildings/ets although they do use trees. Primarily feeds on aquatic emergent insects. If a bat maternity site is discovered, CDFW protocol will be followed to buffer and avoid the site appropriately.
Mollusks		
Species	Status	Reason No Effect

western ridged mussel	NA	Aquatic species; if present, would be protected by standard EEZ
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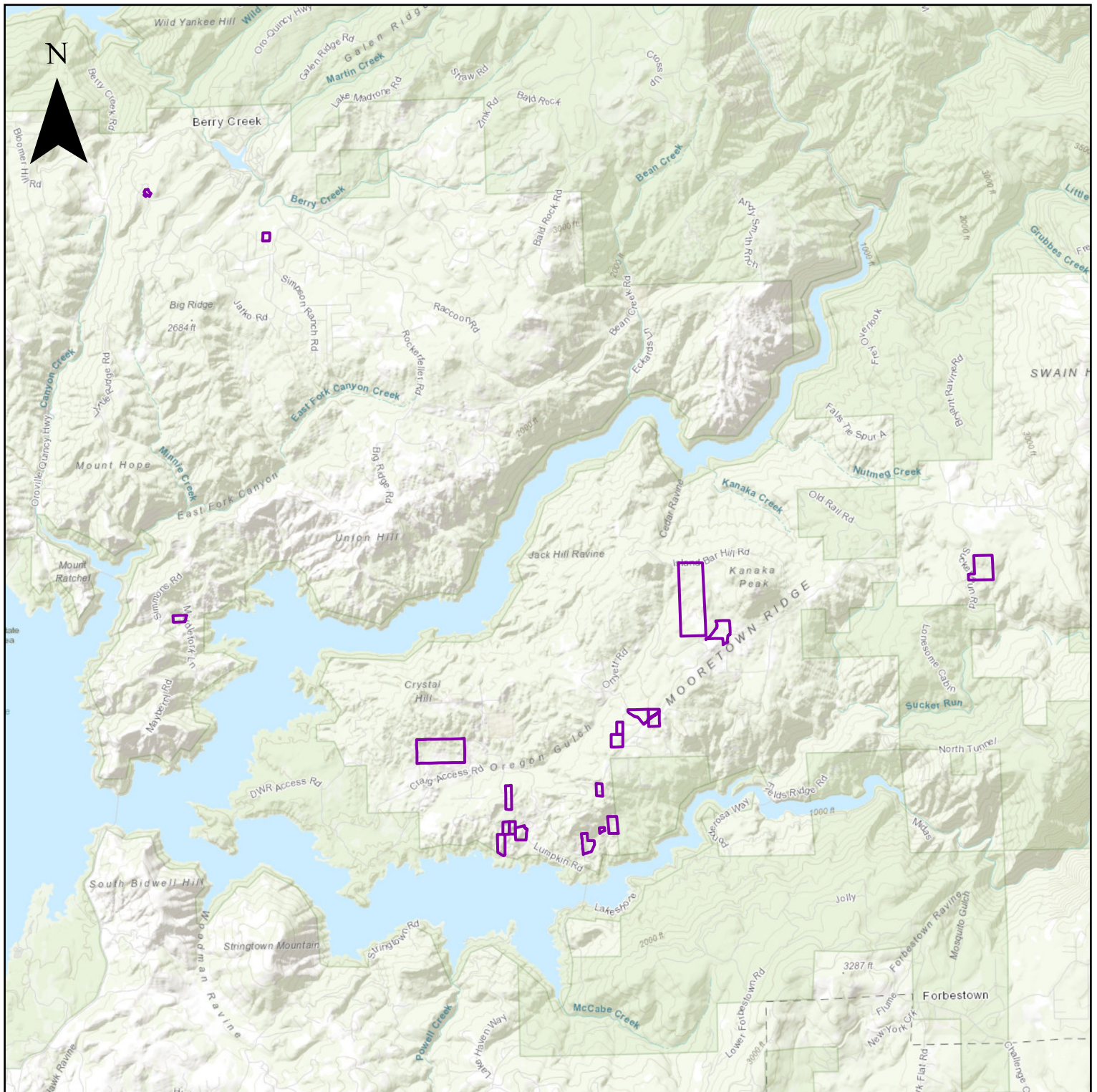
Project Vicinity Map



Project Vicinity

0 2.5 5 Miles

Project Location Map



Property Boundary

0 0.75 1.5 Miles



Photo 1: Representative conditions commonly found across Feather Falls portion of project area between approx. 1200' and 2500'



Photo 2: Representative conditions in the roject area higher elevations above 2500'