

State of California – Natural Resources Agency  
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE  
Northern Region  
601 Locust Street  
Redding, CA 96001  
[www.wildlife.ca.gov](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov)

**GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor**  
**CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director**

August 20, 2025

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**SUBJECT: Review of Girvan Road Over Olney Creek Bridge Replacement Project, City of Redding, State Clearing House Number 2025071047**

Dear Amber Kelley:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has reviewed the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (ISMND), dated July 2025, for the above-referenced project (Project). CDFW appreciates this opportunity to comment on the Project, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines<sup>1</sup>.

**CDFW's Role**

CDFW is California's Trustee Agency for fish and wildlife resources and holds those resources in trust by statute for all the people of the state (Fish & G. Code, §§ 711.7, subd. (a) & 1802; Pub. Resources Code, § 21070; CEQA Guidelines § 15386, subd. (a)). CDFW, in its Trustee Agency capacity, has jurisdiction over the conservation, protection, and management of fish, wildlife, native plants, and habitat necessary for biologically sustainable populations of those species (Id., § 1802). Similarly, for purposes of CEQA, CDFW is charged by law to provide, as available, biological expertise during public agency environmental review efforts, focusing specifically on projects and related activities that have the potential to adversely affect fish and wildlife resources.

CDFW is also submitting comments as a Responsible Agency under CEQA (Pub. Resources Code, § 21069; CEQA Guidelines, § 15381). CDFW expects that it may need to exercise regulatory authority as provided by the Fish and Game Code. Likewise, to the extent implementation of the Project as proposed may result in "take" as defined by state law, of any species protected under the

<sup>1</sup> CEQA is codified in the California Public Resources Code in section 21000 et seq. The "CEQA Guidelines" are found in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, commencing with section 15000.

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California Endangered Species Act (CESA) (Fish & G. Code, § 2050 et seq.) or state listed rare plants pursuant to the Native Plant Protection Act (NPPA; Fish & G. Code § 1900 et seq.), authorization as provided by the applicable Fish and Game Code may be required.

**Project Description:**

The Project, as it is described in the ISMND is as follows:

*"The City of Redding (Lead Agency) is proposing to replace the Girvan Road Bridge (O6C-0341) over Olney Creek. The purpose of the project is to improve safety conditions for vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic and to improve the hydraulic capacity of Olney Creek at the bridge.*

*The Project includes sidewalk improvements; ADA compliant curb, gutter, and ramps; and lighting improvements. Construction work will consist of vegetation removal, access ramps, temporary clear water diversion, bridge demolition, earthwork, falsework, drilling, vibratory hammers, trenching, utility relocation, drainage installation and modification, bridge construction, rock slope protection, revegetation, paving, striping, and sign replacement/installation. The improvements will be constructed in the City right of way and within easement areas. The bridge will be constructed over two seasons, with one side of the bridge being removed and reconstructed the first year, and the second side of the bridge being removed and reconstructed the following year. Traffic control will consist of a single lane of alternating traffic, controlled by temporary signals. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2027 and continue through 2028."*

**Biological Setting:**

The Project is located along Olney Creek, a tributary to the upper Sacramento River in the northern Sacramento Valley. The regional landscape is a patchwork of urban/suburban development, valley foothill oak woodland, annual grassland, and riparian/riverine habitats associated with Olney Creek and the Sacramento River corridor. Olney Creek flows south through the Project area to the confluence of the Sacramento River. The hydrology of Olney Creek is seasonal to intermittent in its upper reaches, with perennial pools/runs possible in lower, shaded segments near the confluence. Flows are rainfall and stormwater-driven with flashy hydrographs during winter-spring storms and baseflow sustained by urban runoff and shallow groundwater.

Olney Creek supports a defined bed with banks of riparian dominated by

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Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*), willow (*Salix* spp.), Oregon ash (*Fraxinus latifolia*), box elder (*Acer negundo*), with an understory of Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*), wild grape (*Vitis californica*), and various herbaceous species. Adjacent uplands support valley oak (*Quercus lobata*) and blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*) woodland, ruderal/thatched annual grassland, urbanized landscaped areas, and disturbed scrub along roads and utility corridors.

Riparian habitat to the north and south of the Project area, as well as the adjacent upland vegetation, likely support tree-dwelling bats, migratory birds and protected raptor species such as Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*, SSC) and Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, CESA Endangered and Fully Protected). Olney Creek contains suitable habitat for Northwestern pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata*, State Species of Special Concern [SSC]), steelhead trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus* pop. 11, SSC) and Chinook Salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha* pop. 13, Central Valley fall / late fall-run ESU, SSC), and may periodically support two additional Chinook Salmon runs including CESA Endangered Sacramento River winter-run ESU and CESA Endangered Central Valley spring-run ESU.

### **Comments and Recommendations**

CDFW staff recognize that the Lead Agency has taken some appropriate steps to evaluate this Projects impacts to biological resources however CDFW offers the following comments and recommendations to further assist the Lead Agency in adequately identifying, avoiding, and minimizing potentially significant, direct, and indirect impacts on biological resources with the implementation of the Project.

#### **Natural Environment Study**

The ISMND indicates that a Natural Environment Study (NES) was prepared to assess the impact of the Project on biological resources. The NES was not included in the documents available for review to the public. Without attaching the NES or including specific information from the NES into the ISMND, it is challenging to determine which species and habitats with potential to occur were considered, if any protocol-level biological surveys were performed and overall adequacy of the biological assessment. CDFW recommends re-posting the draft ISMND for public review with information from the NES, to more adequately disclose this Projects potential impacts to biological resources.

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#### Crotch's Bumble Bee

Without the NES, it's not clear if special-status bumble bees were considered as part of this Project's biological assessment. On September 30, 2022, the California Fish and Game Commission accepted a petition to list Crotch's bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*, CBB) under CESA, advancing the species to the candidacy stage of the CESA listing process. Candidate species are granted full protection under CESA during this period. Take of any endangered, threatened, or candidate species that results from the Project is prohibited, except as authorized by state law (Fish & G. Code, §§ 86, 2062, 2067, 2068, 2080, 2085; Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 786.9).

CBB may inhabit diverse habitats including woodlands, grasslands, shrublands, agricultural lands and urban landscapes. Without assessment, and appropriate avoidance and minimization measures, potentially significant impacts to CBB may occur with the implementation of this Project.

Since this Project bisects the range of CBB, CDFW recommends a CBB habitat assessment is performed by a qualified biologist and included in an amended NES and final ISMND. If the habitat assessment concludes the Project area has potentially suitable CBB, avoidance and minimization measures should be employed to avoid potential impacts in accordance with CDFW's [June 2023 Survey Considerations for California Endangered Species Act \(CESA\) Candidate Bumble Bee Species](#)<sup>2</sup>.

#### Mitigation Measure 1: In-Stream Work Window and Fish Passage Protection

Mitigation Measure 1 (MM-1) states *"The in-stream project construction period will be limited to the dry season (June 1–October 31). If water is present during construction, a temporary stream diversion will be used to divert water away from in-stream construction and maintain flow and fish passage."*

CDFW recommends revising MM-1 to state **"The in-stream project construction period shall be limited to the dry season, June 1 through October 15. If water is present during construction, a CDFW-approved temporary stream diversion shall be installed to divert water away from the in-stream construction area while maintaining continuous downstream flow and fish passage through the worksite consistent with CDFW guidance. The contractor shall monitor weather forecasts and stream conditions during the work period; if the first substantial fall rains occur prior to October 15, or if river/creek flow increases, salmon and steelhead may begin upstream migration. In such cases, work shall be**

<sup>2</sup> <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=213150&inline>

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**conducted to maintain unimpeded CDFW-approved fish passage. In-stream construction shall not occur after October 15 unless otherwise authorized in writing by CDFW and NMFS."**

This revision shortens the allowable work window to avoid overlap with the onset of fall-run Chinook Salmon and steelhead trout migrations, which typically begin after the first substantial autumn rains. Maintaining fish passage after the onset of these flows is critical to avoid migration delays or blockage.

Mitigation Measure 2: Fish Presence and Translocation Procedures

Mitigation Measure 2 (MM-2) states *"Prior to any in-stream work, the area will be visually inspected for fish presence. If presence of fish is noted, they will be herded away from the area using seines. If appropriate, seines could be placed upstream and downstream of the project area to prevent fish from entering the area. All translocation or removal of fishes will be conducted by qualified fisheries biologists."*

Please note that the lower reaches of Olney Creek historically receive leakage from Anderson Cottonwood Irrigation District canal crossing of the creek above State Route 273 resulting in a maintained flow and habitat connectivity throughout the summer and fall. CDFW believes that during the high summertime irrigation flows in the Sacramento River, juvenile salmonids can access and use lower Olney Creek for non-natal rearing. It is unclear at this time if the backwater effect from the Sacramento River that allows non-natal rearing can impact the Girvan Road bridge Project area. Species present in the lower reaches of the creek could include CESA-listed spring-run Chinook Salmon, CESA-listed winter-run Chinook Salmon, fall-run Chinook Salmon, and ESA-listed steelhead trout.

The ability for fish translocation will depend on a fisheries assessment of the presence of juvenile CESA-listed species. CDFW recommends revising MM-2 to state **"Prior to any in-stream work, the Project area shall be visually inspected for fish presence by a qualified fisheries biologist. If fish are observed, the need for translocation shall be determined based on a fisheries assessment of the species present, with specific consideration for the potential occurrence of juvenile CESA-listed species. If juvenile CESA-listed species are present, all handling, translocation, or removal shall be conducted only under appropriate CDFW and/or NMFS authorization and in accordance with agency-approved methods. If determined appropriate, fish may be herded away from the work**

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**area using seines, and barrier seines may be placed upstream and downstream to prevent fish from entering the work area. All fish relocation activities shall be conducted by qualified fisheries biologists under the terms of applicable permits."**

This revision ensures that translocation activities are informed by a formal assessment of species presence, thereby avoiding unauthorized take of CESA-listed fish and ensuring compliance with CESA.

#### Mitigation Measure 7: Avoidance and Protection of Bats

Bats are considered non-game mammals and are afforded protection by state law from take and/or harassment (Fish & G. Code, § 4150; Cal. Code of Regs., § 251.1). Construction activities, including ground disturbance, vegetation removal, and any activities leading to increased noise levels, may have direct and/or indirect impacts on bats and bat roosts. Trees that contain cavities, crevices, or exfoliated bark have high potential to be used by various bat species.

While CDFW staff are pleased to see the ISMND considers potential impacts to bats, the avoidance and minimization measure, MM-7, appears to only consider impacts to maternity roosts and does not consider impacts to individual roosting bats. CDFW recommends including a pre-construction survey by a qualified biologist to identify and mark trees slated for removal within the Project area that contain suitable bat roosting habitat features before tree removal occurs, and to include a two-step removal process to further reduce the risk of impacts to bats. CDFW recommends incorporating the following revisions, shown in bold, to MM-7 to more adequately avoid this Project's potential impacts to bats:

**MM-7: A qualified biologist shall perform a pre-construction visual inspection of trees larger than 10" diameter at breast height (DBH) to identify and clearly mark trees that have potential roosting features (e.g., cavities, crevices in wood and bark, exfoliating bark for colonial species, suitable canopy for foliage roosting species). Removal of marked trees should be performed in accordance with the following methods:**

- 1. Removal of marked trees should occur only during the following time frames and subject to the following weather conditions, or as otherwise approved/recommended by a qualified biologist:**

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- **Between March 15 and April 30, and between August 15 and October 1; and**
  - **Between October 2 and March 14 when evening temperatures are above 45°F, and no more than ½" of rainfall within a 24-hour period prior to tree removal.**
- 2. Marked trees shall be removed using a two-step process to allow individually roosting bats the opportunity to abandon the roost prior to removal. The two-step removal process is as follows:**
- **Day 1: Remove small-diameter trees, brush, and non-habitat features of marked trees (branches without cavities, crevices, or exfoliating bark) to alter existing conditions around the roost thus encouraging bats to vacate the roost on their own. The tree shall then be left for 24 hours to allow the bats to move to another roost site.**
  - **Day 2: If bats are thought to be in marked tree branches that can successfully be removed and set aside, cut the branches off intact and set them upright against trees away from the Project area to allow any bats present to passively escape. Then, remove the remainder of the tree.**

If construction (including the removal of large trees) **must occur outside of the above time frames**, a qualified biologist shall conduct a preconstruction survey of the project area to locate maternity colonies and identify measures to protect the colonies from disturbance. The preconstruction survey will be performed no more than seven days prior to the implementation of construction activities. If a lapse in construction activities for seven days or longer occurs between those dates, another preconstruction survey will be performed. If a maternity colony is found a qualified biologist (in consultation with the CDFW) will determine the extent of a construction-free buffer zone to be established around the nest. If practicable, removal of large trees with cavities will occur before maternity colonies form (i.e., prior to March 1) or after young are capable of flying (i.e., after August 15).

BIO-2 – Limited Vegetation Removal/Exclusionary Fencing

Due to the risk of obstruction to terrestrial wildlife connectivity and entanglement, CDFW recommends revising BIO-2 to state “**Areas where vegetation needs to be removed shall be identified in advance of ground**

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**disturbance and limited to only those areas approved by the City. Areas to be avoided shall be clearly identified in the construction drawings and contractor work plans. Exclusionary fencing shall be installed around riparian and other sensitive areas that are not to be disturbed; however, in riparian corridors and other high-value wildlife movement areas, fencing shall be of a wildlife-permeable design that avoids materials likely to cause entanglement (e.g., plastic mesh, silt fence with loose edges) and shall not create a barrier to wildlife connectivity. Acceptable alternatives may include wildlife-friendly post-and-rope barriers, highly visible flagging on T-posts, or other temporary delineation measures that clearly demarcate the work limit for construction personnel while allowing for safe wildlife passage. All pedestrian and vehicular traffic into the avoided areas delineated by the fencing or markers shall be prohibited during construction. Fencing or delineation shall be inspected and maintained regularly throughout project construction to ensure integrity and visibility.”**

This revision maintains the protective intent of BIO-2 while avoiding the use of high-visibility or mesh exclusionary fencing in riparian areas, which can obstruct wildlife movement corridors and increase the risk of entanglement for small mammals, reptiles, and birds. Wildlife-permeable delineation methods provide a visual boundary to construction workers without impeding wildlife passage.

### **California Endangered Species Act**

Please be advised that a [CESA Incidental Take Permit](#)<sup>3</sup> must be obtained if the Project has the potential to result in “take” (hunt, pursue, catch, capture, kill, or attempt thereof) of plants or animals listed under CESA, either during construction or over the life of the project. Issuance of a CESA permit is subject to CEQA documentation; the CEQA document must specify impacts, mitigation measures, and a mitigation monitoring and reporting program. If the Project has the potential to result in take of a CESA-listed species, early consultation is encouraged, as significant modification to the Project may be necessary to minimize and fully mitigate impacts as required by Fish and Game Code, section 2081(b)(2).

Page 13 of the ISMND indicates a Biological Assessment (BA) was prepared was prepared to assess potential impacts of the proposed project on federally listed salmon and steelhead (Stantec 2022b), and a Natural Environment Study (Stantec 2022a) was prepared to assess potential impacts of the proposed

<sup>3</sup> <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/CESA/Permitting>

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project on other special-status fish species. This project may qualify for CESA take authorization through a [Consistency Determination](#)<sup>4</sup>(CD).

If a species is listed as endangered or threatened under the federal ESA and listed as endangered, threatened, or candidate under CESA, Fish and Game Code section 2080.1 allows an applicant who has obtained a federal incidental take statement (federal Section 7 consultation) or a federal incidental take permit (federal Section 10(a)(1)(B)) to request that the Director of CDFW find the federally authorized take consistent with CESA. If CDFW finds the federal take authorization consistent with CESA and issues a CD, no further authorization or approval is necessary under CESA. For federal take authorization to be found consistent, it must meet the following criteria:

1. The authorized take is incidental to an otherwise lawful activity;
2. The impacts of the authorized take are minimized and fully mitigated;
3. The measures required to minimize and fully mitigate the impacts of the authorized take:
  1. Are roughly proportional in extent to the impact of the taking on the species,
  2. Maintain the applicant's objectives to the greatest extent possible, and
  3. May be successfully implemented by the applicant;
  4. Adequate funding is provided to implement the required minimization and mitigation measures and to monitor compliance with and the effectiveness of the measures; and
  5. Issuance of the permit will not jeopardize the continued existence of a CESA-listed species.

Please note, an incidental take statement should include language specifying that its authorization relies on the action(s) as described in the Biological Opinion (BO). Phrasing that has been successfully included to obtain consistency includes: "This incidental take statement is based upon the proposed action occurring as described in the accompanying biological opinion." Such language is important in linking the association of a BO and an incidental take statement, so that CDFW may have the opportunity to then authorize take through a CD. Please note, mitigation, financial assurance, and specific language should be incorporated into the BA/BO to ensure consistency with CESA.

<sup>4</sup> <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/CESA/Permitting/Consistency-Determinations>

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### **Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement**

Fish and Game Code section 1602 requires any person, state or local governmental agency, or public utility to notify CDFW prior to beginning any activity that may do one or more of the following:

- Substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow of the bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream, or lake; or
- Substantially change or use any material from the bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream, or lake; or
- Deposit or dispose of debris, waste, or other material containing crumbled, flaked, or ground pavement where it may pass into any river, stream, or lake.

To obtain information about the 1602 Notification process, please access the [Lake and Streambed Alteration Program](#)<sup>5</sup>.

### **Submitting Data**

CEQA requires that information developed in environmental documents is incorporated into a database which may be used to make subsequent or supplemental environmental determinations. (Public Resources Code, § 21003, subd. (e).) Accordingly, please report any special status species and natural communities detected during surveys to the [California Natural Diversity Database](#)<sup>6</sup> (CNDDB).

### **Promoting Collaboration**

CDFW is charged with preserving and protecting the state's diverse ecosystems and wildlife; therefore, CDFW maintains a strong commitment to collaborate with other state agencies. CDFW is enthusiastic to continue assisting the Lead Agency in implementing comprehensive avoidance and minimization strategies for the benefit of California's sensitive resources and aligning regulatory frameworks.

### **Conclusion**

CDFW appreciates the opportunity to comment on the DEIR and to assist the Lead Agency in identifying, avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating potentially significant Project impacts on biological resources. If you have any questions, please contact Erika Iacona, Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist) by

<sup>5</sup> <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Environmental-Review/LSA>

<sup>6</sup> <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDB>

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email at [R1CEQARedding@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:R1CEQARedding@wildlife.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

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