*PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT*

# INITIAL STUDY/ MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

FOR THE

# WEST POINT REGULATING RESERVOIR ENLARGEMENT PROJECT

CALAVERAS COUNTY WATER DISTRICT
WEST POINT, CA

AUGUST 19, 2025

*Prepared for:*

Calaveras County Water District
120 Toma Ct
San Andreas, CA 95249

*Prepared by:*

BaseCamp Environmental, Inc.
802 W. Lodi Avenue
Lodi, CA 95240

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

| | |
|---|---|
| AB | Assembly Bill |
| ARB | California Air Resources Board |
| BMP | Best Management Practice |
| CalEEMod | California Emissions Estimator Model |
| Cal Fire | California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection |
| CCAPCD | Calaveras County Air Pollution Control District |
| CDFW | California Department of Fish and Wildlife |
| CEQA | California Environmental Quality Act |
| CNDDB | California Natural Diversity Database |
| $CO_2e$ | carbon dioxide equivalent |
| CPUD | Calaveras Public Utility District |
| dBA | A-weighted decibels |
| EIR | Environmental Impact Report |
| EPA | U.S. Environmental Protection Agency |
| ESA | Environmentally Sensitive Area |
| FEMA | Federal Emergency Management Agency |
| GHG | greenhouse gas |
| IS/MND | Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration |
| $NO_x$ | nitrogen oxide |
| $PM_{10}$ | particulate matter 10 microns or less in diameter |
| RCEM | Road Construction Emissions Model |
| ROG | reactive organic gas |
| RWQCB | Regional Water Quality Control Board |
| SB | Senate Bill |
| SR | State Route |
| SWPPP | Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan |
| SWRCB | State Water Resources Control Board |
| TAC | toxic air contaminant |
| USFWS | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
| VMT | vehicle miles traveled |
| WTP | Water Treatment Plant |

# MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

## A. General Project Information

| | |
|---|---|
| Project Title: | West Point Regulating Reservoir Enlargement |
| Lead Agency Name and Address: | Calaveras County Water District<br>120 Toma Ct<br>San Andreas, CA 95249 |
| Contact Person and Phone Number: | Jesse Franco<br>Black Water Engineering<br>559-375-1522 |
| Project Location: | West Point Regulating Reservoir<br>1121 Winton Road, West Point, CA |
| Project Sponsor Name and Address: | Calaveras County Water District<br>120 Toma Ct.<br>San Andreas, CA 95249 |
| General Plan Designation: | Not applicable |
| Zoning: | Not applicable |
| Description of Project: | Enlargement of existing storage reservoir from 50 acre-feet to 150 acre-feet, replacement of concrete spillway and other facilities. |
| Surrounding Land Uses and Setting: | The project is located at existing reservoir site north of Winton Road, near the Bummerville Road intersection. The project vicinity is mainly forested land outside the immediate reservoir vicinity; there are several rural residences located adjacent to the CCWD ownership. |
| Other Public Agencies Whose Approval is Required: | State Water Resources Control Board (approval of environmental package), California Division of Safety of Dams Calaveras County (grading permit), Calaveras County Air Pollution Control District (Fugitive Dust Prevention and Control Plan approval), Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Construction General Permit). |

| | |
|---|---|
| Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1? If so, has consultation begun? | No tribes have requested consultation. See Appendix C regarding tribal outreach. |

## B. Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

The environmental factors checked below may be significantly affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" prior to mitigation. Mitigation measures that would avoid potential effects or reduce them to a less than significant level have been prescribed for each of these effects, as described in the checklist and narrative on the following pages, and in the Summary Table at the end of Chapter 1.0.

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

## C. Lead Agency 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 will be prepared.

✓ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project and/or mitigation measures that would reduce potential effects to a less than significant level have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will 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 EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

CALAVERAS COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

_____ _____

Kevin Williams, District Engineer Date

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Project Brief

This document is an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for the CCWD West Point Regulating Reservoir Enlargement Project The project is 1.1 miles east of the community of West Point in the unincorporated area of Calaveras County (Figures 1-1 through 1-4). The IS/MND has been prepared in compliance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). For the purposes of CEQA, the Calaveras County Water District (CCWD) is the Lead Agency for the project.

The District's 2004 Water System Improvements Final Feasibility Report and the 2005 West Point Water System Master Plan presented recommended water supply, storage and distribution improvements for the West Point service area. Among the several elements not yet constructed is enlargement of the West Point Regulating Reservoir to increase its capacity. The enlargement and related improvements the current project addressed in this document.

The West Point Regulating Reservoir is the only storage pond for the West Point Water System. During drought periods water storage is not sufficient to meet water demands, requiring the District to purchase Mokelumne River water. The proposed project would approximately triple the capacity of the reservoir, from the existing 50 AF to 150 AF, reducing the District's dependence on purchase of Mokelumne River water via a separate system. Grant funding for engineering and environmental studies has been obtained from FEMA and Cal-OES.

The KASL Engineering 2018 West Point Master Plan for the District provides Conceptual Design and analyzes alternatives for meeting the objective reservoir capacity of 150 AF. The District's selected alternative involves a combination of excavation within the reservoir footprint, raising the existing dam and expansion of the reservoir footprint. These changes will also require modification or replacement of the existing spillway, piping, drainage channel, and other features; the existing concrete lined channel will need to be replaced with box culvert where it intersects the fill for the enlarged dam. The project may fill to be obtained from a nearby suitable borrow site, which will also require environmental clearances. The reservoir will be dewatered for the proposed work; interim water supply will be provided to the West Point area: these project elements will need to be considered in environmental studies. The project and its CEQA document would require approval from the CCWD Board of Directors.

## 1.2 Purpose of Initial Study

CEQA requires that public agencies document and consider the potential environmental effects of the agency's actions that meet CEQA's definition of a "project." Briefly summarized, a "project" is an action that has the potential to result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment. A project includes the agency's direct activities as

well as activities that involve public agency approvals or funding. Guidelines for an agency's implementation of CEQA are found in the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3).

Provided that a project is not exempt from CEQA, the first step in the agency's consideration of its potential environmental effects is the preparation of an Initial Study. The purpose of an Initial Study is to determine whether the project would involve "significant" environmental effects, as defined by CEQA, and to describe any feasible mitigation measures that would avoid significant effects or reduce them to a level that is less than significant. If the Initial Study does not identify significant effects, then the agency ordinarily prepares a Negative Declaration. If the Initial Study notes significant effects but also identifies mitigation measures that would reduce these significant effects to a level that is less than significant, then the agency ordinarily prepares a Mitigated Negative Declaration. If a project involves significant effects that cannot be readily mitigated, then the agency must prepare an Environmental Impact Report. The agency may also decide to proceed directly with the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report without first preparing an Initial Study.

The proposed project is a "project" as defined by CEQA and is not exempt from CEQA consideration. The CCWD has determined that the project may potentially have significant environmental effects and therefore requires preparation of an Initial Study. This Initial Study describes the proposed project and its environmental setting, discusses the potential environmental effects of the project, and identifies feasible mitigation measures that would eliminate any potentially significant environmental effects of the project or reduce them to a level that would be less than significant. The Initial Study considers the project's potential for significant environmental effects in the following subject areas:

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

This Initial Study concludes that the project would have some potentially significant environmental effects, but that recommended mitigation measures would reduce all of these effects to a level that would be less than significant. As of the distribution of the IS/MND for public review, the CCWD has accepted and will implement all the mitigation measures recommended by the Initial Study. As a result, the CCWD has prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration and notified the public of the CCWD's intent to adopt the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration. A copy of the CCWD's Notice of Intent, which indicates the time available for comment, is inside the cover of this document.

## 1.3 Project Background

The Calaveras County Water District (District), a California special district, is a water utility based in San Andreas, California. The primary purpose of the not-for-profit District, formed in 1946, is the provisions of water and sewer service to the residents of the Calaveras County. The District is also engaged in the development of hydroelectric power for financial support and development of water supplies. The District includes all of Calaveras County; its boundaries encompass approximately 1,037 square miles of land, ranging from the San Joaquin Valley floor in the west to the crest of Sierra Nevada range. The District provides water service to about 13,080 municipal and residential / commercial customers in six service areas, and sewer service to about 4,848 customers in 12 service areas, distributed throughout the County.

The Calaveras County Water District (CCWD or District) owns and operates the West Point water system, which serves potable water to approximately 600 residential and commercial customers in the unincorporated communities of West Point, Wilseyville, Bummerville and Railroad Flat. The water supply system includes diversions from Bear Creek and the Middle Fork of the Mokelumne River, the West Point Regulating Reservoir providing raw water storage of approximately 50 acre-feet and the West Point Treatment Plant pumping facility.

The West Point WTP provides treated water with a capacity of up to one million gallons per day (MGD), which is adequate to serve existing customers, with additional capacity available to serve existing and new customers projected through the year 2100. Treated water storage has been recently expanded at the West Point WTP which adequately meets existing and projected Maximum Day Plus Fire Flows and Peak Hour Demands. Water is distributed to the served communities via downstream distribution systems

As the sponsoring agency, the District is the Lead Agency for the project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and will be responsible for working with FEMA and any other involved federal agencies in delivering National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) clearance for the project. Federal agency involvement will require that biological and cultural resources studies be prepared in accordance with NEPA and applicable federal statutes, including Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and Section 7 of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act.

Environmental compliance will need to carefully consider and document the existing environmental resources and sensitivities of the project site and surroundings, including federal (and state) biological and cultural resource studies. It appears from topographic maps and aerial photos that there are several existing residences in the immediate vicinity of the reservoir; these residences will require careful consideration of aesthetic and air emissions and noise during construction.

Environmental documents will need to address the concerns of various federal and state agencies with permit and approval jurisdiction of the project, including:

Federal

US Army Corps of Engineer

Federal Emergency Management Agency

California

Department of Fish and Wildlife
Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
State Historic Preservation Office
Native American Heritage Commission
Division of Dam Safety
Regional Water Control Board
SWRCB Water Rights
SWRCB Drinking Water
Calaveras Air Pollution Control District

## 1.4 Environmental Evaluation Checklist Terminology

The project's potential environmental effects are evaluated in the Environmental Evaluation Checklist presented in Chapter 3.0 of this IS/MND. The checklist includes a list of environmental considerations against which the project is evaluated. For each question, the CCWD determines whether the project would involve 1) a Potentially Significant Impact, 2) a Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated, 3) a Less Than Significant Impact, or 4) No Impact.

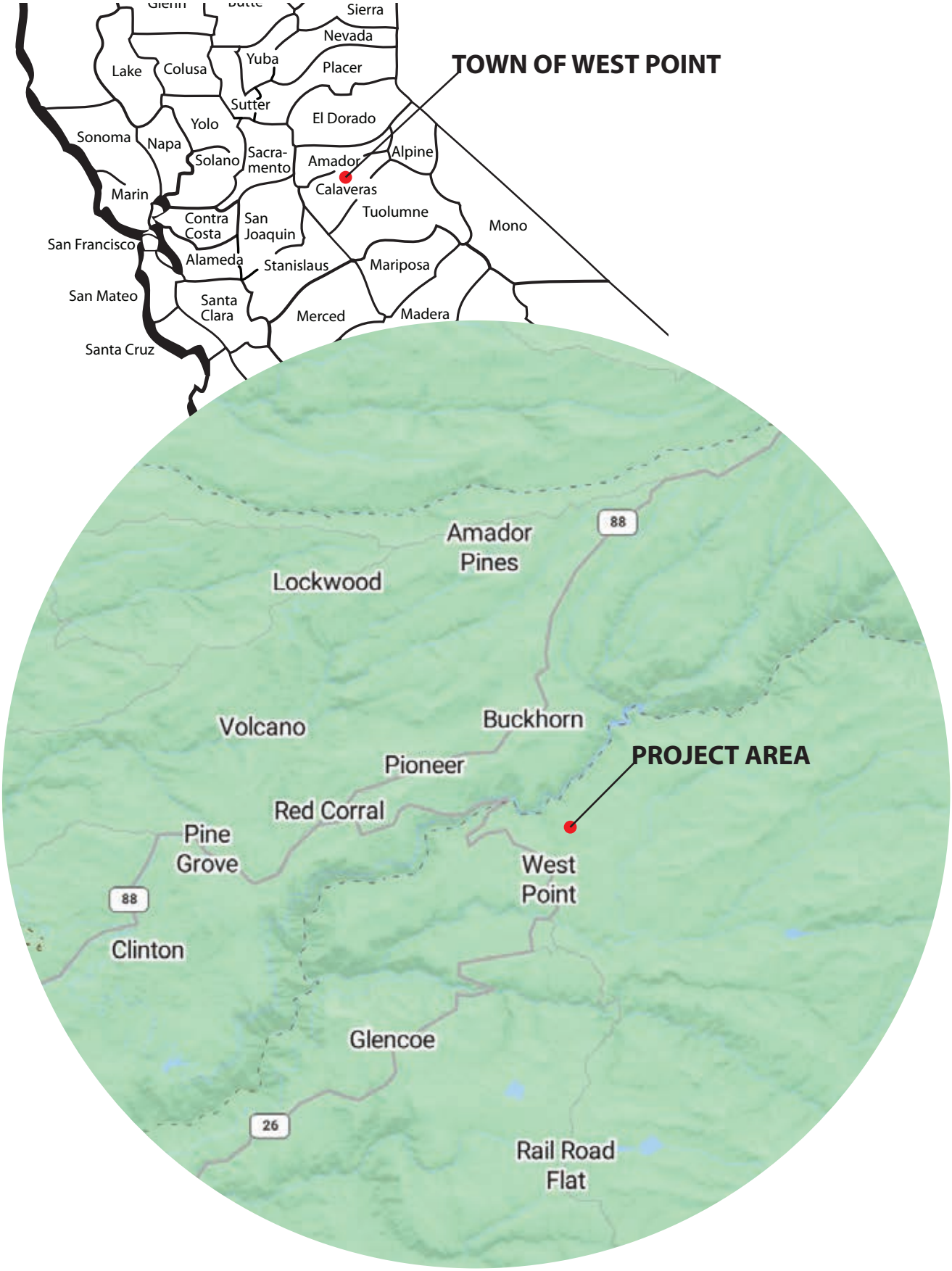
> A Potentially Significant Impact occurs when there is substantial evidence that the project would involve a substantial adverse change to the physical environment, i.e., the environmental effect may be significant, and mitigation measures have not been defined that would reduce the impact to a level that would be less than significant. If there is a Potentially Significant Impact entry in the Initial Study, then an EIR is required. No Potentially Significant Impacts are identified in this Initial Study.
>
> An environmental effect that is Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated is a Potentially Significant Impact that can be avoided or reduced to a level that is less than significant with the application of defined mitigation measures.
>
> A Less Than Significant Impact occurs when the project would involve an environmental impact, but the impact would not cause a substantial adverse change to the physical environment that would require mitigation.
>
> A determination of No Impact is self-explanatory.

This IS/MND identifies certain potentially significant environmental effects that would be mitigated by implementation of existing provisions of law and standards of practice related to land use planning and environmental protection. Such provisions are identified and considered in the environmental impact analysis, and the degree to which they would reduce potential environmental effects is discussed. These protections are considered part of the existing regulatory environment and are assumed to counter the potential environmental effects of the project as discussed. The need for additional mitigation measures described in this Initial Study occurs when such existing environmental

protections are not adequate to avoid potential environmental effects or to reduce them to a level that is less than significant.

## 1.5 Summary of Environmental Effects and Mitigation Measures

Table 1-1, which follows Figure 1-4, summarizes the results of the environmental analysis contained in the Environmental Evaluation Checklist in Chapter 3.0 of this IS/MND. The potential environmental impacts of the proposed project are listed in the left-most column of this table. The level of significance of each impact is indicated in the second column. Feasible mitigation measures that are considered necessary to avoid or minimize the impacts are shown in the third column, and the significance of the impact after mitigation measures are applied is shown in the fourth column.




BaseCamp Environmental

Figure 1-1
REGIONAL LOCATION MAP

BaseCamp Environmental

Figure 1-2
STREET MAP

Figure 1-3
USGS MAP

BaseCamp Environmental

Figure 1-4
AERIAL PHOTO

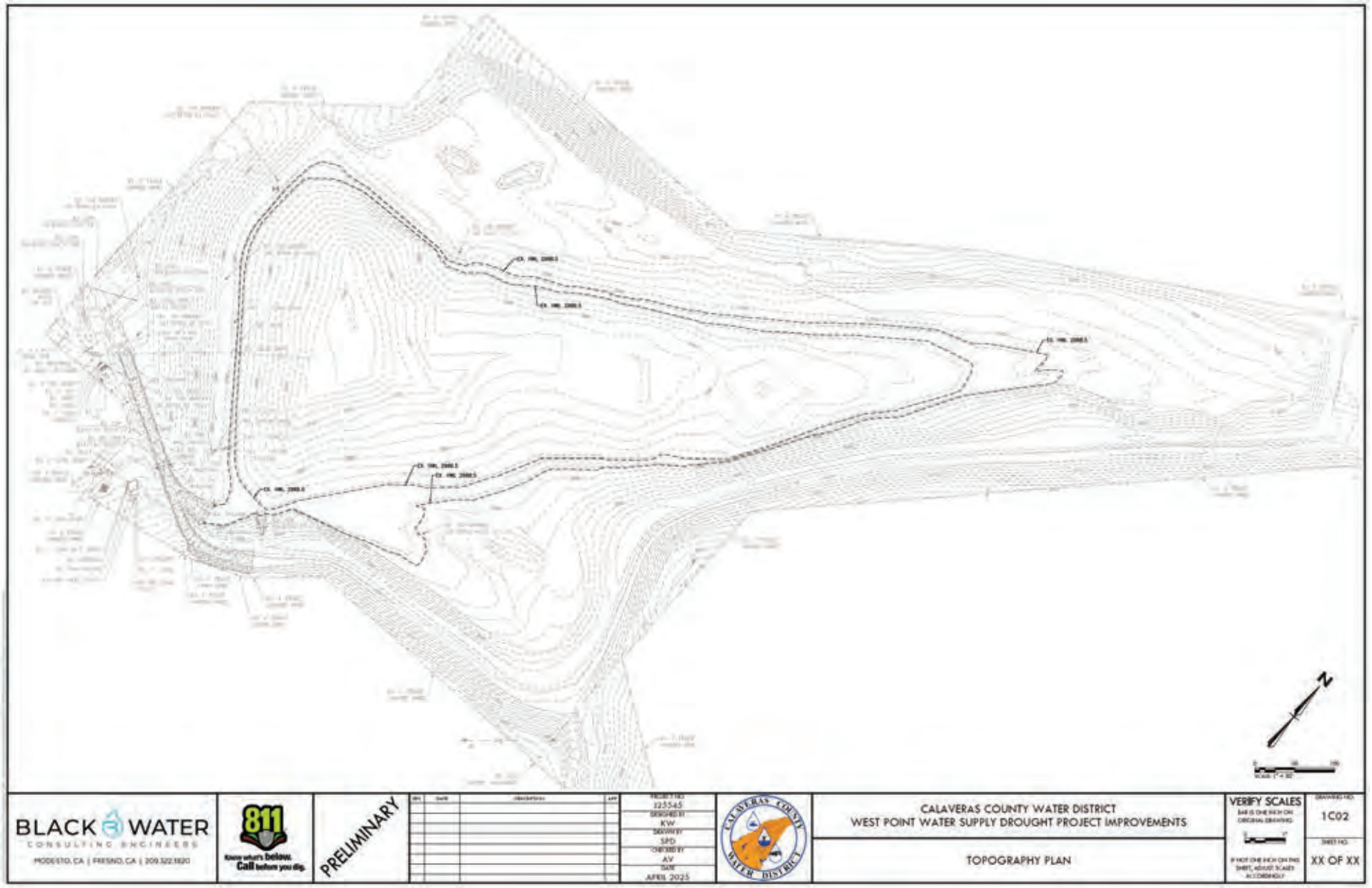



Figure 1-5
EXISTING TOPOGRAPHY

TABLE 1-1
SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

| Potential Impact | Significance Before Mitigation Measures | Mitigation Measures | Significance After Mitigation Measures |
|---|---|---|---|
| **3.1 AESTHETICS** | | | |
| a) Scenic Vistas | NI | None required. | - |
| b) Scenic Routes and Resources | NI | None required. | - |
| c) Visual Character and Quality | LS | None required. | - |
| d) Light and Glare | NI | None required. | - |
| **3.2 AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES** | | | |
| a) Agricultural Land Conversion | NI | None required. | - |
| b) Agricultural Zoning and Williamson Act | NI | None required. | - |
| c) Forest Land Zoning | NI | None required. | - |
| d) Forest Land Conversion | NI | None required. | - |
| e) Indirect Conversion of Farmland and Forest Land | NI | None required. | - |
| **3.3 AIR QUALITY** | | | |
| a) Air Quality Plan Consistency | LS | None required. | - |
| b) Cumulative Emissions | NI | None required. | - |
| c) Exposure of Sensitive Receptors | LS | None required. | - |
| d) Odors | NI | None required. | - |
| **3.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES** | | | |
| a) Special-Status Species | PS | BIO-1: A pre-construction survey for special-status species should be performed by a qualified biologist to ensure that special-status species are not present. The focal species | LS |

TABLE 1-1
SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

| Potential Impact | Significance Before Mitigation Measures | Mitigation Measures | Significance After Mitigation Measures |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | are scalloped moonwort, watershield, yellow-lip pansy monkeyflower, southern long-toed salamander, foothill yellow-legged frog, California red-legged frog, and western pond turtle. If any listed species are detected, construction should be delayed, and protection measures including avoidance measures, initiated defined by a qualified biologist in consultation with the appropriate wildlife agency (CDFW and/or USFWS). With the implementation of this mitigation measure, adverse impacts upon special-status species would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.<br><br>BIO-2: A qualified biologist, in consultation with CDFW and/or USFWS, should develop measures to avoid "take" of active nests prior to the initiation of any construction activities. Avoidance measures may include establishment of a buffer zone using construction fencing or the postponement of vegetation removal until after the nesting season, or until after a qualified biologist has determined the young have fledged and are independent of the nest site.<br><br>BIO-3: A pre-construction bat survey should be performed by a qualified biologist to ensure that bats are not roosting in trees that will be felled or near construction activities where a bat colony could be adversely affected. The focal species are silver-haired bat, hoary bat, long-legged myotis, Townsend's big-eared bat. If any bat roosts or colonies are detected, construction should be delayed, and the appropriate wildlife agency (CDFW and/or USFWS) should be consulted, avoidance measures initiated, and project impacts and mitigation reassessed. With the implementation of this mitigation measure, adverse impacts upon bat populations would be reduced to a less-than-significant level. | |

TABLE 1-1
SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

| Potential Impact | Significance Before Mitigation Measures | Mitigation Measures | Significance After Mitigation Measures |
|---|---|---|---|
| b) Riparian and Other Sensitive Habitats | NI | None required. | - |
| c) Wetlands and Waters of the U.S. | NI | None required. | - |
| d) Fish and Wildlife Movement | NI | None required. | - |
| e) Local Biological Requirements | NI | None required. | - |
| f) Conflict with Habitat Conservation Plans | NI | None required. | - |
| **3.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES** | | | |
| a) Historical Resources | NI | None required. | - |
| b) Archaeological Resources | PS | CULT-1: If buried cultural resources are inadvertently discovered during ground-disturbing activities, work shall stop within 30 feet of the find until a qualified archaeologist can assess the significance of the find. If necessary, the archaeologist will develop appropriate treatment measures in consultation with the Calaveras Public Utility District and other agencies as appropriate. Treatment measures may include, but are not limited to, preservation in place or excavation under supervision of a qualified archaeologist. | LS |
| c) Human Burials | LS | None required. | - |
| **3.6 ENERGY** | | | |
| a) Project Energy Consumption | LS | None required. | - |
| b) Consistency with Energy Plans | NI | None required. | - |
| **3.7 GEOLOGY AND SOILS** | | | |

TABLE 1-1
SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

| Potential Impact | Significance Before Mitigation Measures | Mitigation Measures | Significance After Mitigation Measures |
|---|---|---|---|
| a-i) Fault Rupture Hazards | NI | None required. | - |
| a-ii) Seismic Ground Shaking | LS | None required. | - |
| a-iii) Other Seismic Hazards | NI | None required. | - |
| a-iv) Landslides | NI | None required. | - |
| b) Soil Erosion | LS | None required. | - |
| c) Unstable Soils | LS | None required. | - |
| d) Expansive Soils | LS | None required. | - |
| e) Adequacy of Soils for Wastewater Disposal | NI | None required. | - |
| f) Paleontological Resources and Unique Geologic Features | PS | GEO-1: If buried paleontological resources are inadvertently discovered during ground-disturbing activities, work shall stop within 30 feet of the find until a qualified paleontologist can assess the significance of the find. If necessary, the paleontologist will develop appropriate treatment measures in consultation with the Calaveras Public Utility District and other agencies as appropriate. Treatment measures may include, but are not limited to, preservation in place or excavation under supervision of a qualified paleontologist. | LS |
| 3.8 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS | | | |
| a) Project GHG Emissions | LS | None required. | - |
| b) Consistency with GHG Reduction Plans | NI | None required. | - |
| 3.9 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS | | | |
| a) Hazardous Material Transport, Use and Storage | LS | None required. | - |

TABLE 1-1
SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

| Potential Impact | Significance Before Mitigation Measures | Mitigation Measures | Significance After Mitigation Measures |
|---|---|---|---|
| b) Release of Hazardous Materials by Upset or Accident | LS | None required. | - |
| c) Hazardous Materials Releases near Schools | NI | None required. | - |
| d) Hazardous Materials Sites | NI | None required. | - |
| e) Airport Operations | NI | None required. | - |
| f) Emergency Response and Evacuation | NI | None required. | - |
| g) Wildland Fire Hazards | LS | None required. | - |
| **3.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY** | | | |
| a) Violation of Water Quality Standards | LS | None required. | - |
| b) Groundwater Supplies and Recharge | NI | None required. | - |
| c-i) Erosion | NI | None required | - |
| c-ii, iii) Drainage Patterns and Runoff | NI | None required. | - |
| c-iv) Flood Flows | NI | None required. | - |
| d) Release of Pollutants in Flood Zone | NI | None required. | - |
| e) Conflict with Water Quality or Sustainable Groundwater Plans | LS | None required. | - |
| **3.11 LAND USE AND PLANNING** | | | |
| a) Division of Established Communities | NI | None required. | - |
| b) Conflict with Applicable Plans, Policies and Regulations Avoiding or Mitigating Environmental Effects | LS | None required. | - |

TABLE 1-1
SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

| Potential Impact | Significance Before Mitigation Measures | Mitigation Measures | Significance After Mitigation Measures |
|---|---|---|---|
| **3.12 MINERAL RESOURCES** | | | |
| a, b) Loss of Mineral Resource Availability | NI | None required. | - |
| **3.13 NOISE** | | | |
| a) Exposure to Noise Exceeding Local Standards | LS | None required. | - |
| b) Groundborne Vibrations | LS | None required. | - |
| c) Exposure to Airport/Airstrip Noise | NI | None required. | - |
| **3.14 POPULATION AND HOUSING** | | | |
| a) Unplanned Population Growth | NI | None required. | - |
| b, c) Displacement of Housing and People | NI | None required. | - |
| **3.15 PUBLIC SERVICES** | | | |
| a-i) Fire Protection | NI | None required. | - |
| a-ii) Police Protection | NI | None required. | - |
| a-iii) Schools | NI | None required. | - |
| a-iv) Parks | NI | None required. | - |
| a-v) Other Public Facilities | NI | None required. | - |
| **3.16 RECREATION** | | | |
| a, b) Recreational Facilities | NI | None required. | - |
| **3.17 TRANSPORTATION** | | | |
| a) Conflict with Transportation Plans, Ordinances and Policies | NI | None required. | - |

TABLE 1-1
SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

| Potential Impact | Significance Before Mitigation Measures | Mitigation Measures | Significance After Mitigation Measures |
|---|---|---|---|
| b) Conflict with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b) | NI | None required. | - |
| c) Traffic Hazards | NI | None required. | - |
| d) Emergency Access | NI | None required. | - |
| **3.18 TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES** | | | |
| a-i, ii) Tribal Cultural Resources | PS | Mitigation Measure CULT-1. | LS |
| **3.19 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS** | | | |
| a) Construction or Relocation of Infrastructure | LS | None required. | - |
| b) Water Supply | NI | None required. | - |
| c) Wastewater Systems | NI | None required. | - |
| d, e) Solid Waste Services | NI | None required. | - |
| **3.20 WILDFIRE** | | | |
| a) Emergency Response and Emergency Evacuation Plans | NI | None required. | - |
| b) Exposure of Project Occupants to Pollutants | NI | None required. | - |
| c) Installation and Maintenance of Infrastructure | NI | None required. | - |
| d) Risks from Runoff, Post-Fire Slope Instability, or Drainage Changes | NI | None required. | - |
| **3.21 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE** | | | |
| a) Findings on Biological and Cultural Resources | PS | Mitigation measures in Sections 3.4 and 3.5. | LS |

TABLE 1-1
SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

| Potential Impact | Significance Before Mitigation Measures | Mitigation Measures | Significance After Mitigation Measures |
|---|---|---|---|
| b) Findings on Individually Limited but Cumulatively Considerable Impacts | NI | None required. | - |
| c) Findings on Adverse Effects on Human Beings | LS | None required. | - |

Notes: NI = No Impact; LS = Less Than Significant; PS = Potentially Significant

# 2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

## 2.1 Project Location

The project site is the existing West Point Regulating Reservoir in Calaveras County, approximately 1.1 miles northeast of the community of West Point (see Figures 1-1 through 1-4). The existing reservoir is north of Winton Road at its intersection with Bummerville Road. The project site is shown on the U.S. Geological Survey's West Point, California, 7.5-minute quadrangle map as within Section 35, Township 7 North, Range 13 East, Mt. Diablo Base and Meridian. The latitude of the project site is approximately 38° 24′ 39″ North, and the longitude is approximately 120° 30′ 19″ West.

## 2.2 Project Details

The West Point Drought Water Supply project will involve modifications to the existing 35-foot high, 500-foot-long dam and reservoir to increase water storage capacity and enhance system performance. The proposed improvements include raising and enlarging the earthen dam towards the upstream side of the existing dam and excavating within the reservoir basin to increase capacity from 50 acre-feet (AF) to approximately 150 AF.

The dam embankment will be raised from elevation 2,991 to 3,003. The proposed high-water level within the reservoir will be at elevation 2,999. Upstream and downstream slopes will be 3 horizontal to 1 vertical (3H:1V). The low point in the reservoir will be unchanged at approximately elevation 2,961.

The existing concrete spillway will be redesigned and reconstructed. The conceptual plan for the spillway is a reinforced concrete open channel spillway measuring 3 feet deep by 10 feet wide.

Two borrow pits and one soil disposal area may be used for embankment material as part of the enlargement. The two borrow pits are located at the junction of Stephen P. Teale Highway and Associated Office Road in Sandy Gulch, CA, 3.1 acres, (APN 08025032) and on Smitty Lane near Winton Road in West Point, CA, 1.3 acres, (APN 08025032). The disposal area is located at 4027 Railroad Flat Road, in Wilseyville, CA, 3.9 acres, (APN 10019036).

Plans for expansion include the excavation of the bottom of the reservoir and expansion to the northeast with the construction of embankments, retaining walls, a wide-box culvert, and access roads around the outside of the embankment toe (Figure 2). In addition, the outlet pipe, which currently is located at the low point of the reservoir, is under consideration to be modified with a floating screen to reduce debris influx and improve oxygen levels. The existing bottom outlet piping will be retained and functional if for any reason the reservoir needs to be drawn down to minimum elevations.

Soils removed as part of the project will either be retained on site and used in the building of embankments or transported off site to the disposal area. The expanded reservoir will maintain a 15-foot-wide top embankment width, a 14-foot-wide spillway outfall with open channel section, and a minimum 12-foot-wide access roadway constructed around the outside of the embankment toe.

For the purposes of this IS/MND, assumed excavation and embankment construction volumes of 86,000 CY and 68,000 CY, respectively. Both of these activities would occur within the proposed reservoir footprint. Excavation volumes would exceed embankment construction volumes by approximately 20,000 cubic yards. Of this amount, it is possible that the entire amount would be used or stored on the project site; however, for the purposes of air quality emissions analysis, it was assumed that approximately half of that, or 10,000 CY, would be exported to a CCWD-owned storage site within three miles of the site.

Initially, the definition of the "project site" included two potential off-site borrow areas located in the West Point vicinity. As the geotechnical analysis of the project has proceeded, it appears that adequate embankment fill can be obtained from the reservoir site itself, and it is unlikely that import of additional embankment fill will not be necessary.

## 2.3 Permits and Approvals

The project would occur entirely on CCWD property. As such, the project and this IS/MND would require approval from the CCWD Board of Directors. The Board of Directors must consider adoption of the IS/MND prior to its decision on the project.

Should the project be approved, it is expected to require approvals or permits from other agencies. Specifically, the project would require a grading permit from Calaveras County and approval of a Fugitive Dust Prevention and Control Plan from the Calaveras County Air Pollution Control District (APCD).

The project geotechnical report when it is completed will be submitted to the California Division of Safety of Dams (DSOD) as part of the project design package. The geotechnical report has been completed to the 60% level and may require additional data collection and analysis in order to advance to the 90% design and obtain DSOD approval.

The project will require permits from resource management agencies, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Clean Water Act Section 404), the State Water Resources Control Board (Clean Water Act Section 401 (Water Quality Certification) and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Lake and Streambed Alteration) permits.

It is anticipated that the project would be funded largely by the SWRCB through its Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) program. An application for DWSRF funding will be presented to the SWRCB, including an Environmental Package that evaluates the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project under CEQA and NEPA, along with a Technical Package and a Financial Security Package. The Environmental Package will include the adopted version of this IS/MND for purposes of compliance with CEQA and other information related to compliance with NEPA. The SWRCB must approve the application, and a finalized agreement must be executed before

funding is disbursed. The SWRCB also has approval authority for a Construction General Permit that would need to be obtained for the project (see Section 3.7, Geology and Soils).

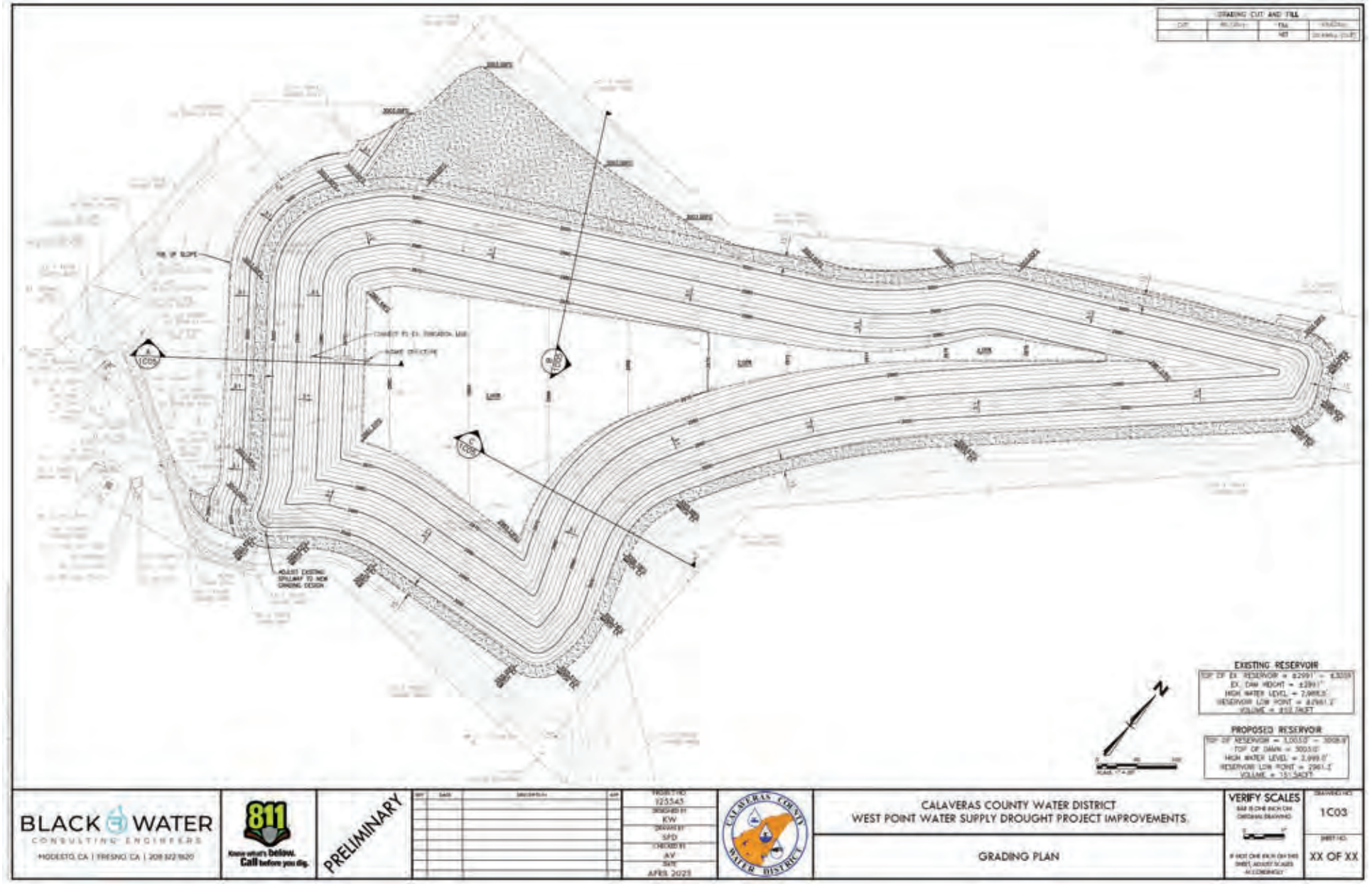
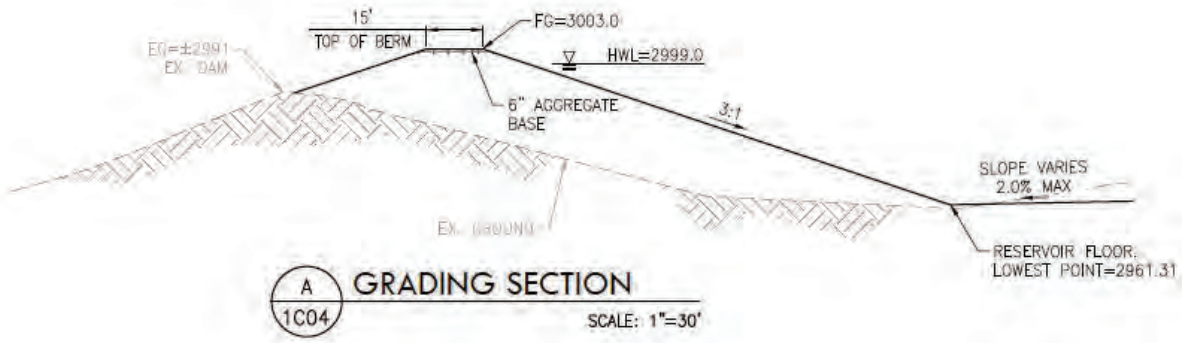
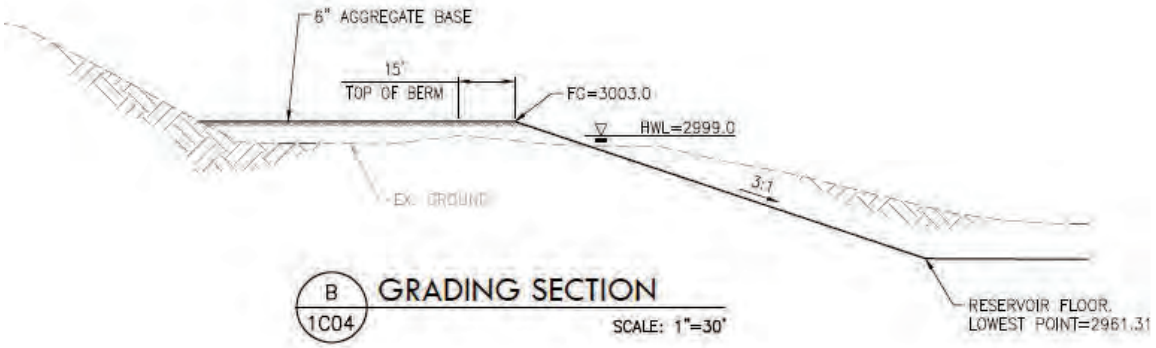
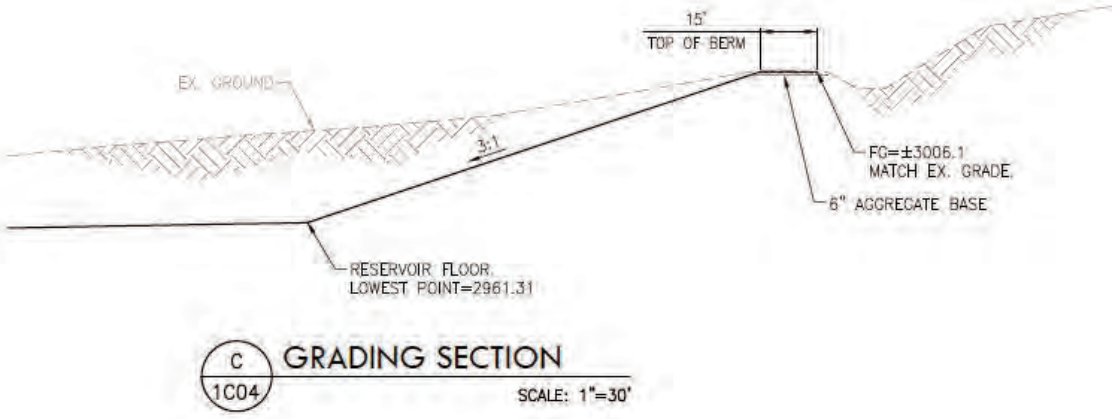



Figure 2-1
GRADING PLAN




**SOURCE:** Black Water Consulting and Engineering



Figure 2-2
GRADING SECTIONS

# 3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION CHECKLIST

The following environmental evaluation considers the potential environmental effects of City approval of the proposed project, as described in Chapter 2.0, Project Description. The format of this evaluation is based on the Environmental Checklist presented in CEQA Guidelines Appendix G.

## 3.1 AESTHETICS

| Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| c) In non-urbanized areas, 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ | ☐ |
| d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |

### Environmental Setting

The project site is the premises of the existing CCWD West Point Regulating Reservoir. The facilities are in the Sierra Nevada foothills of northern Calaveras County, and the overall landscape is mostly forested. This portion of Amador County has very little development generally, outside of small communities. The existing reservoir and the area proposed for expansion is bordered on two sides by existing low-density rural residential development.

The only scenic vista identified by the County General Plan consists of the Ebbetts Pass National Scenic Byway. The 58-mile stretch of State Route (SR) 4 and 89 known as the Scenic Byway is partially in Calaveras and Alpine Counties; 24 miles of the road is within Calaveras County from east of Arnold to the Alpine County line (Calaveras County 2018).

The project site is located more than 10 miles from the Ebbetts Pass National Scenic Byway. Nearby SR 26 is not assigned a State scenic designation. No other designated scenic highways are in the project vicinity.

The project site is not visible from any nearby publicly accessible vantage points, such as public roads. The project site is immediately visible from adjoining rural residential parcels. Mixed views of the reservoir surface and tree growth on surrounding lands are available to the adjoining residences.

The existing reservoir is, together with existing tree cover between the homes and the reservoir, an important foreground feature in views from the rear yards of these residences.

The project site has no existing lighting. Some night lighting associated with surrounding residences and CCWD water system facilities is visible from the reservoir. Lighting near the project site is limited to exterior lighting at these residences for the purposes of safety, security, and emergencies.

## Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

a) Scenic Vistas.

The project would have no impact on scenic vistas.

b) Scenic Routes and Resources.

There are no officially designated scenic resources on the project site. The project is within a forested area that may be considered scenic. However, project construction would occur exclusively on the WTP and reservoir sites. No trees would be removed as a result of the project.

The eastern portion of SR 4 in Calaveras County, which is part of the Ebbetts Pass byway, is also an officially designated State Scenic Highway (Caltrans 2019). As this segment of SR 4 is more than 10 miles away, and with intervening forested mountain land, the project site is not visible from this scenic highway. The project would have no impact on scenic resources or scenic highways.

c) Visual Character and Quality.

A recent change to the Environmental Checklist in CEQA Guidelines Appendix G emphasizes aesthetic and visual resource impacts on public views in non-urbanized areas. As defined in Appendix G, “public views” are views that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage points. Although not specifically defined, “publicly accessible vantage points” are assumed to include, though not necessarily limited to, public roads, parks, trails, and vista turnouts.

The project is in a relatively lightly-developed area with restricted access. Views of the existing reservoir are not available from public roads in the area, but the site is visible from adjacent residential lots. Views from these areas would be substantially affected during tree removal and grading associated with reservoir enlargement, but the existing 50 acre-foot reservoir would be replaced by the larger 150 acre-foot reservoir. Existing tree cover surrounding the reservoir would be removed or thinned as a part of the project. The long-term view of the reservoir would be modified by the enlargement of the water feature and reduction of existing forest cover.

The changes to the reservoir would not involve a visual intrusion on the existing landscape as viewed from the adjacent residential uses. Project impacts on visual character and quality would be less than significant.

d) Light and Glare.

The project does not propose the installation of lighting. Materials used by the project are not expected to generate glare, and in any case would not affect views from public roads or from areas outside the project site. The project would have no impact related to light or glare.

## 3.2 AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

| Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) 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 Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| e) Involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |

## Environmental Setting

The project is within a forested area of Calaveras County. Timberland in Calaveras County is under both public and private ownership and is concentrated in the eastern portion of the County generally at elevations above 2,500 feet. Timber production values have fluctuated widely in the County. In 1999, timber production represented more than half of the total agricultural production value countywide (Calaveras County 2019). However, in 2022, timber production value in the County was $91,137, less than 0.5% of the total value of agricultural production of Calaveras County and a 96% decrease from the 2021 value. One of the contributing factors of this decrease was brought on by lack of demand from the housing market (Calaveras County 2022).

The Important Farmland Maps, prepared by the California Department of Conservation as part of its Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, designate the viability of lands for farmland use, based on the physical and chemical properties of the soils. The maps categorize farmland as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance. Collectively, these three categories are referred to as "Farmland" by CEQA Guidelines Appendix G. There are also designations for other agricultural land, grazing land and for urban/built-up areas, among others. According to the 2020 Important Farmland Map of Calaveras County, the project is on land designated Grazing Land (FMMP 2020). According to the FMMP map, there is no Farmland in the project vicinity.

## Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

a) Farmland Conversion.

As noted, the project site is in an area designated as Grazing Land. Some nearby lands in and around West Point Project are designated Urban and Built-Up land. CEQA Guidelines Appendix G defines Farmland as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. None of these designations apply to the project site or vicinity. The project would have no impact on Farmland conversion.

b) Agricultural Zoning and Williamson Act.

The project site and surrounding area is zoned RA to accommodate forestry, agricultural and residential uses. Public works and utilities are allowed with a Conditional Use Permit. The project would be confined to the existing regulating reservoir site and would not interfere with any existing agricultural or forestry use in the vicinity.

The Williamson Act is State legislation that seeks to preserve farmland by offering property tax breaks to farmers who sign a contract pledging to keep their land in agricultural use. There are no lands in the project area subject to Williamson Act contracts. The project would have no impact related to agricultural zoning or Williamson Act contracts.

c) Forest Land Zoning.

As noted in b) above, the project is within an RA zone, which allows for forestry activities by right and allows for public works and utilities. The project involves improvements to an existing water reservoir; proposed enlargement of the reservoir would not introduce a new use type to the site, or any potential for conflicts with the RA zone. The project would have no impact on forest land zoning.

d) Forest Land Conversion.

The project is within a forested area. However, the proposed facilities would be in an area that has already been developed with the existing regulating reservoir and other CCWD water system facilities. It is expected that a substantial number of trees would be need to be removed within the expanded area to be inundated; outside of the project footprint, the surrounding forested area would remain in timber management.

The project site is owned by CCWD, a public agency, and is intended for water resource development. This site does not appear to meet the definition of timber land as defined by the Public Resources Code:

Enlargement of the existing reservoir use will require permanent removal of the existing tree cover. Whether the project will involve timber land conversion as defined by the Public Resources Code will need to be determined, and if require a timber conversion permit will need to be obtained.

e) Indirect Conversion of Farmland and Forest Land.

The project would involve improvements to an existing reservoir and WTP. As noted, there is no designated Farmland in the project vicinity, so the project would have no impact regarding indirect conversion of Farmland. The project would not involve the installation of infrastructure, such as roads, that could encourage the conversion of the existing forested area to non-forest use. The project would have no impact on the indirect conversion of forest land.

## 3.3 AIR QUALITY

| Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable Air Quality Attainment Plan? | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ | ☐ |
| b) 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations? | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ | ☐ |
| d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |

## Environmental Setting

Relatively few sources of air pollutant emissions are located within Calaveras County. However, air quality impacts occur through the transport of pollutants from the more developed Central Valley to the County. Therefore, while sources of emissions within the County may be limited, the transport of emissions from outside of the County can negatively impact air quality within the County. The most visible impacts to air quality originating within the County are a result of open burning of vegetation related to property owners, industrial activities, and state agencies (Calaveras County 2018).

The Calaveras County Air Pollution Control District (CCAPCD) is responsible for protecting public health by managing the County's air quality, and for achieving or maintaining ambient air quality standards set under both federal and California Clean Air Acts. Except for ozone and particulate matter less than 10 micrometers ($PM_{10}$), the Air Basin is in attainment of, or unclassified for, all federal and State ambient air quality standards. Ozone is not emitted directly into the air but is formed when reactive organic gases (ROG) and nitrogen oxides (NOx) react in the atmosphere in the presence of sunlight. $PM_{10}$ is a mixture of solid and liquid particles suspended in air, including dust, pollen, soot, smoke, and liquid droplets.

In addition to the criteria pollutants, the ARB has identified other air pollutants as toxic air contaminants (TACs) - pollutants that are carcinogenic (i.e., cause cancer) or that may cause other adverse short-term or long-term health effects. Diesel particulate matter, considered a carcinogen, is the most common TAC, as it is a product of combustion in diesel engines. It is present at some concentration in all developed areas of the state. Other TACs are less common and are typically associated with industrial operations.

a) Air Quality Plan Consistency.

In order to evaluate air pollutant emissions from development projects, the CCAPCD established project-level significance thresholds for emissions of ROG, $NO_x$, and $PM_{10}$. The significance thresholds, expressed in pounds per day, serve as air quality standards in the evaluation of air quality impacts associated with proposed development projects. Thus, if a proposed project's emissions exceed the CCAPCD thresholds, the projects could have a significant effect on regional air quality and attainment of federal and State ambient air quality standards and may require mitigation. Table 3-1 shows the CEQA thresholds for significance for construction pollutant emissions within the CCAPCD together with estimated ROG, Nox and PM10 emissions for the project.

TABLE 3-1
CCAPCD SIGNIFICANCE THRESHOLDS AND
PROJECT AIR POLLUTANT EMISSIONS

| | ROG | $NO_x$ | $PM_{10}$ |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Construction Significance Thresholds** | **150** | **150** | **150** |
| Project Construction Emissions | 5.32 | 32.28 | 47.44 |
| *Above Threshold?* | *No* | *No* | *No* |

Note: All figures are in pounds per day. Construction emissions are maximum daily summer values.
Sources: EPA technical memos, CalEEMod version 2022.1, CCAPCD undated.

Potential project emissions of the criteria pollutants shown in the table were calculated by Environmental Permitting Specialists (EPS) based on assumed excavation and embankment construction volumes of 86,000 CY and 68,000 CY, respectively. Both of these activities would occur within the proposed reservoir footprint. Excavation volumes would exceed embankment construction volumes by approximately 20,000 cubic yards. Of this amount, it is possible that the entire amount would be used or stored on the project site; however, for the purposes of air quality emissions analysis, it was assumed that approximately half of that, or 10,000 CY, would be exported to a CCWD-owned storage site within three miles of the site. Estimated emissions based on these assumptions are shown in the table.

As indicated in Table 3-1, estimated construction emissions would be substantially below the significance thresholds established by CCAPCD for criteria pollutant emissions addressed by the thresholds. As the significance thresholds were established in part to ensure consistency with the objectives of air quality attainment plans adopted by the CCAPCD, project construction emissions would not conflict with these plans.

While project construction emissions would not be significant, the project would still be required to comply with applicable CCAPCD rules and regulations, which would further reduce potential air quality impacts. These regulations contain measures to reduce fugitive

dust emissions during construction. Dust control provisions are routinely included in site improvement plans and specifications, along with construction contracts.

After construction work is completed, the project would not generate any substantial air pollutant emissions from operations. Project impacts related to air quality plans would be less than significant.

b) Cumulative Emissions.

As noted in a) above, the project would not generate any substantial emissions once construction work is completed. Future attainment of federal and State ambient air quality standards is a function of successful implementation of the CCAPCD's attainment plans. Consequently, the application of significance thresholds for criteria pollutants is relevant to the determination of whether a project's individual emissions would have a cumulatively significant impact on air quality.

Pursuant to the CCAPCD's guidance, if project-specific emissions are less than the thresholds of significance for criteria pollutants, the project would not be expected to result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant. As the project would not generate any substantial operational emissions, it would not have a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant and therefore would have no impact on this issue.

c) Exposure of Sensitive Receptors.

"Sensitive receptors" are people particularly sensitive to air pollutants, including children, the elderly, and people with health issues. They also include land uses where such people may congregate, such as residences, schools, parks and playgrounds, nursing homes, and hospitals. There are several residences in the immediate vicinity of the project site EPS quantified potential diesel particulate emissions from use of construction equipment in constructing the enlarged reservoir and the associated cancer and health risks posed to nearby residences associated with these emissions. The calculated health risks of these project emissions to nearby residences are substantially below State standards of significance. As a result, the project would not involve any significant health risks associated with construction emission. As noted, project operations would not generate any substantial air pollutant emissions impacts on sensitive receptors. Project impacts on sensitive receptors would be less than significant.

d) Odors and Other Emissions.

The project does not involve any features that would generate any new or increased odors associated with WTP operations. Construction equipment could generate exhaust that would be considered odorous. However, exposure would be limited, and the exhaust emissions would quickly dissipate.

Construction emissions would likely include diesel particulate matter, which is a TAC. However, these emissions would have adverse effects on sensitive receptors only with long-term exposure, and diesel particulate emissions would cease once construction work

is completed. No diesel particulate matter would be generated by project operations. The project would have no impact related to odors or other emissions.

## 3.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

| Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Adversely impact, either directly or through habitat modifications, any endangered, rare, or threatened species, as listed in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (Sections 670.2 or 670.5) or in Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations (Sections 17.11 or 17.12)? | ☐ | ✓ | ☐ | ☐ |
| b) 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 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| c) 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| d) 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Conservation Community Plan, or other | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |

approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?

Information for this section is provided mainly from a field survey, biological assessment and aquatic resources delineation report for the project prepared by Graening and Associates in 2025, The biological assessment is shown in Appendix B of this IS/MND.

## Environmental Setting

The Graening Biological Assessment provides information about the biological resources within the project area, the regulatory environment affecting such resources, any potential project-related impacts upon these resources, and finally, to identify mitigation measures and other recommendations to reduce the significance of these impacts, if any Graening's specific scope of services performed for this assessment consisted of the following tasks:

- Compile all readily-available historical biological resource information about the Project Area;
- Spatially query state and federal databases for any occurrences of special-status species or habitats within the project area and vicinity;
- Perform a reconnaissance-level field survey of the project area, including photographic documentation;
- Inventory all flora and fauna observed during the field survey;
- Characterize and map the habitat types present within the project area, including any potentially-jurisdictional water resources;
- Evaluate the likelihood for the occurrence of any special-status species;
- Assess the potential for the project to adversely impact any sensitive biological resources;
- Recommend mitigation measures designed to avoid or minimize project-related impacts; and
- Prepare and submit a report summarizing all of the above tasks.

The project area is located within the cis-montane Sierra Nevada mountains geographic subregion, which is contained within the Sierra Nevada Mountains geographic subdivision of the larger California Floristic Province (Baldwin et al. 2012). The Study Area is in Climate Zone 2b "Warmer-Summer Intermountain Climate", characterized by milder summers and longer and colder winters than in the Central Valley. The topography of the area is a broad valley incised by a small stream, but it has been altered by the creation of the existing reservoir. The general direction of surface runoff in the area is into the reservoir and then to the southwest in an unnamed channel. The elevation ranges from approximately 2,950 feet to 3,060 feet above mean sea level. The land uses of the area

include the water supply reservoir, open space, rural estates, forestry open space, transportation corridors, and grazing land.

Consulting biologist Dr. Geo Graening conducted a reconnaissance-level field survey on March 27, 2025. Survey efforts emphasized the search for any special-status species that had documented occurrences in the CNDDB within the vicinity of the Project Area and those species on the USFWS species list. Additional methodology information is shown in IS/MND Appendix B.

The locations of any special-status species sighted were marked on aerial photographs and/or georeferenced with a geographic positioning system (GPS) receiver. Habitat types occurring in the project area were mapped on aerial photographs, and information on habitat conditions and the suitability of the habitats to support special-status species was also recorded (see Figure 3-1). The project area was also informally assessed for the presence of potentially-jurisdictional water features, including riparian zones, isolated wetlands and vernal pools, and other biologically-sensitive aquatic habitats.

The boundaries of potentially jurisdictional water resources within the Project Area were identified mapped and measured in the field. were classified using the CNPS vegetation classification system. Preliminary wetland delineation methods consisted of an abbreviated, visual assessment of the three requisite wetland parameters (hydrophytic vegetation, hydric soils, hydrologic regime) defined in the US Army Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual. Wildlife habitats were classified according to the CDFW's California Wildlife Habitat Relationships System.

All plants detected during the field survey of the project area are listed in Appendix B. The following animals were detected within the project area during the field survey: moths and butterflies; ants; Canada goose; great blue heron; red-winged blackbird; Stellar's jay; spotted towhee; northern flicker; black phoebe; song sparrow; hermit thrush; yellow-rumped warbler; acorn woodpecker; golden-crowned sparrow; chipping sparrow; black tailed deer; and Pacific chorus frog. No federally-listed species were detected. No special-status species were detected.

General vegetation communities occurring in the Project Area were mapped (Figure 3-1) specifically, including the following terrestrial natural communities:

- Pinus ponderosa - Calocedrus decurrens - Pseudotsuga menziesii Forest & Woodland Alliance (Ponderosa pine - Incense Cedar - Douglas fir forest and woodland)
- Quercus (agrifolia, douglasii, garryana, kelloggii, lobata, wislizeni) Forest & Woodland Alliance (Mixed oak forest and woodland)
- Arctostaphylos viscida Shrubland Alliance (Whiteleaf manzanita chaparral)
- Ceanothus cuneatus Shrubland Alliance (Buck brush chaparral)
- Typha (angustifolia, domingensis, latifolia) Herbaceous Alliance (Cattail marshes)

- Juncus - Carex Herbaceous Alliance (Rush - sedge marshes)
- Salix gooddingii - Salix laevigata Forest & Woodland Alliance (Goodding's willow - red willow riparian woodland and forest)

In addition to these natural communities, the project area contains open water (in the reservoir) and ruderal/developed areas (the roads, the dam, etc.).

The CNDDB reported no special-status habitats within the project area. The CNDDB reported the following special-status habitats in a 10-mile radius outside of the Project Area: Central Valley Drainage Hardhead/Squawfish Stream; Central Valley Drainage Resident Rainbow Trout Stream; Ione chaparral; Sacramento-San Joaquin Foothill/Valley Ephemeral Stream.

No critical habitat for any federally-listed species occurs within the project area. The following special-status habitats were detected within the Project Area during the field survey: riparian habitat and wetlands.

Wildlife movement corridors link remaining areas of functional wildlife habitat that are separated primarily by human disturbance, but natural barriers such as rugged terrain and abrupt changes in vegetation cover are also possible. Wilderness and open lands have been fragmented by urbanization, which can disrupt migratory species and separate interbreeding populations. Corridors allow migratory movements and act as links between the separated populations. The Bear Creek river corridor functions as a wildlife corridor; Bear Creek also contains fishery resources.

The project area is not located within any adopted Habitat Conservation Plan or Natural Community Conservation Plan.

Special Status Plant Species

During the field survey, no special-status plant on wildlife species were detected within the project area. The aquatic habitats within the project area have the potential for harboring three special-status plant species: scalloped moonwort, watershield, and yellow-lip pansy monkeyflower.

The CNDDB reported no special-status species occurrences within the project area. No special status plants were reported by the USFWS within a 10-mile buffer of the project area boundary, the CNDDB reported several special-status species occurrences, summarized in the table in Appendix B along with any additional CNPS plant species.

Special Status Wildlife Species

A USFWS wildlife species list was generated online using the USFWS' IPaC Trust Resource Report System (see Appendix B). This list is generated using a regional and/or watershed approach and does not necessarily indicate that the project area provides suitable habitat. The following listed species should be considered in the impact assessment:

- Gray Wolf (*Canis lupus*) Endangered

- California Spotted Owl (*Strix occidentalis occidentalis*) Proposed Threatened
- Northwestern Pond Turtle (*Actinemys marmorata*) Proposed Threatened
- California Red-legged Frog (*Rana draytonii)* Threatened
- Foothill Yellow-legged Frog (*Rana boylii, South Sierra Distinct Population Segment*) Endangered
- Western Spadefoot (*Spea hammondii*) Proposed Threatened
- Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) Proposed Threatened

Numerous migratory bird species protected under the Migratory Bird Species Act have potential to occur the project area and are considered in the following impact analysis

The aquatic habitats within the Project Area have the potential for harboring four special-status animal species: southern long-toed salamander (Ambystoma macrodactylum sigillatum), foothill yellow-legged frog, California red-legged frog, and western pond turtle (Emys marmorata).

The forest habitats within the project area have the potential for harboring special-status bat and bird species, specifically: silver-haired bat (Lasionycteris noctivagans), hoary bat (Lasiurus cinereus), long-legged myotis (Myotis volans), Townsend's big-eared bat (Corynorhinus townsendii), great gray owl (Strix nebulosa), and sharp-shinned hawk (Accipiter striatus).

Wetlands and Waters

The USFWS National Wetland Inventory reported three water features within the project area (see Figures 3-2 and 3-3) the reservoir; the stream feeding in to the reservoir; and the stream leaving the reservoir. A formal assessment for the presence of potentially jurisdictional water resources within the project area was also conducted during the field survey and reported in a separate report, also shown in Appendix B. The waters inventoried by Graening are shown on Figures 3-2 and 3-3 listed.

Upper channel: 3,846 sq. ft.; 0.088 acre; 445 linear feet; this is the unnamed intermittent channel that flows into the reservoir; it has a cobble bottom and is surrounded by riparian forest

Spillway: 3,449 sq. ft.; 0.079 acre; 280 linear feet; this is a shallow, concrete-lined, trapezoidal canal; devoid of vegetation

Lower channel: 394 sq. ft.; 0.009 acre; 59 linear feet; it has a cobble/bedrock bottom; it is fed by the spillway via a pipe culvert; cattails and reeds (Juncus) dominate.

Marsh, lacustrine: 48,485 sq. ft.; 1.113 acres; this is a series of emergent wetlands that are dominated by cattails

Marsh palustrine: 1,790 sq. ft.; 0.041 acre; this is a small, seasonal emergent wetland that is dominated by sedges and reeds

Marsh, upper: 4,221 sq. ft.; 0.097 acre; this is seasonal emergent wetland that is dominated by cattails and is created by the road over the upper channel; a pipe culvert connects it to the downstream channel

Marsh, lower: 165 sq. ft.; 0.004 acre; this is a seasonal emergent marsh that is between the spillway and the pipe culvert leading to the lower channel.

Open water: 154,515 sq. ft.; 3.547 acres This is the open water of West Point Regulating Reservoir at max. pool height (OHWM).

Southside riparian: 10,197 sq. ft.; 0.234 acre; this is a narrow band of riparian forest on the southside of the upper channel; it is dominated by willows and alders

Northside riparian: coordinates 13,096 sq. ft.; 0.301 acre; this is a narrow band of riparian forest on the northside of the upper channel; it is dominated by willows and alders

## REGULATORY SETTING

Special-status Species Regulations

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service implement the Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 (FESA) (16 USC §1531 et seq.). Threatened and endangered species on the federal list (50 CFR §17.11, 17.12) are protected from "take" (direct or indirect harm), unless a FESA Section 10 Permit is granted or a FESA Section 7 Biological Opinion with incidental take provisions is rendered. Pursuant to the requirements of FESA, an agency reviewing a proposed project within its jurisdiction must determine whether any federally listed species may be present in the project area and determine whether the proposed project will have a potentially significant impact upon such species. Under FESA, habitat loss is considered to be an impact to the species. In addition, the agency is required to determine whether the project is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any species proposed to be listed under FESA or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat proposed to be designated for such species (16 USC §1536[3], [4]). Therefore, project-related impacts to these species or their habitats would be considered significant and would require mitigation. Species that are candidates for listing are not protected under FESA; however, USFWS advises that a candidate species could be elevated to listed status at any time, and therefore, applicants should regard these species with special consideration.

The California Endangered Species Act of 1970 (CESA) (California Fish and Game Code §2050 et seq., and CCR Title 14, §670.2, 670.51) prohibits "take" (defined as hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill) of species listed under CESA. A CESA permit must be obtained if a project will result in take of listed species, either during construction or over the life of the project. Section 2081 establishes an incidental take permit program for state-listed species. Under CESA, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has the responsibility for maintaining a list of threatened and endangered species designated under

state law (CFG Code 2070). CDFW also maintains lists of species of special concern, which serve as "watch lists." Pursuant to requirements of CESA, an agency reviewing proposed projects within its jurisdiction must determine whether any state-listed species may be present in the project area and determine whether the proposed project will have a potentially significant impact upon such species. Project-related impacts to species on the CESA list would be considered significant and would require mitigation.

California Fish and Game Code Sections 4700, 5050, and 5515 designates certain mammal, amphibian, and reptile species "fully protected," making it unlawful to take, possess, or destroy these species except under issuance of a specific permit. The California Native Plant Protection Act of 1977 (CFG Code §1900 et seq.) requires CDFW to establish criteria for determining if a species or variety of native plant is endangered or rare. Section 19131 of the code requires that landowners notify CDFW at least 10 days prior to initiating activities that will destroy a listed plant to allow the salvage of plant material.

Many bird species, especially those that are breeding, migratory, or of limited distribution, are protected under federal and state regulations. Under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (16 USC §703-711), migratory bird species and their nests and eggs that are on the federal list (50 CFR §10.13) are protected from injury or death, and project-related disturbances must be reduced or eliminated during the nesting cycle. California Fish and Game Code (§3503, 3503.5, and 3800) prohibits the possession, incidental take, or needless destruction of any bird nests or eggs. Fish and Game Code §3511 designates certain bird species "fully protected", making it unlawful to take, possess, or destroy these species except under issuance of a specific permit. The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (16 USC §668) specifically protects bald and golden eagles from harm or trade in parts of these species.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code §15380) defines "rare" in a broader sense than the definitions of threatened, endangered, or fully protected. Under the CEQA definition, CDFW can request additional consideration of species not otherwise protected. CEQA requires that the impacts of a project upon environmental resources must be analyzed and assessed using criteria determined by the lead agency. Sensitive species that would qualify for listing but are not currently listed may be afforded protection under CEQA. The CEQA Guidelines (§15065) require that a substantial reduction in numbers of a rare or endangered species be considered a significant effect. CEQA Guidelines (§15380) provide for assessment of unlisted species as rare or endangered under CEQA if the species can be shown to meet the criteria for listing. Plant species on the California Native Plant Society CRPR Lists 1A, 1B, or 2 are typically considered rare under CEQA. California "Species of Special Concern" is a category conferred by CDFW on those species that are indicators of regional habitat changes or are considered potential future protected species. While they do not have statutory protection, Species of Special Concern are typically considered rare under CEQA and thereby warrant specific protection measures.

Water Resource Protection

Real property that contains water resources are subject to various federal and state regulations and activities occurring in these water resources may require permits, licenses, variances, or similar authorization from federal, state and local agencies, as described next.

The Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972 (as amended), commonly known as the Clean Water Act (CWA), established the basic structure for regulating discharges of pollutants into "waters of the United States". Waters of the US includes essentially all surface waters, all interstate waters and their tributaries, all impoundments of these waters, and all wetlands adjacent to these waters. CWA Section 404 requires approval prior to dredging or discharging fill material into any waters of the US, especially wetlands. The permitting program is designed to minimize impacts to waters of the US, and when impacts cannot be avoided, requires compensatory mitigation. The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is responsible for administering Section 404 regulations. Substantial impacts to jurisdictional wetlands may require an Individual Permit. Small-scale projects may require only a Nationwide Permit, which typically has an expedited process compared to the Individual Permit process. Mitigation of wetland impacts is required as a condition of the CWA Section 404 Permit and may include on-site preservation, restoration, or enhancement and/or off-site restoration or enhancement. The characteristics of the restored or enhanced wetlands must be equal to or better than those of the affected wetlands to achieve no net loss of wetlands.

Under CWA Section 401, every applicant for a federal permit or license for any activity which may result in a discharge to a water body must obtain State Water Quality Certification that the proposed activity will comply with State water quality standards. The California State Water Resources Control Board is responsible for administering CWA Section 401 regulations.

California Fish and Game Code (§1601 - 1607) protects fishery resources by regulating "any activity that may substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow or substantially change the bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream, or lake." CDFW requires notification prior to commencement, and issuance of a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement, if a proposed project will result in the alteration or degradation of ''waters of the State"(Figures 3-3). The limit of CDFW jurisdiction is subject to the judgment of the Department; currently, this jurisdiction is interpreted to be the "stream zone", defined as "that portion of the stream channel that restricts lateral movement of water" and delineated at "the top of the bank or the outer edge of any riparian vegetation, whichever is more landward". CDFW reviews the proposed actions and, if necessary, submits to the applicant a proposal for measures to protect affected fish and wildlife resources. The final proposal that is mutually agreed upon by the CDFW and the applicant is the Streambed Alteration Agreement. Projects that require a Streambed Alteration Agreement may also require a CWA 404 Section Permit and/or CWA Section 401 Water Quality Certification.

Tree Protection

At the State level, on private timberland, tree removal is subject to the conditions and requirements set forth in the Z'berg-Nejedly Forest Practice Act and the California Forest

Practice Rules. If development of a project will result in the removal of commercial tree species, one of the following permits is needed: Less than 3 Acre Conversion Exemption; Christmas Tree; Dead, Dying or Diseased, Fuelwood, or Split Products Exemption; a Public Agency, Public and Private Utility Right of Way Exemption; a Notice of Exemption from Timberland Conversion Permit for Subdivision; or an Application for Timberland Conversion Permit. The forested CCWD lands may or may not be subject to these requirements. This will need to be determined during further review of the project.

## Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The limits of grading encompass an area of approximately 11.7 acres.

a) Special-Status Species.

The project site aquatic habitats have the potential for harboring three special-status plant species: scalloped moonwort, watershield, and yellow-lip pansy monkeyflower. The aquatic habitats have the potential for harboring four special-status animal species: southern long-toed salamander, foothill yellow-legged frog, California red-legged frog, and western pond turtle. The forest habitats within the project area have the potential for harboring the following special-status bat and bird species: silver-haired bat, hoary bat, long-legged myotis, Townsend's big-eared bat, great gray owl, and sharp-shinned hawk. During the field survey, no listed species or special-status species were observed within the project area. However, special-status species could be undetected or they could migrate into project areas between the time that the field survey was completed and the start of construction. This is a potentially significant impact before mitigation.

Special-status bird and bat species were reported in databases (CNDDB and USFWS) in the vicinity of the project area. The project area contains suitable nesting and roosting habitat for various bird and bat species. If construction activities are conducted during the nesting season or the bat roosting birds, nesting birds or roosting bats could be directly impacted by tree removal and indirectly impacted by noise, vibration, and other construction-related disturbance. Project construction is considered a potentially significant adverse impact to nesting birds and roosting bats. With the implementation of Mitigation Measure Bio-1, adverse impacts upon special-status species would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Level of Service: Potentially significant

Mitigation Measures:

BIO-1: A pre-construction survey for special-status species should be performed by a qualified biologist to ensure that special-status species are not present. The focal species are scalloped moonwort, watershield, yellow-lip pansy monkeyflower, southern long-toed salamander, foothill yellow-legged frog, California red-legged frog, and western pond turtle. If any listed species are detected, construction should be delayed, and protection measures including avoidance measures, initiated defined by a qualified biologist in

consultation with the appropriate wildlife agency (CDFW and/or USFWS). With the implementation of this mitigation measure, adverse impacts upon special-status species would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

BIO-2: A qualified biologist, in consultation with CDFW and/or USFWS, should develop measures to avoid "take" of active nests prior to the initiation of any construction activities. Avoidance measures may include establishment of a buffer zone using construction fencing or the postponement of vegetation removal until after the nesting season, or until after a qualified biologist has determined the young have fledged and are independent of the nest site.

BIO-3: A pre-construction bat survey should be performed by a qualified biologist to ensure that bats are not roosting in trees that will be felled or near construction activities where a bat colony could be adversely affected. The focal species are silver-haired bat, hoary bat, long-legged myotis, Townsend's big-eared bat. If any bat roosts or colonies are detected, construction should be delayed, and the appropriate wildlife agency (CDFW and/or USFWS) should be consulted, avoidance measures initiated, and project impacts and mitigation reassessed. With the implementation of this mitigation measure, adverse impacts upon bat populations would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

The Project Area is not within any designated listed species' critical habitat.

b) Riparian and Other Sensitive Natural Communities.

The Project Area contains special-status habitats that will be impacted: riparian habitat and wetlands. This is a significant impact before mitigation.

Southside Riparian: 0.234 acre of riparian forest will be removed, but 0.270 acres of riparian forest is proposed to be created around new reservoir perimeter

Northside Riparian: 0.301 acre of riparian forest will be removed, but 0.347 acres of riparian forest is proposed to be created around new reservoir perimeter

The project will also require a California Fish and Game Code Section 1600 lake or streambed alteration agreement for impacts to water resources and to riparian habitat. Avoidance and minimization measures, as well as compensatory mitigation for loss of jurisdictional waters and riparian, is required by federal and state permits to maintain the policy of "No Net Loss" of wetlands and other protected water resources. Compensatory mitigation would consist of any combination of in-lieu fee payment to a mitigation bank, habitat enhancement or creation, or land dedication, at mitigation ratios determined by USACE. The applicability and value of these mitigations will be determined during the

CDFW Section 1600 process. The acquisition of these permits, and the performance of avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures would reduce impacts to water resources to a less than significant level.

c) State and Federally Protected Wetlands.

There are jurisdictional Waters of the U.S. and wetlands in the site. There are also areas in the site meeting the criteria of Waters of the State, including wetlands. The project would have potentially significant impacts on State or federally protected Waters or wetlands, as listed below. Project implementation will cause the following direct impacts to aquatic resources:

Channels

Channel, Upper: inundation of 398 feet of channel

Spillway: modifications to concrete spillway may shorten this artificial channel by 10 feet

Channel, Lower: project will have no effect on this feature

Wetlands

Marsh, Lacustrine: gain of 0.867 acre of lacustrine wetlands

Marsh, Palustrine: loss (by inundation) of 0.041 acre of palustrine wetland

Marsh, Upper: project will have no effect on this feature

Marsh, Lower: project will have no effect on this feature

Open Water

Open water: 3.952 acres of open water will be created

Riparian Zone

Southside: 0.234 acre of riparian forest will be removed, but 0.270 acres of riparian forest is proposed to be created around new reservoir perimeter

Northside: 0.301 acre of riparian forest will be removed, but 0.347 acres of riparian forest is proposed to be created around new reservoir perimeter

The project will require a Jurisdictional Determination and/or a Section 404 permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers. The project will also require a California Fish and Game Code Section 1600 lake or streambed alteration agreement for impacts to water resources

and to riparian habitat. Avoidance and minimization measures, as well as compensatory mitigation for loss of jurisdictional waters and riparian, is required by federal and state permits to maintain the policy of "No Net Loss" of wetlands and other protected water resources. Compensatory mitigation would consist of any combination of in-lieu fee payment to a mitigation bank, habitat enhancement or creation, or land dedication, at mitigation ratios determined by USACE. The acquisition of these permits, and the performance of avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures would reduce impacts to water resources to a less than significant level.

d) Fish and Wildlife Movement.

The Bear Creek river corridor functions as a wildlife corridor; Bear Creek also contains fishery resources. Implementation of the proposed project will erect some new barriers but, in general, will not substantially affect wildlife movement. Fishery resources could be impacted, but aquatic resources mitigation measures will protect these resources. Thus, implementation of the proposed project is a less than significant impact upon wildlife movement. Implementation of the project will not 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.

e) Local Biological Requirements.

Implementation of the proposed project will require the removal of mature trees that may be subject to CAL FIRE regulations. The degree to which CAL FIRE regulations apply has yet to be determined. This is a potentially significant impact before mitigation. The project will need to conform, as appropriate to California. Forest Practice's Act and the California Forest Practice Rules.

f) Conflict with Habitat Conservation Plans.

No Habitat Conservation Plans, Natural Community Conservation Plans, or similar regional or local plans cover the project site. Therefore, the project would not conflict with habitat conservation plans. The project would have no impact on this issue.

## 3.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

| Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5? | ☐ | ✓ | ☐ | ☐ |
| c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries? | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ | ☐ |

Information for this section is provided mainly from a cultural resource report prepared by Natural Investigations Company, except where otherwise noted. The report is not included in this IS/MND.

Archaeological and traditional property locations are considered confidential and should not be disclosed to the general public or unauthorized persons. The Natural Investigations study document contains sensitive information regarding the nature and location of archaeological sites and is therefore excluded from this Initial Study and appendices. Authorized persons may obtain access to this information by contacting CCWD. The preparation of the report involved a search of cultural resource databases, including the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS), and a field survey of all portions of the project site. Record search work included a search of the Native American Heritage Commission's (NAHC) Sacred Lands File (SLF), and a paleontological records search from the University of California Museum of Paleontology (UCMP).

Record searches yielded seven previous surveys and four cultural resources within the four parts of the APE. In addition, thirty-three previous surveys and forty-five cultural resources were identified within the 0.5-mile buffer of the APE. The SLF identified no listed sacred sites.

Letters concerning the project were submitted to the Buena Vista Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians, the Calaveras Band of Mi-Wuk Indians, the Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians, the Ione Band of Miwok Indians, the Jackson Rancheria Band of Miwuk Indians, the Nashville Enterprise Miwok-Maidu-Nishinam Tribe, the Pakan'yani Maidu of Strawberry Valley Rancheria, the Susanville Indian Rancheria, and the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California. The Calaveras Band of Mi-Wuk Indians indicated that the area was highly sensitive and wished to obtain more information regarding the project.

A search of the UCMP database for Calaveras County was conducted by Natural Investigations on March 15, 2025. UCMP records indicate 31 fossils are known within Calaveras County but none within the four parts of the APE. No paleontological resources and no unique geologic features or outcrops were identified during survey.

## Environmental Setting

The project site is within an area historically occupied by the Northern Sierra Mi-wuk, also spelled Miwok. Section 3.18, Tribal Cultural Resources, discusses the Northern Sierra Mi-wuk in more detail. They are one of four other Mi-wuk groups (Bay, Plains, Central Sierra, and Southern Sierra) whose Eastern Miwok language is a subfamily of the Miwokan branch

of the Utian language family, which is regarded as a subgroup of Penutian stock. Prior to Euro-American contact, Northern Sierra Mi-wuk occupied the foothills and mountains of the Mokelumne and Calaveras River drainages. Neighboring groups included the Washoe to the east, Central Sierra and Southern Sierra Mi-wuk to the southeast, Plains Mi-wuk to the west, and Nisenan to the north.

Seasonally mobile hunter-gatherers with semi-permanent villages, the foothills and mountains provided the Northern Sierra Mi-wuk with an abundance of natural resources. Acorns were of particular importance to the diet. Oak trees from which this staple food was gathered annually were carefully preserved by the Sierra Mi-wuk. The Mi-wuk hunted, gathered or fished antelope, elk, rabbit, salmon, waterfowl, and valley oak acorns at the lower elevations. Deer, rabbit, salmon, valley quail, gray pine nuts, blue oak acorns, and live oak acorns were obtained in the foothills. At the higher elevations, resources included deer, squirrel, trout, mountain quail, pigeons, nuts of the sugar pine, and black oak acorns.

Political units among the Mi-wuk were structured by similarities in language and ethnicity, and villages were divided into "tribelets". Tribelets controlled specific lands and the natural resources within that territory. The population size of Sierran Mi-wuk tribelets averaged between 100 and 300 individuals. The territory of each Mi-wuk tribelet typically included a main village and smaller satellite villages. Semi-permanent Northern Sierra Mi-wuk settlements or winter villages were clustered along the Mokelumne and Calaveras river drainages. Traditional houses were made of thatching, tule matting, or slabs of bark over a conical framework of poles. Villages also contained acorn granaries, winter grinding houses, and conical sweathouses.

Similar to other California Native American groups, the Mi-wuk employed a variety of tools, implements, and enclosures for hunting and collecting natural resources. The bow and arrow, snares, traps, nets, and enclosures or blinds were used for hunting land mammals and birds. For fishing, they made canoes from tule, balsa, or logs, and used harpoons, hooks, nets, and basketry traps. To collect plant resources, they used sharpened digging sticks, long poles for dislodging acorns and pinecones, and a variety of woven tools (seed beaters, burden baskets, and carrying nets).

Foods were processed with a variety of tools, such as bedrock mortars, cobblestone pestles, anvils, and portable stone or wooden mortars that were used to grind or mill acorns and seeds. Additional tools and implements included knives, anvils, leaching baskets and bowls, woven parching trays, and woven strainers and winnowers. Prior to processing, the acorns were stored in the village granaries. Earth ovens were used by the Mi-wuk to bake acorn bread.

The Mi-wuk participated in an extensive east-west trade network between the coast and the Great Basin. From coastal groups marine shell (Olivella and abalone) and steatite moved eastward, while salt and obsidian traveled westward from the Sierras and Great Basin. Basketry, an important trade item, moved in both directions.

The discovery in 1848 of gold in the western Sierra Nevada foothills and the ensuing Gold Rush led to a flood of non-indigenous peoples into Mi-wuk territory. Sierran Mi-wuk remained in rancherias scattered throughout the foothills, but in addition to traditional

hunting and gathering, they worked seasonally as paid laborers on foothills farms and ranches. Their reliance on cash income increased as natural resources decreased with the growth of non-Miwukan communities and towns in their traditional territory.

During the first half of the 1900s, the federal government acquired lands and established reservations, or rancherias, for the Plains Mi-wuk, Northern Sierra Mi-wuk and Central Sierra Mi-wuk. The U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs terminated relations with most of these rancherias between 1934 and 1972, but status has been restored to the majority of the rancherias, beginning in 1984. At present, there are seven federally-recognized rancherias (Wilton, Shingle Springs, Jackson, Buena Vista, Sheep Ranch, Tuolumne, and Chicken Ranch) in Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Lake, and Tuolumne counties that have primarily or exclusively Eastern Mi-wuk populations.

The Mi-wuk had a sizeable presence in the project region numbering about 10,000 and moved to West Point in the 1890s. However, by 1900 they were forced to leave and settled on Bald Mountain Road. In 1914 they were granted Allotments by President Woodrow Wilson. Roundhouses at the Eaph property was the site of Big Times celebrations. This celebration has been revived as recently as 2010 on the Frank Fisher Allotment.

Spanish Period

Between 1769 and 1823, 21 missions were established by the Spanish and the Franciscan Order along the coast between San Diego and San Francisco. The Spanish expeditions into the Central Valley in 1806 and 1808 led by Lieutenant Gabriel Moraga explored along the main rivers, including the American, Calaveras, Cosumnes, Feather, Merced, Mokelumne, Sacramento San Joaquin, and Stanislaus. In 1813, Moraga led another expedition in the lower portion of the Central Valley and gave the San Joaquin River its name. The last Spanish expedition into California's interior was led by Luis Arguello in 1817 and traveled up thte Sacramento River, past the future site of the city of Sacramento to the mouth of the Feather River, before returning to the coast.

Mexican Period

After the end of the Mexican Revolution (1810–1821) against the Spanish crown, the Mexican Period is marked by an extensive era of land grants, most of which were in the interior of the state, as well as by exploration by American fur trappers west of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Most of the land grants to Mexican citizens in California (Californios) were in the interior since the Mexican Republic sought to increase the population away from the more settled coastal areas where the Spanish settlements had been concentrated. The largest land grants in the Sacramento Valley were awarded to John Sutter. In 1839, he founded a trading and agricultural empire called New Helvetia that was headquartered at Sutter's Fort near the divergence of the Sacramento and American rivers in today's City of Sacramento (Hoover et al. 2002). One land grant, the majority of which was in neighboring Stanislaus County, was issued within today's Calaveras County. Awarded in 1843 and located north of the Stanislaus River, the 48,887-acre Rancheria del Rio Estanislao also bordered present-day Tuolumne County to the south.

American Period

The first American trapper to enter California, Jedediah Smith, explored along the Sierra Nevada in 1826 and in 1827, he entered the Sacramento Valley, traveling along the American and Cosumnes rivers. In 1827, Smith also traveled through the San Joaquin Valley. Other trappers soon followed, including employees of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1832. Between 1830 and 1833, and again in 1837, diseases introduced by the non-indigenous explorers, trappers, and settlers, as well as relocation to the missions, military raids, and settlement by non-native groups, decimated native Californian populations, communities, and tribes in the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys.

The American Period was initiated in 1848 with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the Mexican–American War (1846–1848), and California became a territory of the United States. Gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill on the American River in Coloma the same year, and by 1849, nearly 90,000 people had journeyed to the gold fields. In 1850, largely as a result of the Gold Rush, California became the thirty-first state. Four years later, the bustling boomtown of Sacramento became the state capital. In contrast to the economic boom and population growth that enabled statehood, the loss of land and territory (including traditional hunting and gathering locales), malnutrition, starvation, and violence further contributed to the decline of indigenous Californians in the Central Valley and all along the Sierra Nevada foothills.

Calaveras County and West Point History

Created in 1850 at the time of statehood, Calaveras County is one of the original 27 counties of California. To the north and south, the county is bordered by two major rivers, Mokelumne and Stanislaus, respectively. Tradition states the name of the county was derived from that of the Calaveras River, so named by Spanish Lieutenant Gabriel Moraga during the expedition of 1808. Other accounts indicate the Spaniards referred to the waterway as Rio San Juan and that calaveras, the Spanish word for skulls, was adopted after the discovery of numerous skeletal remains on the river banks by the John Marsh party in 1836/1837. Maps dated 1841 show both names, but the map produced by John Frémont and Charles Preuss in 1845 shows only Río de las Calaveras. The discovery by the Marsh party may reflect the effect of the malarial epidemics of 1833 and 1837 that decimated indigenous populations, leaving no one to bury the dead.

Located in the central part of the Mother Lode, the history of Calaveras County is deeply tied to the Gold Rush era and the mining of gold as well as copper. Angels Camp, Murphys, and Carson Hill were established as placer gold mining camps by George and Henry Angel, John and Dan Murphy, and James Carson in the summer of 1848. Mokelumne Hill and San Andreas were also founded in 1848. By 1849, thousands of gold seekers had traveled to the region, many of them traveling the route followed by today's State Route 26. Additional communities, such as Calaveritas, Campo Seco, and El Dorado, were established and named after prominent mines or miners, locations, or events. Jenny Lind, once the center of mining operations on the lower Calaveras River, was named after an opera star. In 1860, an extensive deposit of copper (the second largest in the state) was discovered in the southwestern part of the county at Copperopolis, with more than $1,600,000 worth of

copper shipped east via Stockton during the Civil War era and via the Stockton-Copperopolis Railroad beginning in the early 1870s.

At an elevation of 2,769 feet (816.5 meters) above sea level, West Point (originally named Indian Gulch) was founded in 1825 and was officially named West Point in 1854 in reference to the name of a camp set up nearby by Kit Carson. The name was changed again to Westpoint in 1895 and then back to West Point in 1947. Due to its association with Kit Carson, the entire town of West Point has been named a historical landmark by the Office of Historic Preservation, California State Parks, with registration number 268 and was registered in 1937. A historical marker was installed at the intersection of State Hwy 26 and Main Street. The marker states that an emigrant road forked near Big Meadow, whose north branch came directly to West Point, and a thriving trading post (prior to the discovery of gold in the region) was located there.

The town of West Point was established as a mining supply camp for quartz mining which eventually shifted to gold. The GLO Plat of 1873, lists the Old Henry and Billy Williams gold mines and within the region. Due to a lack of trails, emigration to this area came from Volcano, across the Mokelumne River to the north. The most notable quartz mines were Lockwood, Champion, Lone Star, Blazing Star, and Keltz. Beyond mining, West Point also had a robust logging industry which was hampered by methods of transport. Many methods of floating logs were tried, most of which failed until the advent of trucking, and railways were never established in the area.

Natural Investigations conducted a pedestrian survey of the reservoir and borrow site portions of the project on March 27, 2025 and identified one site, NIC-2025-WestPoint-01, which is recommend as not eligible for the National Register of Historic Place (NRHP). In addition, Natural Investigations updated the site record for site P05-002370 and determined that the Bear Creek Ditch has been destroyed and recommended the reservoir portions of site P05-002370 as not eligible for inclusion in the NRHP.

A search of the UCMP database for Calaveras County was conducted by Natural Investigations on March 15, 2025. UCMP records indicate 31 fossils are known within Calaveras County but none within the four parts of the APE. No paleontological resources and no unique geologic features or outcrops were identified during survey.

## Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

a) Historical Resources.

A records search of the California Historical Resources Information System indicated that historic-era cultural resources had been identified near the project site. None of these was recommended as eligible for listing. Based upon the conclusions of the Natural Investigations cultural resource report, the project would have no impact on historical resources.

b) Archaeological Resources.

The cultural resource report stated that no archaeological resources on the project site were identified during the Natural Investigations study, and no other cultural resources were

previously recorded within the area of potential effect. Considering that the project area has been disturbed due to past water resources the development, the potential for the discovery of buried archaeological materials within the project area is low. As a result, the report does not recommend additional cultural resources work; monitoring of ground-disturbing activity is likewise not recommended.

However, the report noted that it is possible to inadvertently uncover cultural resources during ground-disturbing project activities. Mitigation described below would require work to be stopped when cultural resources are uncovered until these resources can be evaluated by a qualified archaeologist and recommendations made for their proper disposition. Implementation of this mitigation measure would reduce cultural resource impacts to a level that would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures:

CULT-1: If buried cultural resources are inadvertently discovered during ground-disturbing activities, work shall stop within 50 feet of the find until a qualified archaeologist can assess the significance of the find. If necessary, the archaeologist will develop appropriate treatment measures in consultation with the CCWD and other agencies as appropriate. Treatment measures may include, but are not limited to, preservation in place or excavation under supervision of a qualified archaeologist.

c) Human Burials.

The cultural resource report considers the discovery of human remains on the project site unlikely. However, it did state that the discovery of human remains is always a possibility during ground-disturbing activities.

California Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 and California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 describe the procedures to be followed when human remains are uncovered in a location outside a dedicated cemetery. The Calaveras County Sheriff/Coroner shall be contacted immediately. If it is determined that the remains are Native American in origin, then the County Sheriff/Coroner shall contact the Native American Heritage Commission, which in turn shall appoint a Most Likely Descendant to act as a tribal representative. The Most Likely Descendant shall develop a plan for the proper treatment of remains and associated funerary objects.

Compliance with the applicable codes and with the CEQA Guidelines section would ensure that any human remains and associated grave goods encountered during project construction would be treated with appropriate dignity. Project impacts on human remains would be less than significant.

d) Paleontological Resources

No paleontological resources or unique geologic features were identified during the survey, and none were previously known within the APE. Enlargement of the WPRR, use of soil

from the borrow pits, or disposal of soils at the disposal site does not have the potential to cause an impact on any resource that would qualify as a paleontological resource.

Based on the results of the search of UCMP records, background research, field survey, the geologic formations that underlie the APEs, and the assessment of potential direct or indirect impacts by the project, the probability for buried paleontological resource is low. Further, due to the previous disturbance in creating the reservoir, earth moving, introduction of outside soils, and use of heavy machinery, the likelihood of finding paleontological resources in situ, and with context, is unlikely and would not meet significance criteria. No additional paleontological work nor monitoring of the remediation activities is recommended.

## 3.6 ENERGY

| Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Result in potentially significant environmental impacts due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during project construction or operation? | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ | ☐ |
| b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |

### Environmental Setting

Electricity and natural gas are major energy sources for residences and businesses in California. In Calaveras County, electricity consumption in 2022 totaled approximately 326 million kilowatt-hours, of which approximately 106 million kilowatt-hours were consumed by non-residential uses and the remainder by residential uses (CEC 2024a). In San Joaquin County, natural gas consumption in 2022 totaled approximately 0.89 million therms, of which approximately 0.49 million therms were consumed by non-residential uses and the remainder by residential uses (CEC 2024b).

### Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

a) Project Energy Consumption.

Project construction would involve fuel consumption and use of other non-renewable resources. Construction equipment used for trenching and other activities typically runs on diesel fuel or gasoline. The same fuels typically are used for vehicles that transport equipment and workers to and from a construction site. Construction-related fuel

consumption would be finite, short-term, and consistent with construction activities of a similar character. All construction equipment would be regulated per the ARB's In-Use Off-Road Diesel Vehicle Regulation. ARB standards for construction equipment includes measures to reduce emissions from vehicles by subjecting fleet owners to retrofit or accelerated replacement/repower requirements and imposing idling limitations on owners, operators, renters, or lessees of off-road diesel vehicles. Therefore, energy use associated with project construction would not be considered wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary.

The project would be required to comply with all applicable standards and regulations regarding energy conservation and fuel efficiency, which would ensure that future activities would be energy efficient to the maximum extent practicable. The project would not result in a wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary use of energy. Project impacts related to energy consumption are less than significant.

b) Consistency with Energy Plans.

Neither Calaveras County nor the CCWD currently have an adopted plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. If a plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency is adopted prior to the Project receiving its entitlements, then the project would comply with the applicable plan requirements. The project would have no impact on this issue.

## 3.7 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

| Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: | | | | |
| i) 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 Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| ii) Strong seismic ground shaking? | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ | ☐ |
| iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| iv) Landslides? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil? | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ | ☐ |
| c) Be located on strata 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ | ☐ |
| d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code, creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property? | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ | ☐ |
| e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature? | ☐ | ✓ | ☐ | ☐ |

## Environmental Setting

Black Water, the project engineers retained Crawford Engineering to provide geotechnical data, conclusions, and recommendations based on the current understanding of the proposed project elements. The purpose of Crawford report was to identify subsurface geotechnical and material conditions, provide results of slope stability and seepage analyses and to characterize potential borrow material. The Crawford report will be submitted to the California Division of Safety of Dams (DSOD) as part of the 30% design package; DSOD will provide comments to be addressed to move forward to 60% design. The geotechnical report is shown in Appendix B.

The project site is located within the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Geomorphic Province 1 of California. The Sierra Nevada has a general northwest topographic trend and is on the order of 690 km long and 64-129 km wide. The mountain ranges of the Sierra Nevada were created roughly 120 to 130 million years ago when sediments as thick as 9,200 m, along with volcanic rocks, were buckled and warped, resulting in a series of low mountain ranges. The roots of these mountain ranges were then intruded by granitic rock.

The Sierra Nevada ranges were subsequently tilted upward as a result of faulting along the east edge of the ranges. In the higher elevations of the Sierra Nevada, much of the sedimentary material has been eroded to extensively expose the granitic rock. Older rocks that remain have been metamorphosed and are exposed in the foothills of the Sierra

Nevada. From our review of published regional geologic maps, the site is underlain by Mesozoic granitic rocks (Mzg) composed predominantly of granite to granodiorite.

Terra-Ex was subcontracted by Crawford to complete five geotechnical borings and two hand-auger borings under the supervision of a Crawford geologist to characterize potential borrow material at the site. Additionally, Crawford completed two hand-augers at offsite locations to characterize potential borrow material.

In general, the materials encountered in our 2025 borings completed for this study are considered consistent with published geologic mapping and are divided into three general units.

> Unit 1 – Existing Dam Materials of this unit generally consisted of medium dense to dense clayey sand with interbedded layers of stiff to hard lean clay and sandy lean clay.
>
> Unit 2 – Dam Foundation and Dowstream Blanket. This unit was encountered below Unit 1 and from the ground surface in Borings, A- 25-001 and A-25-007. Materials of this unit are similar to Unit 1 generally consisting of loose to dense clayey sand and hard sandy lean clay to approximately elevation 250.
>
> Unit 3 – Igneous Rock. The materials of this unit are generally very soft to soft decomposed igneous rock, primarily granite, to the terminal elevations between elevation 2,949, 2,939 and 2,920. Below elevation 2,920, moderately weathered, intensely fractured, very hard igneous rock was encountered to the terminal elevation of 2,915. A layer of slightly weathered to fresh, very hard, moderately fractured igneous rock was encountered from elevation 2,946 to the terminal elevation of 2,936 in one boring.

At the time of our field exploration, free groundwater was encountered and measured in four of the five drilled borings. Groundwater was observed between can fluctuate due to changes in precipitation, seasonal fluctuations, water elevation in the reservoir, and other site factors. Actual depth to groundwater should be determined immediately prior to work.

### Faults and Seismic Activity

The site is not mapped within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone 4. Based on the California Geologic Survey 5 (CGS) fault data, the nearest active fault (i.e., activity within about the last 11,000 to 15,000 years) is the West Tahoe-Dollar Point fault zone, mapped approximately 38.4miles northeast of the proposed project site. See fault Figure 3-7.

### Liquification Potential

Soil liquefaction can occur when saturated, relatively loose sand and specific soft, fine-grained saturated soils (typically within the upper 50 feet) are subject to ground shaking strong enough to create soil particle separation that results from increased pore pressure.

This separation and subsequent pore pressure dissipation can lead to decreased soil shear strength and settlement. Liquefaction susceptibility of a soil deposit is a function of the soil grain size, relative density, percent fines, plasticity of fines, degree of saturation, age of deposit, and earthquake ground motion. Based on the groundwater depth and the predominantly clayey layers, dense granular layers, and rock encountered in the borings completed for this study along with the site being in a low seismic zone, the potential for liquefaction at the site is low.

Reservoir Area Soils

According to USDA soil surveys, there is one soil type on the project site, with variation as to the land slopes. The Musick-Wukusick Complex is a well-drained soil derived from granite rock. Musick-Wukusick Complex soils consist of sandy loam, and sandy clay loam soils.

Borrow Site Soils

To help evaluate the acceptability of the on-site and off-site material as a potential borrow source, Crawford performed four hand augers at the potential borrow locations. The soils encountered at the borrow sites generally consisted of clayey sand that is similar to the existing dam. The laboratory testing performed on representative samples of the material encountered indicate that borrow site material meets the minimum requirements for Levee Materials, as outlined by the Sacramento District of the United States Army Corp of Engineers 8.

## Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

a-i) Fault Rupture Hazards.

Surface fault rupture is associated with being located on or within close proximity of an active fault. Areas with a potential fault rupture are designated by Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones as determined by the California Geological Survey. Calaveras County, including the project site, has no designated Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones (California Geological Survey 2024). Therefore, the project would have no impact related to fault rupture hazards.

a-ii) Seismic Ground Shaking.

As noted, the nearest potentially active faults to the project site are the Bear Mountain and Melones Fault Zones in the western portion of Calaveras County. Ground shaking generated by activity of these faults could potentially be felt at the project site. The County General Plan Draft EIR stated that, based on an assessment conducted by the California Geological Survey, levels of ground shaking in Calaveras County would equate to intensity values ranging from I to III. At these intensities, few people recognize any shaking as earthquakes when felt (Calaveras County 2018).

Crawford calculated potential ground motion at the site based on published mapping, and exploration, igneous rock (granite) is shallow, and Crawford recommended a Site Class C

for the site. Per the United States Geological Survey (USGS) 2% in 50 years deaggregation hazard tool, the Peak Ground Acceleration (PGA) for the project site is 0.22g. However, Crawford notes, DSOD may require a minimum design PGA of 0.25g.

Proposed water system improvements would incorporate engineering design features that would be in accordance with California DSOD standards and engineering practices. Given this and the anticipated intensities of any earthquakes in Calaveras County, project impacts related to ground shaking would be less than significant.

a-iii) Other Seismic Hazards.

The California Geological Survey administers the Seismic Hazards Mapping Program, which designates Seismic Hazard Zones that encompasses areas prone to seismic-related ground failure hazards such as liquefaction and earthquake-induced landslides. No portion of Calaveras County is within a Seismic Hazard Zone (Calaveras County 2018). Consequently, Calaveras County and the project site are not considered to be at risk from seismic-related ground failure hazards. The project would have no impact related to other seismic hazards. Crawford studies found that the project would be subject to low liquefaction hazards.

a-iv) Landslides.

The project site is in the foothill region of Calaveras County. Landslides can pose a hazard to structures located on steep slopes (20 percent grade or higher), as well as on slopes recently affected by wildfires even in the absence of seismic events (Calaveras County 2018). However, the proposed reservoir/enlargement would be constructed on the existing reservoir. Neither project feature is expected to induce landslides. The project would have no impact related to landslides.

b) Soil Erosion.

Project construction activities would disturb soils within the construction area, leaving them exposed to potential erosion by water. Construction contract provisions would require implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) consistent with the Calaveras County Grading, Drainage, and Erosion Control Design Manual to protect water quality and minimize the potential for siltation and downstream sedimentation. Potential BMPs may include, but are not limited to, vehicle and equipment management, material and waste management, and general stormwater management (Calaveras County 2012).

Also, since the project would disturb one acre of land or more, it would be required to obtain a Construction General Permit from the SWRCB. The Construction General Permit requirements include preparation and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) to address potential water quality issues. The SWPPP would include applicable BMPs to avoid or minimize adverse water quality impacts. BMPs fall within the categories of Temporary Soil Stabilization, Temporary Sediment Control, Wind Erosion Control, Tracking Control, Non-Storm Water Management, and Waste Management and Materials Pollution Control.

In summary, soil erosion on the project site could occur, but compliance with contract provisions and Construction General Permit requirements, along with drainage improvements associated with the project, would minimize potential erosion. Project impacts related to soil erosion would be less than significant.

c) Unstable Soils.

As noted in a) above, there are no Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones in Calaveras County, and the risk of surface fault rupture within the County is considered low. The project does not include activities that would result in soil units onsite becoming unstable, and potentially result in on or offsite landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse. Project impacts related to soil stability would be less than significant.

d) Expansive Soils.

The project is being designed in accordance with Calaveras County Code Chapter 15.04 - Uniform Codes. This chapter considers and addresses expansive soils. Given soil characteristics and compliance with the requirements of County Code Chapter 15.04, project impacts related to expansive soils are considered less than significant.

e) Adequacy of Soils for Wastewater Disposal.

The project would not use, and does not propose to install, any septic systems or alternative waste disposal systems. The project would have no impact related to adequacy of soils for wastewater disposal.

f) Paleontological Resources and Unique Geologic Features.

Paleontological resources are the remains of life preserved in a geologic context, such as fossils. The cultural resource report for the project stated that a record search of the Museum of Paleontology at the University of California in Berkeley found 31 paleontological sites on record within Calaveras County. The closest finds were located in the Mokelumne River watershed. Recovered species include a two-tusked mastodon, a four-tusked gomphothere, rhinoceros, camel, horse, bird, fish, tortoise, and tapir, among others still to be identified (Natural Investigations Company 2024).

The cultural resource report concluded that the Mokelumne Hill area is highly sensitive for paleontological resources. Mitigation described below would require work to be stopped when paleontological resources are uncovered until these resources can be evaluated by a qualified paleontologist and recommendations made for their proper disposition. Implementation of this mitigation measure would reduce paleontological resource impacts to a level that would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures:

GEO-1: If buried paleontological resources are inadvertently discovered during ground-disturbing activities, work shall stop within 30 feet of the find until a qualified paleontologist can assess the significance of the find. If necessary, the paleontologist will develop appropriate

treatment measures in consultation with the Calaveras Public Utility District and other agencies as appropriate. Treatment measures may include, but are not limited to, preservation in place or excavation under supervision of a qualified paleontologist.

## 3.8 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

| Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment? | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ | ☐ |
| b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |

### Environmental Setting

Greenhouse gases (GHGs) are gases that absorb and emit radiation within the thermal infrared range, trapping heat in the earth's atmosphere. GHGs are both naturally occurring and are emitted by human activity. GHGs include carbon dioxide, the most abundant GHG, as well as methane, nitrous oxide, and other gases. GHG emissions in California in 2021, the most recent year for which data are available, were estimated at approximately 381.3 million metric tons carbon dioxide equivalent ($CO_2e$) – a decrease of approximately 21.5% from the peak level in 2004. Transportation was the largest contributor to GHG emissions in California, with 39% of total emissions (ARB 2023).

GHG emissions and their impact on climate are a subject of concern for the State of California. The State of California has implemented GHG emission reduction strategies through Scoping Plans prepared in response to state legislation. In 2022, ARB adopted an update to the current Scoping Plan. The 2022 Scoping Plan assesses progress towards achieving the SB 32 2030 reduction target and lays out a path to achieve carbon neutrality no later than 2045. Proposed strategies to achieve these reductions include rapid movement to zero-emission transportation, phasing out fossil fuel use for heating homes and buildings, restricting use of chemicals and refrigerants that are thousands of times more powerful at trapping heat than carbon dioxide, expanded development of renewable energy sources, increased use of natural and working lands for incorporating and storing carbon, and greater employment of carbon removal technology (ARB 2022).

Cities and counties throughout California have prepared Climate Action Plans that outline how the local government will reduce GHG emissions, which are typically related to the 2020 emission reduction target set in the State's Climate Change Scoping Plan. Calaveras

County is currently in the process of preparing a GHG Reduction Plan that would address emission reductions for target years 2030 per SB 32 and 2045.

### Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

a) Project GHG Emissions.

Based on results from the RCEM run (see Section 3.3, Air Quality), potential construction GHG emissions would amount to an estimated 1,101 metric tons $CO_2e$ for the construction period. Construction emissions would be limited to a single work season and would cease once work is completed.

The Calaveras County APCD has not adopted thresholds of significance for the analysis of GHG emissions related to implementation of a proposed project. However, the nearby Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District has established a quantitative threshold of 1,100 metric tons $CO_2e$ to determine the significance of project GHG emissions for CEQA purposes (SMAQMD 2021). This threshold applies to both construction and operational emissions. CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.7 allows for the use of significance thresholds established by other agencies. The GHG construction emissions of the proposed project are well below this threshold of 1,100 metric tons $CO_2e$.

Upon completion of construction work, the project would not generate any direct GHG emissions, and would generate only minimal GHG emissions indirectly, mainly from maintenance vehicles and equipment. The CalEEMod estimated that operational GHG emissions would be 0.21 metric tons $CO_2e$ annually, which is substantially below the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District quantitative threshold. Based on this, project GHG emissions would be less than significant.

b) Consistency with GHG Reduction Plans.

As noted in a) above, upon completion of construction work, project operations would generate at most minimal GHG emissions. As a result, the project would not conflict with the GHG reduction objectives of the State's Climate Change Scoping Plan or with the County GHG Reduction Plan should it be adopted. The project would have no impact related to consistency with GHG reduction plans.

## 3.9 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

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

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment? | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ | ☐ |
| c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires? | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ | ☐ |

## Environmental Setting

This section focuses on hazards associated with hazardous materials, proximity to airports, and wildfires. Geologic and soil hazards are addressed in Section 3.7, Geology and Soils, and potential flooding hazards are addressed in Section 3.10, Hydrology and Water Quality.

Data on hazardous material sites are kept in the GeoTracker database, maintained by the California SWRCB, and in the EnviroStor database, maintained by the California Department of Toxic Substances Control. Both GeoTracker and EnviroStor provide the names and addresses of hazardous material sites, along with their cleanup status.

GeoTracker records show four closed Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) sites in West Point, with no further action needed; one such case is open, and the site is in remediation. All of these sites are more than a mile west of the project site; neither Geotracker nor EnviroStor indicated any record of active hazardous material sites on or within a mile of the project site (SWRCB 2025, DTSC 2025).

## Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

a) Hazardous Materials Transportation, Use, and Disposal.

Small amounts of hazardous materials, such as fuel and solvents, would be used during project construction and operation activities. Operation of the project would continue the occasional use, transport, and disposal of potentially hazardous materials. The project would be required to comply with federal, state, and local regulations regarding the storage, handling, transportation, disposal, and cleanup of hazardous materials. Project impacts on hazardous materials transportation, use, or disposal would be less than significant.

b) Release of Hazardous Materials by Upset or Accident.

Project construction activities may involve the use of hazardous materials such as fuels and solvents, and thus create a potential for hazardous material spills. Construction and maintenance vehicles would transport and use fuels in ordinary quantities. Fuel spills, if any occur, would be minimal and would not have significant adverse effects.

Potential hazardous materials spills during construction would be addressed in the required SWPPP, described in Section 3.7, Geology and Soils. In accordance with SWPPP requirements, contractors have absorbent materials at construction sites to clean up minor spills. Other substances used in the construction process would be stored in approved containers and used in relatively small quantities, in accordance with the manufacturers' recommendations and/or applicable regulations.

As noted in a) above, the project would involve limited use of hazardous materials after project completion, and such materials would be used and stored in compliance with applicable regulations. Project impacts related to releases of hazardous materials would be less than significant.

c) Hazardous Material Emissions near Schools.

There are no schools within one-quarter mile of the project site. The nearest school is West Point Elementary School in the community of West Point, approximately 1.4 miles southwest of the reservoir. As noted in a) above, the project would involve limited use of hazardous materials. The project would have no known impact related to hazardous material emissions near schools.

d) Hazardous Materials Sites.

As previously noted, a search of the GeoTracker and EnviroStor databases did not identify any active hazardous material sites on or within one mile of the project site. One leaking underground storage tank site in the West Point community were recorded in GeoTracker.

However, both sites were recorded as "Completed – Case Closed" (SWRCB 2024). The project would have no impact related to hazardous material sites.

e) Airport Operations.

There are no airports in the vicinity of the project site. The nearest public airport is the Amador County Airport in the community of Martell in Amador County, approximately 14 miles to the west. Given this distance, the project would not expose workers to safety hazards or excessive noise from operations at this airport. The project would have no impact related to public airport operations.

f) Emergency Response and Evacuation.

Construction of the project would involve work on CCWD property only. Project construction would not affect public roads, except for a temporary increase in construction traffic to and from the project site. Construction activities would not obstruct emergency vehicle access to the project site or to nearby land uses. Project construction activities would be coordinated with local law enforcement and emergency services providers as applicable. Project operations would not obstruct any roads, thereby not interfering with emergency vehicle access or with potential evacuations. The project would have no impact on emergency vehicle access or evacuations.

g) Wildland Fire Hazards.

The project is in a forested area where wildland fires may occur. However, the project would not place people in this area. The project features that are proposed would be minimally exposed to wildland fires, and any damage caused to these features would not lead to impairment of potable water service to CCWD customers. The project would not involve any substantial changes to fuel conditions or introduce new ignition sources. Project impacts related to wildland fire hazards are considered less than significant. Refer to Section 3.20, Wildfire, for more detailed information on wildfire hazards.

## 3.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

| Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality? | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ | ☐ |
| b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin? | | | | |
| c) 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: | | | | |
| i) Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or offsite? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| iii) 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| iv) Impede or redirect flood flows? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan? | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ | ☐ |

## Environmental Setting

The project site is the existing West Point Regulating Reservoir, a created lake from which water is drawn and treated at the West Point WTP and subsequently distributed to CCWD customers. Water is supplied to the reservoir from existing surface water sources. The project involves the enlargement of the existing dam to expand the capacity of the reservoir.

Groundwater is used by local water purveyors and individuals to meet domestic and agricultural demands in western Calaveras County, which overlies the Eastern San Joaquin groundwater sub-basin, which is a part of the larger San Joaquin Valley groundwater basin (Calaveras County 2018). There are no other identified groundwater basins in Calaveras County, including in the immediate project vicinity (DWR 2016). Groundwater documents

provide a source of potable water for low-density residential uses in the general project vicinity.

Based on the Flood Insurance Rate Map prepared for the project area by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the project site does not lie within a designated flood zone (FEMA 2010). A review of the DWR website indicates that no portion of the project site is within the 200-year floodplain, the designation of which is required by the State's SB 5 and companion bills (DWR 2024).

## Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

a) Violation of Water Quality Standards.

The potential water quality impacts of the project are related to potential erosion and sediment discharge resulting from project construction. As discussed in Section 3.7, Geology and Soils, the project would be required to obtain a Construction General Permit from the SWRCB. The Construction General Permit would require preparation and implementation of a SWPPP that would limit potential soil erosion. Implementation of the conditions of the Construction General Permit would minimize potential surface water quality impacts.

Project operations would not affect surface water quality. Reservoir supply would be obtained from existing sources and distributed to West Point users through the West Point WTP and distribution system. Overall, project impacts related to potential violation of water quality standards would be less than significant.

b) Groundwater Supplies and Recharge.

The project would not require any new water consumption for its operations, including groundwater. The project would not add any substantial new impervious surfaces, so the existing groundwater recharge area in the project vicinity would remain essentially unchanged. Project impacts related to groundwater supplies and recharge would be less than significant.

c-i, ii, iii) Drainage Patterns and Runoff.

The project involves raising of the existing reservoir embarkment, further confining drainage leaving the existing watershed in which the existing reservoir is located; because of this, the project would not substantially affect but rather reinforce existing surface drainage patterns within the construction area. The project would have no substantial impact on drainage patterns or runoff.

c-iv) Flood Flows.

As noted, the project site is not within a designated flood zone. Therefore, the project, including its aboveground structures, would not alter any flood flows. The project would have no impact related to flood flows.

d) Release of Pollutants in Flood Zone.

As noted, the project site is not within a designated flood zone. As discussed in Section 3.9, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, project operations would not involve substantial use of any hazardous materials. The project would have no impact related to the release of pollutants during an inundation event.

e) Conflict with Water Quality or Sustainable Groundwater Plans.

As the project is an increase in raw water storage capacity. Assuming adequate control of erosion and sedimentation, it is not expected to interfere with the attainment of the objectives of applicable water quality plans.

In 2014, the State enacted the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. This act requires the formation of local groundwater sustainability agencies that must assess conditions in their local water basins and adopt locally based Groundwater Sustainability Plans for sustainable use of groundwater and avoidance of overdraft. As noted, there are no identified SGMA groundwater basins in the project vicinity; therefore, no Groundwater Sustainability Plans apply to the project site. Overall, project impacts on water quality or sustainable groundwater plans would be less than significant and may be beneficial.

## 3.11 LAND USE AND PLANNING

| Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Physically divide an established community? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| b) 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ | ☐ |

### Environmental Setting

The project is enlargement of the existing West Point Regulating Reservoir, a CCWD facility located outside and just east of the West Point community. The reservoir is in a mostly rural, forested area of Calaveras County, with several rural residences in the immediate vicinity and other dispersed residences and small clusters of residential use distributed throughout the area.

The current Calaveras County General Plan was adopted in 2019. The County General Plan is intended to guide orderly growth and development, promote equity, strengthen the economy, protect the environment, and promote public health and safety. This would be accomplished by setting forth goals and policies that advance the General Plan's intentions. The County General Plan includes a land use map that designates land uses in the unincorporated areas of Calaveras County. The project site is in an area designated Working Lands and Resource Production.

### Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

a) Division of Established Communities.

The project proposes improvements to a public water system in a rural area. The project site is not part of any recognized residential community in the area; the project would expand the capacity of the existing reservoir but would not encroach on any off-site lands. The project would enhance views for nearby residences, and it would not physically divide an established community. The project would have no impact in this area of concern.

b) Conflict with Applicable Plans, Policies and Regulations Avoiding or Mitigating Environmental Effects.

The project is in an area designated by the County General Plan as Working Lands and Resource Production, which identifies public or quasi-public facilities such as water treatment facilities. The project would be consistent with surrounding land uses and existing water storage and treatment activities at the CCWD WTP. The project therefore would be consistent with County General Plan and related policies and regulations.

## 3.12 MINERAL RESOURCES

| Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| b) 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |

### Environmental Setting

Calaveras County has a long history of mining with a rich array of mineral resources due to its location within the Sierra Nevada foothills and the Mother Lode Belt. Mining

activities occur on both private and public lands, the latter including lands managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service (Calaveras County 2019). There are no mineral resource extraction activities on or near the project site. A search of a database for oil and natural gas wells and fields showed no record of them on or near the project site (DOGGR 2024).

### Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

a, b) Loss of Mineral Resource Availability.

Per the State Mining and Geology Board, as of 2013, there are no lands designated in Calaveras County as mineral areas of regional or statewide significance (Calaveras County 2019). Because of this, the project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value either locally or regionally. The project would have no impact on availability of mineral resources.

## 3.13 NOISE

| Would the project result in: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) 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 applicable standards of other agencies? | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ | ☐ |
| b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels? | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ | ☐ |
| 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |

### Environmental Setting

The existing noise environment in the immediate project area, and he noise impacts of the project were assessed by Saxelby Acoustics. A copy of the Saxelby report is shown in Appendix E.

Assessment of noise impacts focuses on changes to the “ambient" noise level, which is the general noise level in a project area. The existing ambient noise environment in the project

vicinity consists mainly of vehicle traffic on local roads and random noise associated with existing rural residences in the immediate vicinity of the project. Chapter 9.02 of the Calaveras County Code contains provisions for the control of noise, including maximum allowable noise levels affecting land uses.

Acoustics is the science of sound. Sound may be thought of as mechanical energy of a vibrating object transmitted by pressure waves through a medium to human (or animal) ears. If the pressure variations occur frequently enough (at least 20 times per second), then they can be heard and are called sound. The number of pressure variations per second is called the frequency of sound and is expressed as cycles per second or Hertz (Hz).

Noise is a subjective reaction to different types of sounds. Noise is typically defined as (airborne) sound that is loud, unpleasant, unexpected or undesired, and may therefore be classified as a more specific group of sounds. Perceptions of sound and noise are highly subjective from person to person.

Measuring sound directly in terms of pressure would require a very large and awkward range of numbers. To avoid this, the decibel scale was devised. The decibel scale uses the hearing threshold (20 micropascals), as a point of reference, defined as 0 dB. Other sound pressures are then compared to this reference pressure, and the logarithm is taken to keep the numbers in a practical range. The decibel scale allows a million-fold increase in pressure to be expressed as 120 dB, and changes in levels (dB) correspond closely to human perception of relative loudness.

The perceived loudness of sounds is dependent upon many factors, including sound pressure level and frequency content. However, within the usual range of environmental noise levels, perception of loudness is relatively predictable, and can be approximated by A-weighted sound levels. There is a strong correlation between A-weighted sound levels (expressed as dBA) and the way the human ear perceives sound. For this reason, the A-weighted sound level has become the standard tool of environmental noise assessment.

The decibel scale is logarithmic, not linear. In other words, two sound levels 10-dB apart differ in acoustic energy by a factor of 10. When the standard logarithmic decibel is A-weighted, an increase of 10-dBA is generally perceived as a doubling in loudness. For example, a 70-dBA sound is half as loud as an 80-dBA sound, and twice as loud as a 60-dBA sound.

Community noise is commonly described in terms of the ambient noise level, which is defined as the all-encompassing noise level associated with a given environment. A common statistical tool is the average, or equivalent, sound level ($L_{eq}$), which corresponds to a steady-state A-weighted sound level containing the same total energy as a time varying signal over a given time period (usually one hour). The $L_{eq}$ is the foundation of the composite noise descriptor, $L_{dn}$, and shows very good correlation with community response to noise.

The day/night average level (DNL or $L_{dn}$) is based upon the average noise level over a 24-hour day, with a +10-decibel weighing applied to noise occurring during nighttime (10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.) hours. The nighttime penalty is based upon the assumption that people

react to nighttime noise exposures as though they were twice as loud as daytime exposures. Because $L_{dn}$ represents a 24-hour average, it tends to disguise short-term variations in the noise environment.

Effects of Noise on People

An important way of predicting a human reaction to a new noise environment is the way it compares to the existing environment to which one has adapted: the so-called ambient noise level. In general, the more a new noise exceeds the previously existing ambient noise level, the less acceptable the new noise will be judged by those hearing it.

With regards to increases in A-weighted noise level, the following relationships occur:

- Except in carefully controlled laboratory experiments, a change of 1-dBA cannot be perceived;
- Outside of the laboratory, a 3-dBA change is considered a just-perceivable difference;
- A change in level of at least 5-dBA is required before any noticeable change in human response would be expected; and
- A 10-dBA change is subjectively heard as approximately a doubling in loudness and can cause an adverse response.

Stationary point sources of noise – including stationary mobile sources such as idling vehicles – attenuate (lessen) at a rate of approximately 6 dB per doubling of distance from the source, depending on environmental conditions (i.e. atmospheric conditions and either vegetative or manufactured noise barriers, etc.). Widely distributed noises, such as a large industrial facility spread over many acres or a street with moving vehicles, would typically attenuate at a lower rate.

Existing Noise Receptors

Some land uses are considered more sensitive to noise than others. Land uses often associated with sensitive receptors generally include residences, schools, libraries, hospitals, and passive recreational areas. Sensitive noise receptors may also include threatened or endangered noise-sensitive biological species, although many jurisdictions have not adopted noise standards for wildlife areas. Noise sensitive land uses are typically given special attention in order to achieve protection from excessive noise.

Sensitivity is a function of noise exposure (in terms of both exposure duration and insulation from noise) and the types of activities involved. In the vicinity of the project site, sensitive land uses include several existing rural single-family residential uses surrounding the project site.

Existing General Ambient Noise Levels

The existing noise environment in the project area is primarily defined by traffic on nearby roads, nature sounds, and typical residential activities. To quantify the existing ambient noise environment in the project vicinity, Saxelby Acoustics conducted continuous (24-

hr.) noise level measurements at three locations on the project site. Noise measurement locations are shown on Figure 3-9.

The sound level meters were programmed to record the maximum, median, and average noise levels at each site during the survey. The maximum value, denoted $L_{max}$, represents the highest noise level measured. The average value, denoted $L_{eq}$, represents the energy average of all the noise received by the sound level meter microphone during the monitoring period. The median value, denoted $L_{50}$, represents the sound level exceeded 50 percent of the time during the monitoring period.

TABLE 3-2
SUMMARY OF EXISTING BACKGROUND NOISE MEASUREMENT DATA

| Location | Date | $L_{dn}$ | Daytime $L_{eq}$ | Daytime $L_{50}$ | Daytime $L_{max}$ | Nighttime $L_{eq}$ | Nighttime $L_{50}$ | Nighttime $L_{max}$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| LT-1: 425 ft. to CL of Winton Rd. | 3/25/25 | 60 | 54 | 45 | 61 | 54 | 47 | 64 |
| LT-2: 390 ft. to CL of Winton Rd. | 3/25/25 | 61 | 55 | 51 | 64 | 55 | 53 | 62 |
| LT-3: 570 ft. to CL of Hidden Valley Rd. | 3/25/25 | 47 | 42 | 38 | 57 | 40 | 39 | 53 |

- *All values shown in dBA*
- *Daytime hours: 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.*
- *Nighttime Hours: 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.*
- *Source: Saxelby Acoustics, 2025.*

## Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

### Calaveras County Code Standards

#### Section 9.02.030 Sound level limitations

No person shall cause, allow, or permit the operation of any sound source on property or any public space or public right-of-way in such a manner as to create a sound level that exceeds the levels listed in Table 3-2. If all provisions of Subsection 9.02.060D. are complied with, this section shall not apply to construction equipment used in connection with construction operations.

TABLE 3-3
EXTERIOR NOISE LEVEL STANDARDS

| Land Use Type* | Sound Level (A-Weighted) Decibels | |
|---|---|---|
| | 7:00 a.m.—10:00 p.m.** | 10:00 p.m.—7:00 a.m. |
| Residential | 60 | 50 |
| Commercial | 70 | 60 |
| Industrial (Industry) | 75 | 65 |

**As defined in Title 17 of the Calaveras County Code.*
***Subsection 9.02.050E provides an extension to midnight on Friday and Saturday for the events listed in the provision.*

Each of the sound level standards specified in 3-3 shall be reduced by five dBA for pure tone noises. However, in no case shall the exterior noise level standard be lower than the ambient sound level plus five dBA. (Ord. No. 3013, § III, 9-25-2012)

Section 9.02.060 Exemptions

Among other things, construction activities are exempt from the Calaveras Code requirements: Sound from construction activity, provided that all construction in or adjacent to residential areas shall be limited to the daytime hours between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00p.m., unless otherwise subject to conditions in a valid discretionary land use permit that addresses construction noise associated with the project.

Criteria for Acceptable Vibration

Human and structural response to different vibration levels is influenced by a number of factors, including ground type, distance between source and receptor, duration, and the number of perceived vibration events.

Caltrans standards indicate that the threshold for architectural damage to structures is 0.20 in/sec p.p.v. A threshold of 0.20 in/sec p.p.v. is considered to be a reasonable threshold for short-term construction projects.

a) Exposure to Noise Exceeding Local Standards.

The Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Roadway Construction Noise Model (RCNM) was used to predict noise levels for standard construction equipment used for roadway improvement projects. The assessment of potential significant noise effects due to construction is based on the standards and procedures described in the Federal Transit Authority (FTA) guidance manual and FHWA's RCNM.

The RCNM noise prediction model enables the prediction of construction noise levels for a variety of construction equipment based on a compilation of empirical data and the application of acoustical propagation formulas. RCNM allows for the modeling of multiple pieces of construction equipment working either independently or simultaneously, the character of noise emission, and the usage factors for each piece of equipment.

Construction activities would increase noise levels temporarily in the vicinity of the Project. Actual noise levels would depend on the type of construction equipment involved, distance to the source of the noise, time of day, and similar factors. Construction noise is temporary and would cease when project work is completed.

Section 9.02.060 of the Calaveras County Code exempts several activities from the requirements of Chapter 9.02, including sound from construction activity, provided that all construction in or adjacent to residential areas shall be limited to the daytime hours between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., unless otherwise subject to conditions in a valid discretionary land use permit that addresses construction noise associated with the project.

The project, once completed, would not generate any substantial noise. Project impacts regarding exposure to noise exceeding local standards would be less than significant.

b) Groundborne Vibration.

Project construction includes activities, such as the operation of large pieces of equipment like heavy trucks, that may result in the periodic, temporary generation of groundborne vibration. Saxelby Acoustics indicates that potential vibration levels would be below the 0.2 in/sec threshold at a distance of 26 feet. No sensitive receptors are located within this distance of construction activities. Vibrations associated with construction would cease once work is completed. Project operations would not introduce new sources of groundborne vibration. Project impacts related to groundborne vibrations would be less than significant.

c) Exposure to Airport/Airstrip Noise.

As noted in Section 3.9, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, there are no public airports near the project site. The project would have no impact related to airport or airstrip noise.

## 3.14 POPULATION AND HOUSING

| Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) 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)? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |

## Environmental Setting

As of January 1, 2024, the population of unincorporated Calaveras County was estimated at 41,255. An estimated 25,921 housing units were in unincorporated Calaveras County as of January 1, 2024, of which approximately 88.3% were single family detached residences (California Department of Finance 2024).

## Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

a) Unplanned Population Growth.

The project involves improvements to a water facility. It would not involve the construction of residences or employment centers that would directly or indirectly induce population growth.

By recycling backwash water, the project would make more potable water available for CCWD residents and businesses. Additional water could encourage more development, which could increase the population in the CCWD area. However, the CCWD area is a mostly rural area that is expected to experience limited growth. Further population growth would likely require an expanded water distribution system, which is not currently planned by CCWD. Future improvements to the distribution system, if necessary, would be subject to environmental review, as would any new development proposed in the CCWD area.

The project is not expected to encourage development and subsequent population growth not otherwise planned for in the Calaveras County General Plan. Therefore, the project would have no impact related to unplanned population growth.

b) Displacement of Housing and People.

The project site contains no housing; therefore, the project would not displace or otherwise affect existing housing in the vicinity. Because of this, the project would also not displace people. The project would have no impact on this issue.

# 3.15 PUBLIC SERVICES

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, 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 any of the public services: | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| i) Fire protection? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| ii) Police protection? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| iii) Schools? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| iv) Parks? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| v) Other public facilities? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |

## Environmental Setting

Fire protection services in the project area are provided by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) and the West Point Fire Protection District (WPFPD); the WPFPD station is located at 195 Spink Rd, West Point, CA 95255. The Calaveras County Sheriff's Department provides police protection services in the area. The project site is within the boundaries of the Calaveras Unified School District. There are no parks or other public services in the project vicinity.

Caltrans IS/MND services notes

**Affected Environment**

Fire Protection and Police Services

Fire protection and police services in the project area are provided by the following agencies:

> California Highway Patrol, 749 Mountain Ranch Road, San Andreas, California 95249.
>
> Calaveras County Sheriff's Department, 891 Mountain Ranch Road, San Andreas, California 95249.
>
> California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Emergency Command Center, 785 Mountain Ranch Road, San Andreas, California 95249.
>
> West Point Fire Protection District, P.O. Box 417, West Point, California 95255.

Hospital Emergency Care Services

> Air Ambulance Providers, PHI Air Medical, 801-D Airport, Modesto, California 95354.
>
> California Shock Trauma Air Rescue, 12151 Airport Road, Jackson, California 95642.

Mark Twain Medical Center, 768 Mountain Ranch Road, San Andreas, California 95249.

Sonora Regional Medical Center, 1000 Greenley Road, Sonora, California 95370.

## Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

a) Fire Protection, Police Protection, Schools, Parks, Other Public Services.

The project involves improvements to public water system facilities. Also, as discussed in Section 3.14, Population and Housing, the project is not expected to generate population growth. Because of this, demand for public services such as fire protection, police protection, schools, parks, and other public services would not be expected to increase as a result of the project. No new or expanded public service facilities would be required. The project would have no substantial impact on public services.

# 3.16 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |

## Environmental Setting

Park and recreation services within unincorporated Calaveras County are provided through County Parks and Recreation. There are no parks in the project vicinity. Jeff Davis Reservoir does not have recreational facilities.

## Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

a, b) Recreational Facilities.

The project involves improvements to water infrastructure. As discussed in Section 3.14, Population and Housing, the project is not expected to generate population growth. As such, demand for parks and recreational services would not increase, and no new or expanded parks or recreational facilities would be required. The project would have no impact on recreational facilities.

# 3.17 TRANSPORTATION

| Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Conflict with an applicable program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| c) Substantially increase hazards to a geometric design feature (e g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e g, farm equipment)? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| d) Result in inadequate emergency access? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |

## Environmental Setting

The project site is accessed by West Forty Road, a rural road that mainly provides access to Jeff Davis Reservoir and the WTP. West Forty Road extends north from Ridge Road, an east-west County road that extends from State Route 26 to the community of Rail Road Flat. Reservoir Road crosses the dam and provides access to the northern and eastern shores of the reservoir. No public transit system serves the project site, and there are no bicycle or pedestrian facilities in the area.

## Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

a) Conflict with Transportation Plans, Ordinances, and Policies.

The project involves improvements to a water facility. The project, once completed, would not contribute any new traffic nor increase traffic volumes on roads in the vicinity. As the

project is in a rural, forested area with few residents, there would be no transportation facilities such as bikeways, sidewalks, or public transit routes that would be affected. The project would have no impact on applicable transportation plans, ordinances, and policies.

b) Conflict with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b).

Recently, Section 15064.3 was added to the CEQA Guidelines. Section 15064.3 states that "vehicle miles traveled" (VMT) is the preferred metric for evaluating transportation impacts. VMT accounts for the total environmental impact of transportation associated with a project, including use of travel modes such as buses or bicycles. Section 15064.3(b) sets forth the criteria for analyzing transportation impacts using the preferred VMT metric. As noted in a) above, the project would not generate traffic. Because of this, the project would not increase VMT and therefore would not conflict with the objectives of CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b). The project would have no impact on this issue.

c) Traffic Hazards.

The project would not alter any local roads such that it would introduce traffic hazards. The existing design features of roads in the area would not change. There would be temporary changes to the existing traffic mix on roads in the area during project construction, when construction equipment and vehicles would travel to and from the project site. However, once construction work ends, the existing vehicle traffic mix would return. As noted, the project would not introduce any new traffic. The project would have no impact on traffic hazards.

d) Emergency Access.

Existing emergency access to the project site would be retained during project construction, as discussed in Section 3.9, Hazards and Hazardous Materials. The project would not create any obstacles to emergency vehicle access once completed. The project would have no impact on emergency access.

## 3.18 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 Section 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: | | | | |
| i) 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 Section 5020.1(k), or | | | | |
| ii) 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 Section 5024.1? In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe? | ☐ | ✓ | ☐ | ☐ |

Information in this section is based primarily upon a cultural resource report prepared by Natural Investigations Company. A copy of this report is available in Appendix C.

## Environmental Setting

As noted, in Section 3.5, Cultural Resources, the project site lies within the traditional territory of the Northern Sierra Mi-wuk. Prior to Euro-American contact, Northern Sierra Mi-wuk occupied the foothills and mountains of the Mokelumne and Calaveras River drainages. Mi-wuk villages were divided into "tribelets", which controlled specific lands and the natural resources within that territory. The population size of Sierran Mi-wuk tribelets averaged between 100 and 300 individuals. The territory of each Mi-wuk tribelet typically included a main village and smaller satellite villages.

Seasonally mobile hunter-gatherers with semi-permanent villages, the foothills and mountains provided the Northern Sierra Mi-wuk with an abundance of natural resources. Acorns were of particular importance to the diet. Similar to other California Native American groups, the Mi-wuk employed a variety of tools, implements, and enclosures for hunting and collecting natural resources. The Mi-wuk participated in an extensive east-west trade network between the coast and the Great Basin. From coastal groups, marine shell and steatite moved eastward, while salt and obsidian traveled westward from the Sierras and Great Basin. Basketry, an important trade item, moved in both directions.

The discovery of gold in 1848 and the ensuing Gold Rush led to a flood of non-indigenous peoples into Mi-wuk territory. Sierran Mi-wuk remained in rancherias scattered throughout the foothills, but in addition to traditional hunting and gathering, they worked seasonally as paid laborers on farms and ranches. Their reliance on cash income increased as availability of natural resources decreased with the growth of non-Miwuk communities and towns in their traditional territory.

During the first half of the 1900s, the federal government acquired lands and established reservations, or rancherias, for the Plains Mi-wuk, Northern Sierra Mi-wuk and Central Sierra Mi-wuk. The U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs terminated relations with most of these

rancherias between 1934 and 1972, but status has been restored to the majority of the rancherias, beginning in 1984. At present, there are seven federally recognized rancherias in Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Lake, and Tuolumne Counties that have primarily or exclusively Eastern Mi-wuk populations: Wilton, Shingle Springs, Jackson, Buena Vista, Sheep Ranch, Tuolumne, and Chicken Ranch.

In 2014, the California Legislature enacted AB 52, which focuses on consultation with Native American tribes on land use issues potentially affecting the tribes. The intent of this consultation is to avoid or mitigate potential impacts on "tribal cultural resources," which are defined as "sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe." Under AB 52, when a tribe requests consultation with a CEQA lead agency on projects within its traditionally and culturally affiliated geographical area, the lead agency must provide the tribe with notice of a proposed project within 14 days of a project application being deemed complete or when the lead agency decides to undertake the project if it is the agency's own project. The tribe has up to 30 days to respond to the notice and request consultation; if consultation is requested, then the local agency has up to 30 days to initiate consultation. The CCWD has not received any requests in writing from California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the area to be notified of proposed projects.

## Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

a-i, ii) Tribal Cultural Resources.

As part of the preparation of the cultural resource report for the project, Natural Investigation Company requested the Native American Heritage Commission to conduct a search of its Sacred Lands File for records of potential tribal sacred land on the project site. The Commission reported a negative result, indicating no sacred lands have been recorded on the project site. The field survey conducted as part of the cultural resource report found no new prehistoric or ethnographic sites. The project site rests upon Nedsgulch series soils found on side slopes of high hills and mountains with slopes ranging from 3 to 60 percent. Buried soils representing former landscapes are not present in this soil series.

As discussed in Section 3.5, Cultural Resources, the potential for the discovery of buried archaeological materials within the project site is low. However, the report also stated that it is possible to inadvertently uncover cultural resources during ground-disturbing project activities. Mitigation Measure CULT-1 would require work to be stopped when cultural resources are uncovered until these resources can be evaluated by a qualified archaeologist and recommendations made for their proper disposition. Implementation of this mitigation measure would reduce tribal cultural resource impacts to a level that would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure: Implementation of Mitigation Measure CULT-1.

## 3.19 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

| Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment facilities or storm drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects? | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ | ☐ |
| b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project determined that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| d) 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| e) Comply with federal, state and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |

### Environmental Setting

As has been noted, the project proposes enlargement of the existing regulating reservoir at the West Point WTP, managed by CCWD. The CCWD provides potable water service to customers and businesses in the West Point service area. Wastewater services for employees at the WTP, West Point residences and business are provided by individual septic systems under permits from the Calaveras County Environmental Health Department. Existing electrical service is provided by PG&E overhead lines, which also serve CCWD facilities, including the WTP.

Other organized utilities serve the needs of other more intensively developed areas of the County, including:

Calaveras Public Utilities District (San Andreas and Mokelumne Hill)
Calaveras County Water District (part of Valley Springs)
Mokelumne Hill Sanitary District (wastewater service)
Pacific Gas and Electric Company (natural gas and electrical service countywide)
AT&T Corporation, Volcano Telephone Company, Comcast, Calaveras Telephone Company

## Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

a) Construction or Relocation of Infrastructure.

The project involves improvements to the existing reservoir facility. This IS/MND evaluates the potential environmental impacts of these improvements. The project may have some impacts on existing utility facilities on and near the project site; any potential conflicts will be identified as a part of detailed project engineering, and any such impacts would be reduced to a level that would be less than significant with anticipated engineering and the implementation of identified mitigation measures.

The project is not expected to impacts on existing infrastructure within the project site other than the existing dam, spillway and drainage. The project proposes improvements to theses facilities. All such work would occur within the existing CCWD ownership; no additional land would need to be acquired or would be affected by this work. As a result,impacts related to construction or relocation of infrastructure would be less than significant.

b) Water Supply.

The project involves improvements to a water facility. It would not require new water use such that additional supplies would need to be obtained.

c) Wastewater Treatment Capacity.

As noted, in Section 3.7, Geology and Soils, the project would not involve any new wastewater treatment demands. The project would have no impact on wastewater treatment capacity.

d, e) Solid Waste Services.

The project involves improvements to a water facility. Project operations would not generate any solid waste that would require collection or the need for landfill capacity. Solid waste generated by the Project would be limited to construction debris. Disposal of this debris would occur at permitted landfills in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations. The project would have no adverse impact on solid waste services.

## 3.20 WILDFIRE

| If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| b) 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| c) 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| d) 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |

### Environmental Setting

As noted in Section 3.9, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, the project is in a forested area that extends beyond the CCWD properties onto private lands to the east and eventually to merge with other forested land in the Stanislaus National Forest.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's Fire and Resource Assessment Program identifies fire threat based on a combination of two factors: 1) fire frequency, or the likelihood of a given area burning, and 2) potential fire behavior. These two factors are combined in determining the following Fire Hazard Severity Zones: Moderate, High, Very High. These zones are mapped for State Responsibility Areas, where the State of California is financially responsible for the prevention and suppression of wildfires. The project site and surrounding lands are within a State Responsibility Area and are placed in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (Cal Fire 2022).

a) Emergency Response and Emergency Evacuation Plans.

Project construction would involve truck transport of fill material from borrow sites to the CCWD dam site.; truck traffic and turning movements could involve obstructions and delays in the passage of emergency vehicles. As discussed in Section 3.9, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, the project would not substantially interfere with emergency vehicle access during construction.

With proper planning and interagency coordination, the project would not involve substantial interference during construction. Project operation would not involve any potential for obstruction of emergency vehicle access or evacuation issues upon project completion. The project would have no substantial impact related to emergency response plans or emergency evacuation plans as they pertain to wildfires.

b) Exposure of Project Occupants to Pollutants.

The project site does not support or include permanent occupants. No unique topographic or wind conditions are known to occur on site that exacerbate wildfire risks. The topographic and climate conditions of adjacent lands is similar. The project would have no impact related to exposure of project occupants to wildfire-related pollutants.

c) Installation and Maintenance of Infrastructure.

The project involves improvements to an existing water storage facility on the existing CCWD reservoir site; no new lands would need to be acquired. The project would not involve any activities that do not currently occur at the existing reservoir. Therefore, the project would not exacerbate fire risk or result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment. The project would have no impact on this issue.

d) Risks from Runoff, Post-Fire Slope Instability, or Drainage Changes.

As noted in b) above, the project would not construct any structures that would be occupied. Because of this, the project would not expose people or structures to downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes. The project would have no impact in this area of concern.

## 3.21 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Does 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 a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory? | | | | |
| b) Does 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)? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ |
| c) Does the project have environmental effects which would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly? | ☐ | ☐ | ✓ | ☐ |

a) Findings on Biological and Cultural Resources.

The project's potential biological resource and cultural resource impacts were described in Sections 3.4 and 3.5, respectively. Potentially significant environmental effects on biological and cultural resources were identified, but implementation of recommended mitigation measures would reduce these effects to a level that would be less than significant. The mitigation measures are described in Sections 3.4 and 3.5 and are listed in Table 1-1.

b) Findings on Cumulatively Considerable Impacts.

As described in this IS/MND, the potential environmental effects of the project would either be less than significant, or the project would have no impact at all, when compared to baseline conditions. Where the project involves potentially significant effects, these effects would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with proposed mitigation measures and compliance with required permits and applicable regulations.

The potential environmental effects identified in this IS/MND have been considered in conjunction with each other as to their potential to generate other potentially significant effects. The various potential environmental effects of the project would not combine to generate any potentially significant cumulative effects.

There are no other known, similar projects with which the project might combine to produce adverse cumulative impacts.

c) Findings on Adverse Effects on Human Beings.

Potential adverse effects on human beings were discussed in Section 3.3, Air Quality (TACs); Section 3.7, Geology and Soils (seismic hazards); Section 3.9, Hazards and Hazardous Materials; Section 3.10, Hydrology and Water Quality (flooding); Section 3.17, Transportation/Traffic (traffic hazards); and Section 3.20, Wildfire. No significant adverse effects were identified in these sections that could not be mitigated to a level that would be less than significant. Project impacts related to potential adverse effects on human beings would be less than significant.

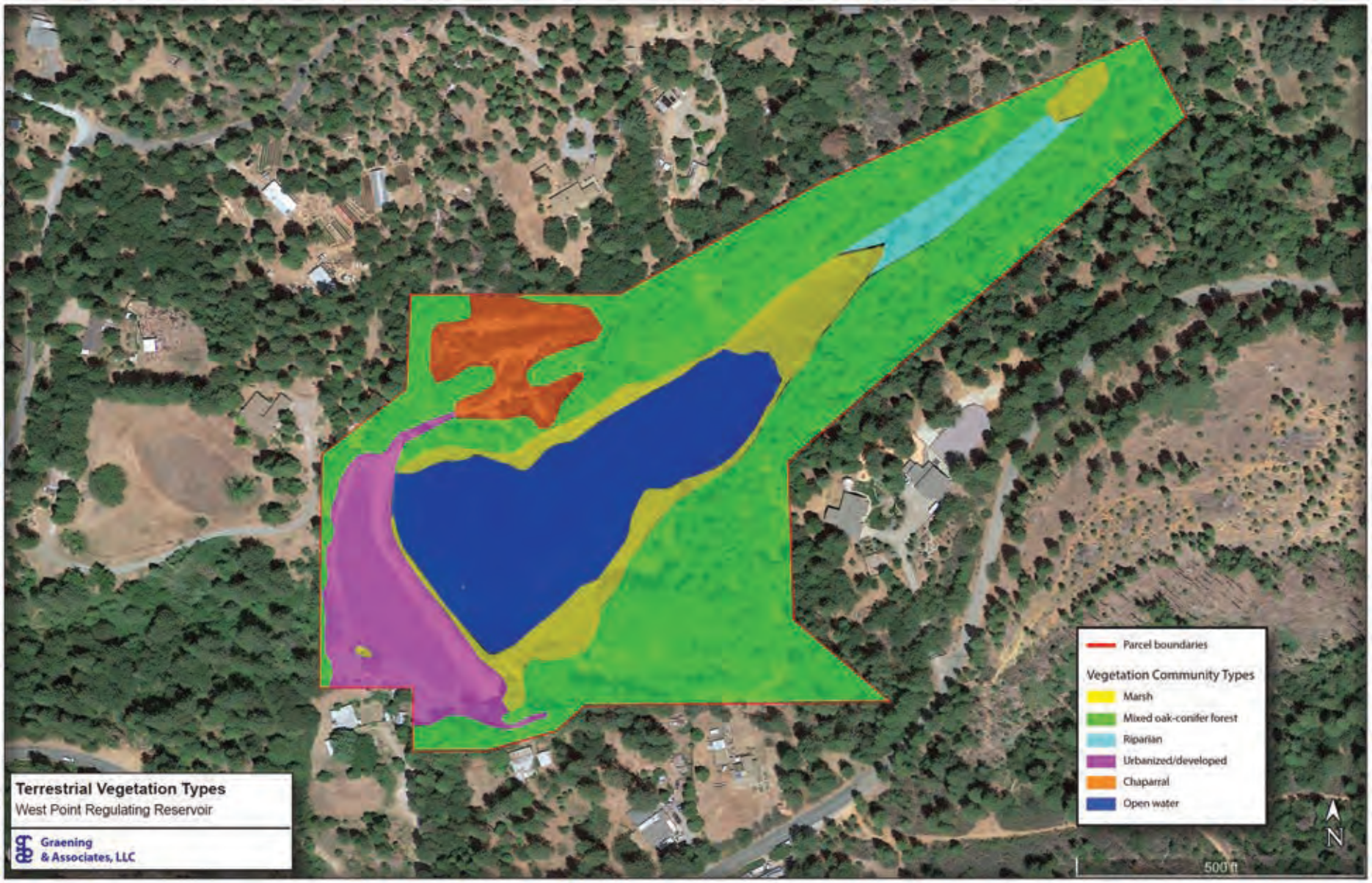





Figure 3-1
TERRESTRIAL VEGETATION TYPES

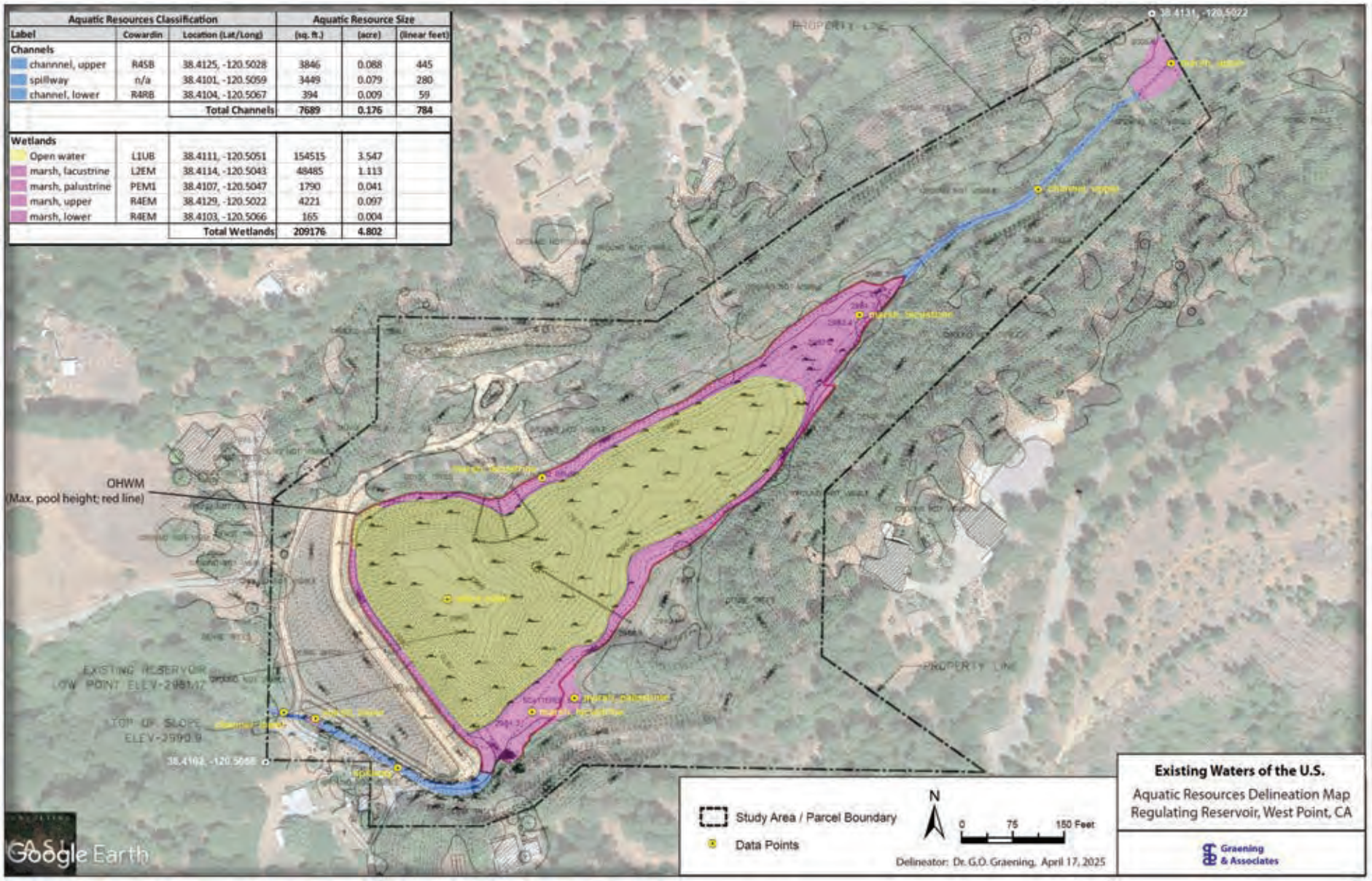





Figure 3-2
EXISTING WATERS OF THE U.S.

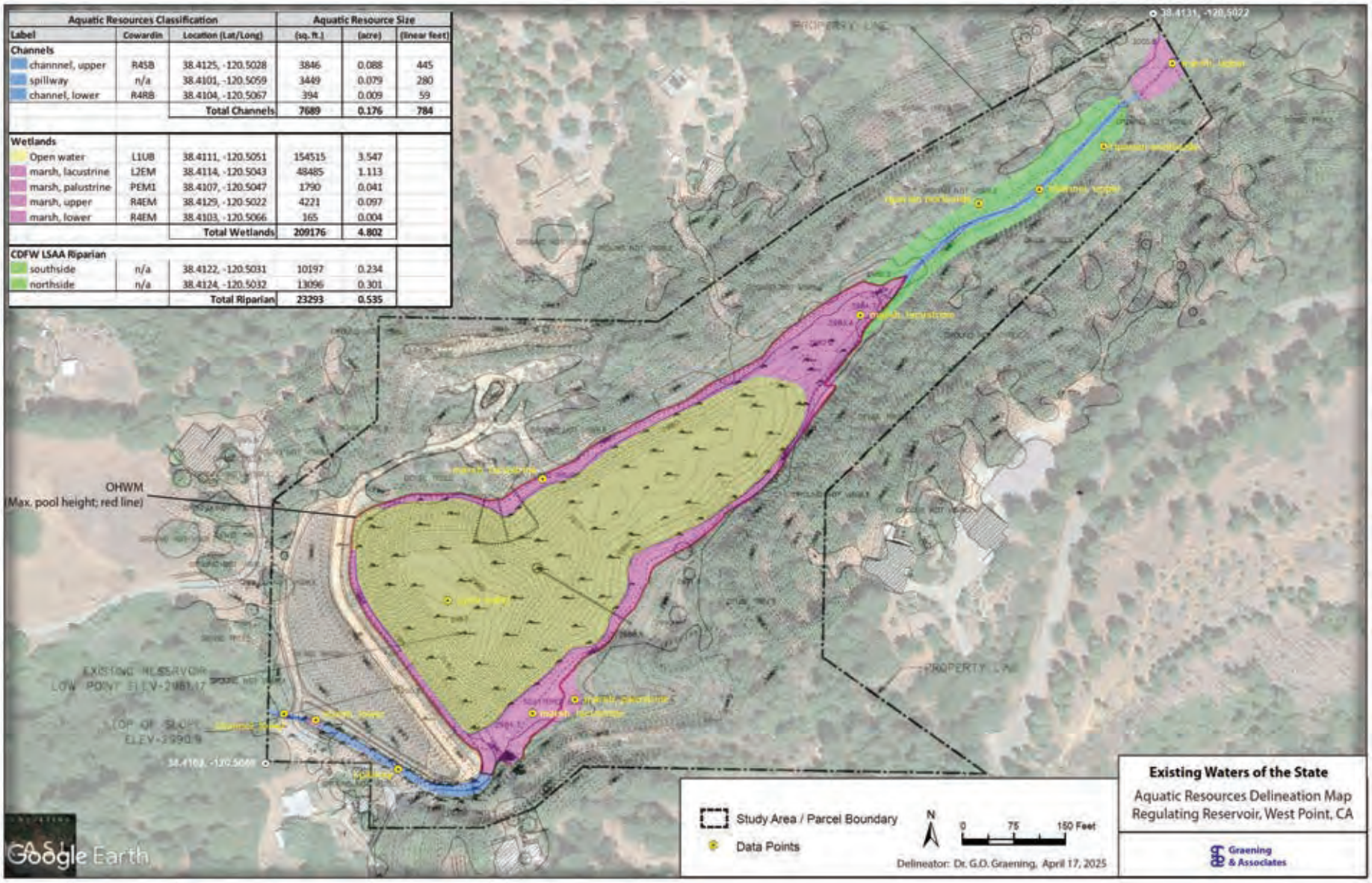





Figure 3-3
EXISTING WATERS OF THE STATE

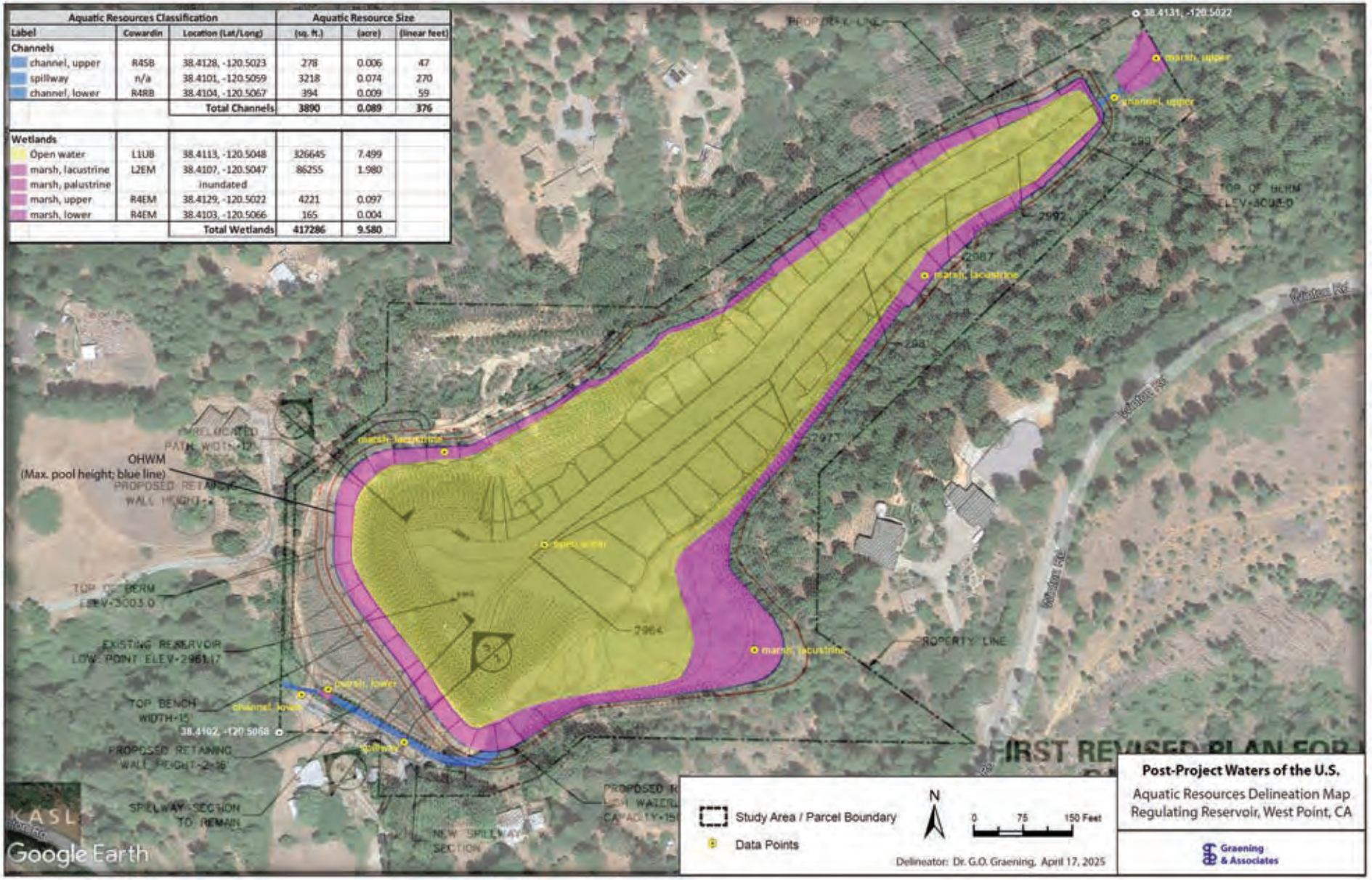



Figure 3-4
POST-PROJECT WATERS OF THE U.S.

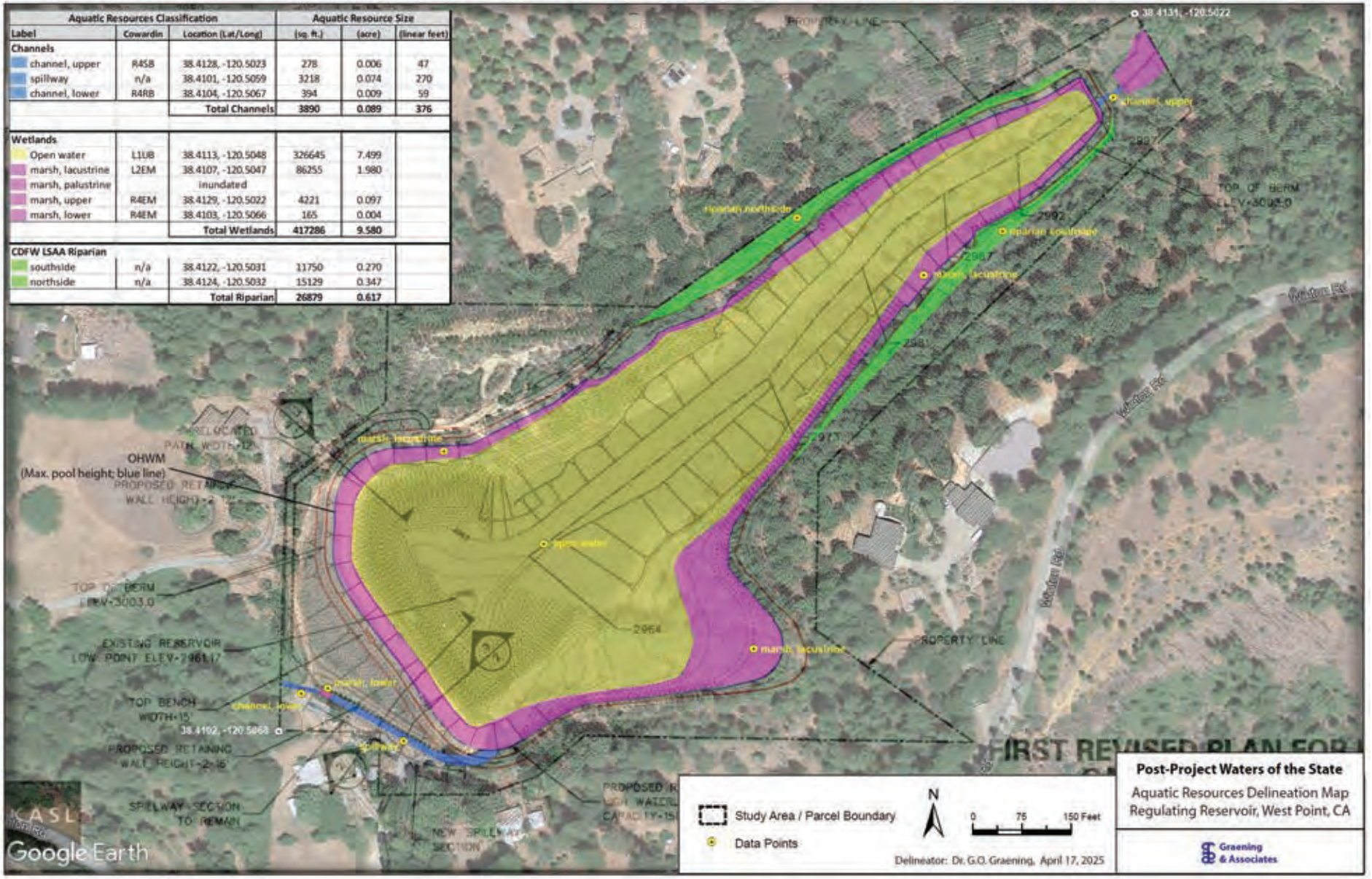





Figure 3-5
POST-PROJECT WATERS OF THE STATE

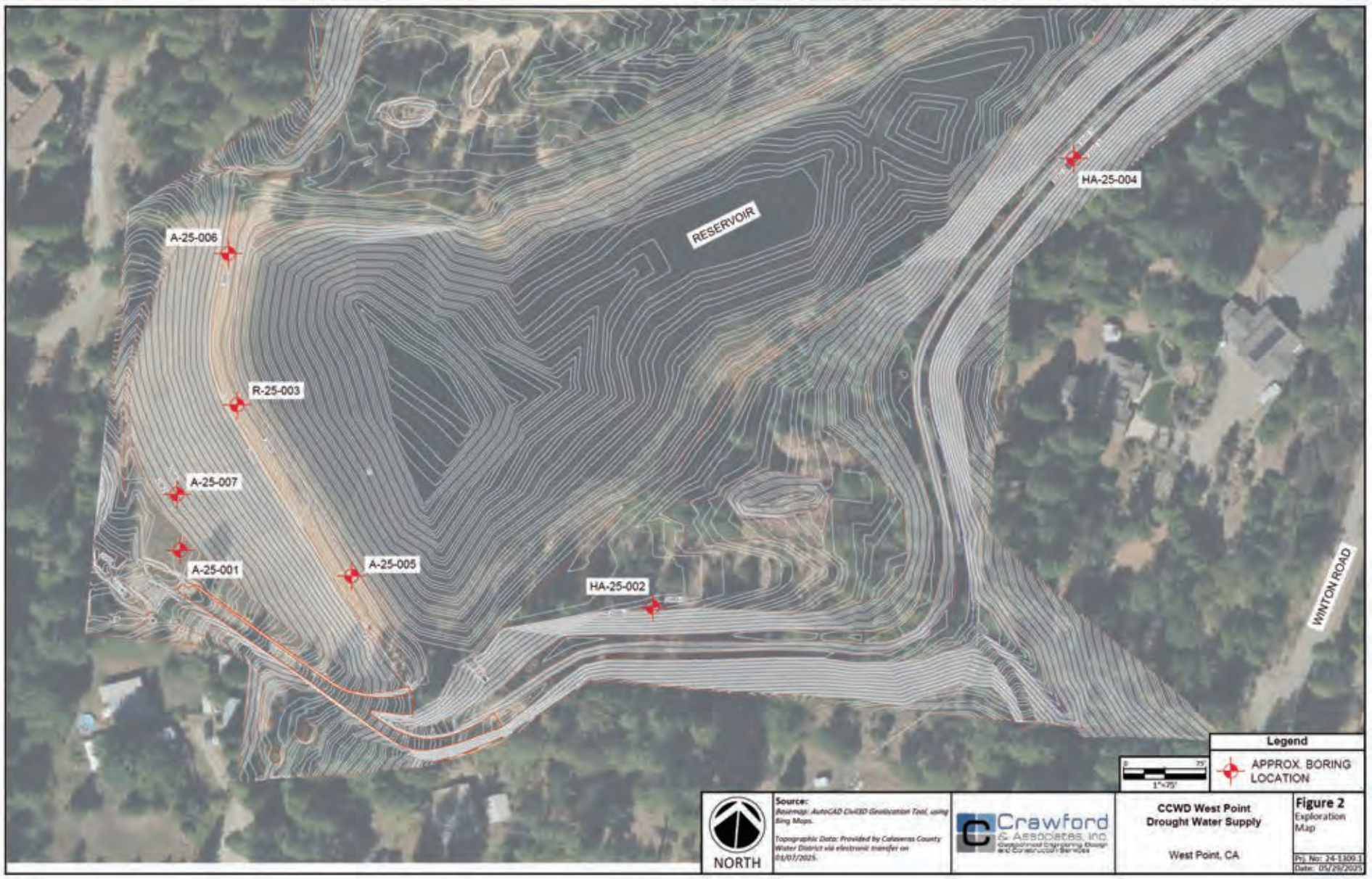





Figure 3-6
BORING LOCATIONS

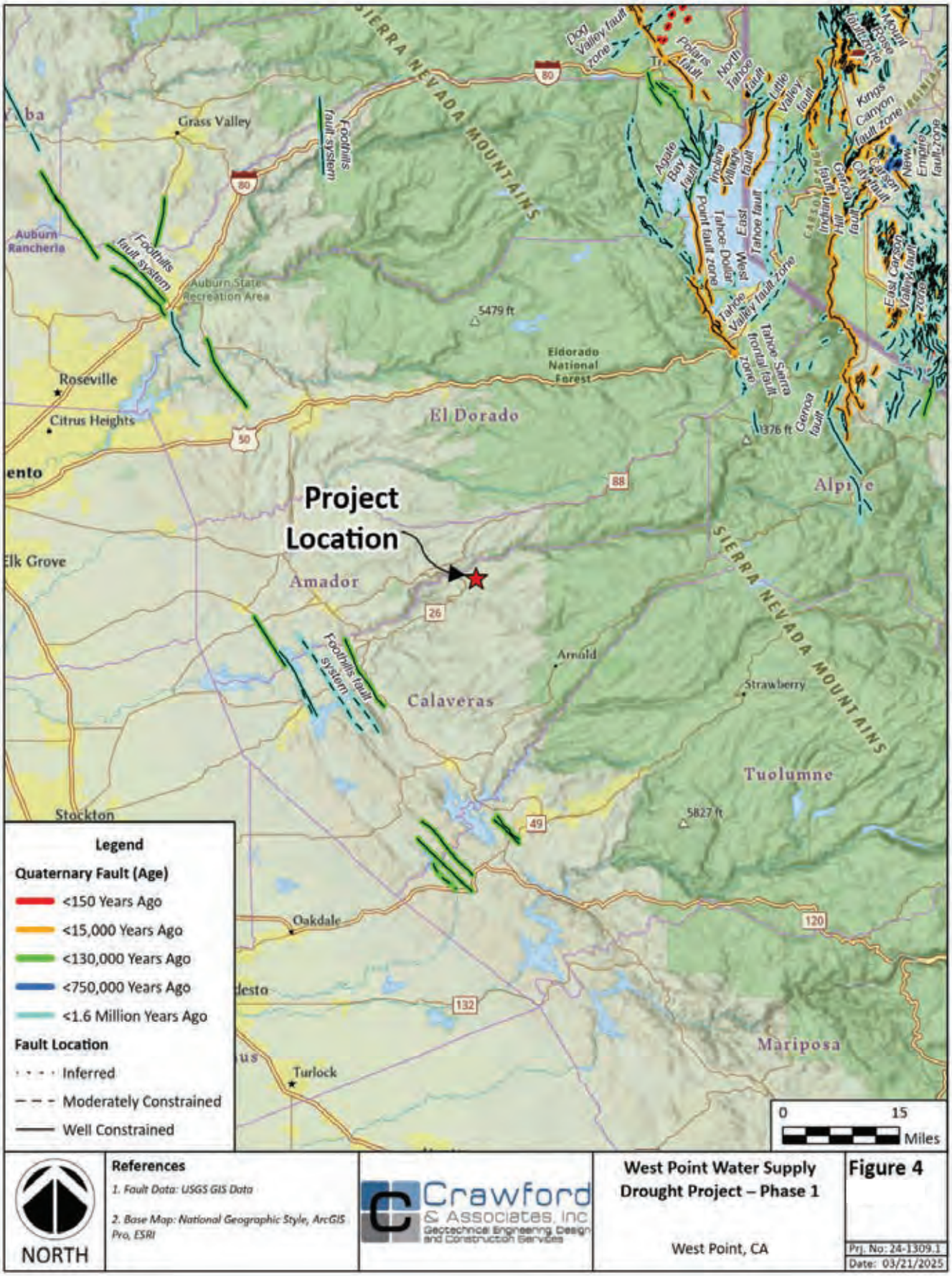





Figure 3-7
FAULT MAP

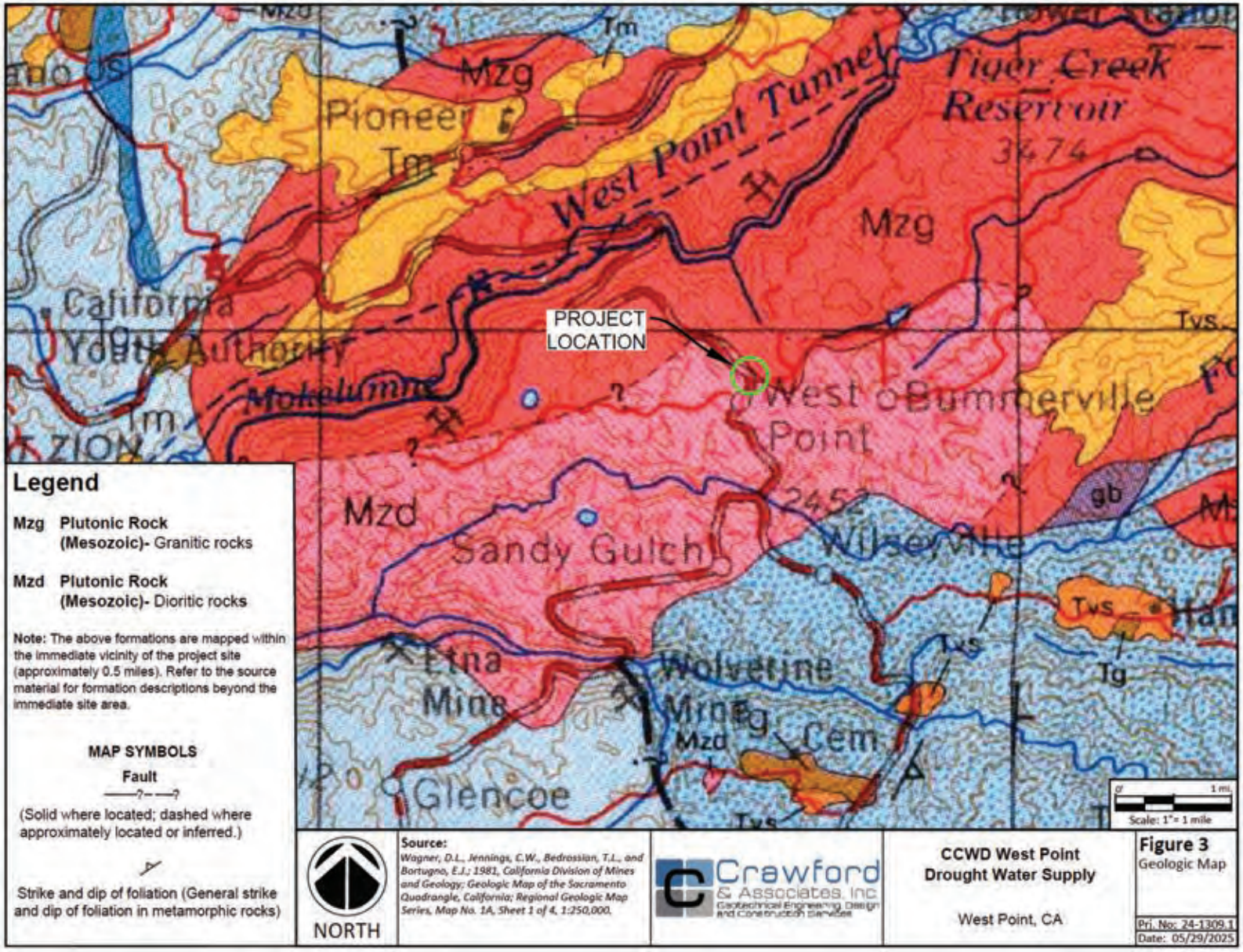





Figure 3-8
GEOLOGIC MAP

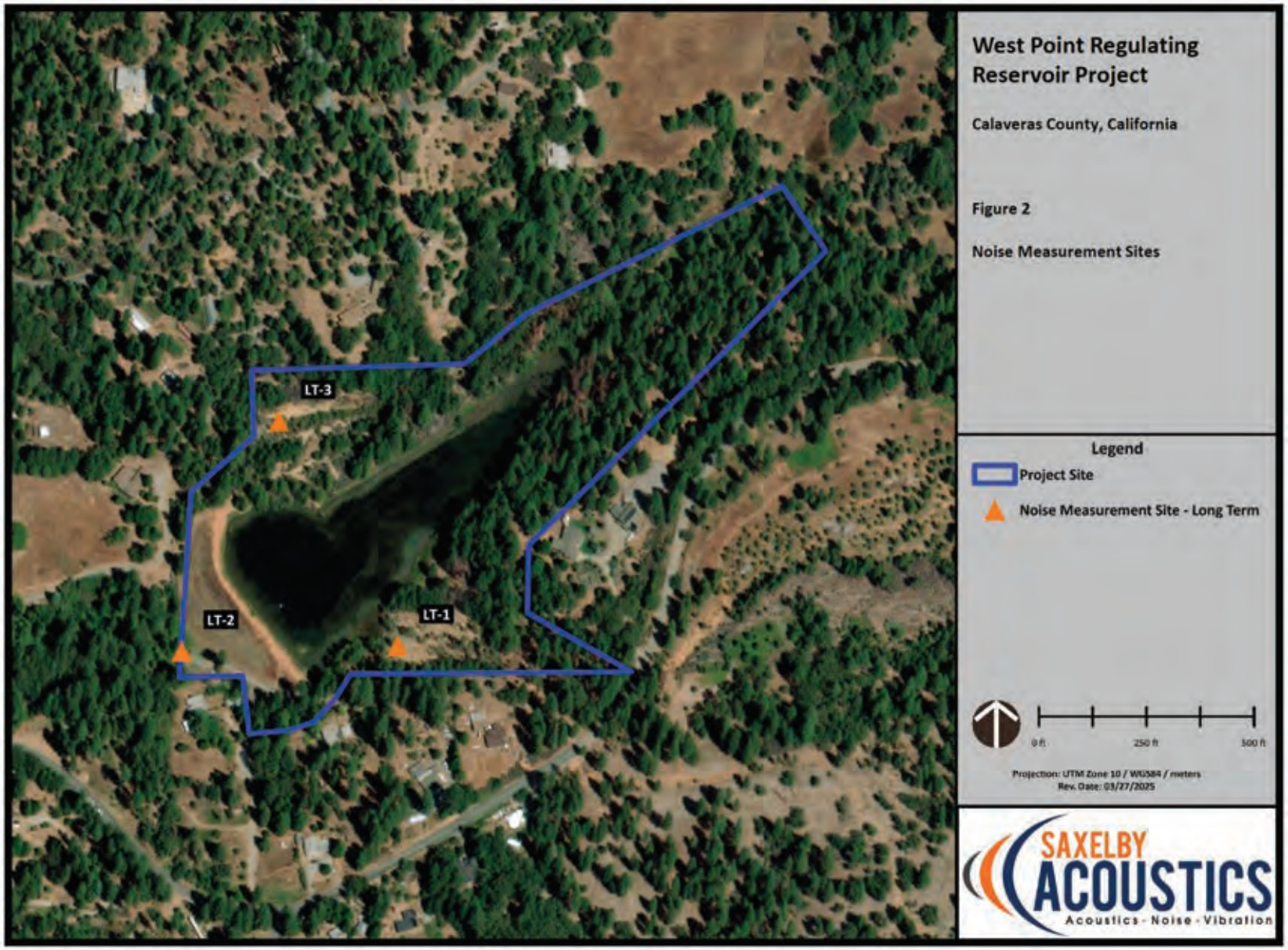
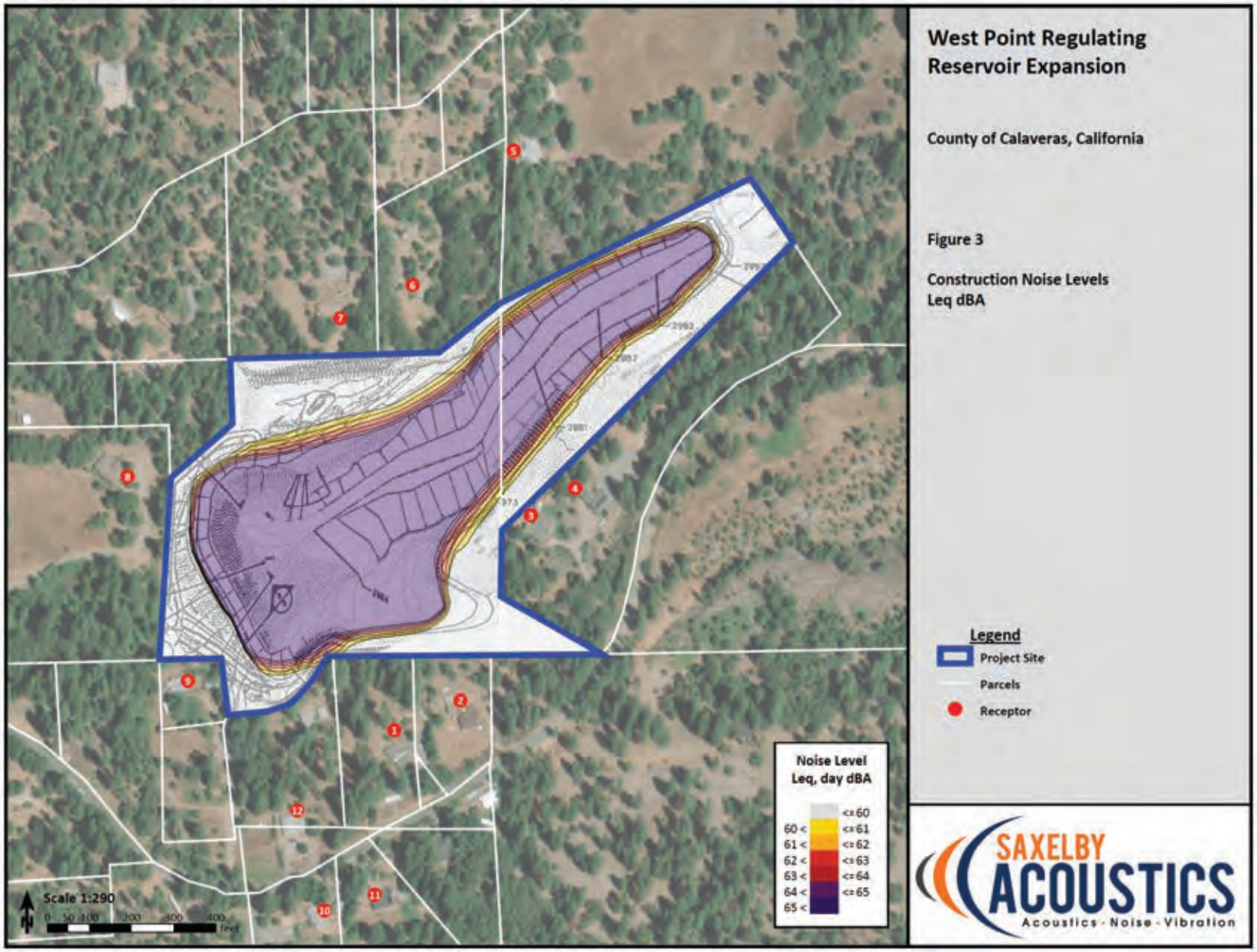





Figure 3-9
NOISE MONITORING SITES


West Point Regulating Reservoir Expansion
County of Calaveras, California
Figure 3
Construction Noise Levels
Leq dBA
Legend
Project Site
Parcels
Receptor
Noise Level
Leq, day dBA
<=60
60 < <=61
61 < <=62
62 < <=63
63 < <=64
64 < <=65
65 <
Scale 1:290
0 50 100 200 300 400 feet
SAXELBY ACOUSTICS
Acoustics · Noise · Vibration

# 4.0 REFERENCES

## 4.1 DOCUMENT PREPARERS

This IS/MND was prepared by BaseCamp Environmental, Inc. for use by and under the supervision of the City of Hughson. The following persons were involved in preparation of the IS/MND:

BaseCamp Environmental, Inc.

Charlie Simpson, Principal
Terry Farmer, AICP, Senior Environmental Planner
Krista Simpson, Associate Environmental Planner

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## 4.3 PERSONS CONSULTED

Tyla Daries. Engineering Technician, WGA Civil Engineering Consultants.

Phil Hanes, MA, RPA. Principal Archaeologist, Natural Investigations Company.

# 5.0 NOTES ON EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

1) A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).

2) All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.

3) Once the lead agency has determined that a physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.

4) "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level (mitigation measures from "Earlier Analyses," as described in (5) below, may be cross-referenced).

5) Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration [CEQA Guidelines Section 15063(c)(3)(D)]. In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:

    a) Earlier Analyses Used: Identify and state where they are available for review.

    b) Impacts Adequately Addressed: Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.

    c) Mitigation Measures: For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures, which were

incorporated or refined from the earlier document, and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.

6) Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.

7) Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.

8) The checklist in CEQA Guidelines Appendix G is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project's environmental effects in whatever format is selected.

9) The explanation of each issue should identify:

   a) the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and

   b) the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance.