



Adams Pond Restoration Project

PUBLIC REVIEW OF THE INITIAL STUDY / MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION



PREPARED BY: Resource Conservation District of Tehama County
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CEQA LEAD AGENCY: Resource Conservation District of Tehama County

January 2026 - FINAL

PROPOSED MITITGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Project: Adams Pond Restoration Project

Lead Agency: Resource Conservation District of Tehama County

Public Review Period: A 30-day public review period shall begin at 5:00 pm on January 15, 2026. Written comments must be submitted to the Lead Agency no later than 5:00 p.m. on February 15, 2026.

Availability of Documents: The Draft Initial Study and Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration is available for review at:

<http://www.tehamacountyrcd.org/notices>

A printed copy is available to view during business hours (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) at the Resource Conservation District of Tehama County office located at 202 Walnut Street in Red Bluff.

Questions or comments regarding this Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration and Initial Study may be addressed to:

Lori Macdonald, Project Manager
Resource Conservation District of Tehama County
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Red Bluff, CA 96080
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530-727-1280

Project Location:

The 29.4-acre project is located on private property off Vestal Road in western Tehama County, California, approximately 30 miles west of Red Bluff, on Stinking Creek, a tributary to Salt Creek, within the Cottonwood Creek watershed (40.230943°N, -122.715017°W).

Stinking Creek generally runs west to east through the Project Limits. The Project occurs on private land at an elevation of approximately 1,000–1,200 feet above sea level.

The Project lies within the United States Geological Survey 7.5-minute Cold Fork quadrangle map (Section 36, Township T28N, Range R8W, Mount Diablo Meridian) at approximately:

NW corner: 40.231056N, -122.718891°W

NE corner: 40.232760N, -122.713078°W

SW corner: 40.228602N, -122.717732°W

SE corner: 40.229891N, -122.712683°W

Access to the Project Site is with permission only. Access to the property is via State Route (SR) 36. From SR 36, turn south onto Vestal Road, a dirt road. Drive south on Vestal Road for approximately 4.32 miles and turn right onto the Site access road and past the locked gate. Follow the Site access road for 2.1 miles to the property access drive and 2nd locked gate. Once past the second gate, travel approximately 650 feet to Staging Area 1 and the existing barn.

Project Description: The RCDTC proposes to restore a privately owned, permitted 4.2-acre agricultural pond on Stinking Creek that was impacted by the 2021 McFarland Fire. The project occurs on private land at an elevation of approximately 1,000–1,200 feet above sea level. The fire resulted in extensive vegetation loss and accelerated erosion within the upper Stinking Creek watershed, leading to significant sediment deposition in the pond and the loss of approximately 75 percent of its original water storage capacity. The proposed project will remove accumulated sediment from the pond and dispose of the material in an on-site state drainage. Upon completion, aquatic and riparian habitats will be restored, and all disturbed areas will be stabilized. Construction activities are expected to occur over a 4- to 5-week period during the dry season, when pond inflows have ceased and downstream connectivity is absent. This timing avoids impacts to downstream waters and aquatic resources while allowing work to occur in predominantly dry conditions. The Project will restore the pond's hydrologic and storage capacity, improve water quality by reducing the delivery of sediment to downstream watersheds, and enhance habitat for wildlife including the Northwestern Pond Turtle. In addition, the Project will improve long-term watershed resilience to wildfire and drought while maintaining agricultural and fire protection water storage benefits.

The Project is further described in the Project Description section within the attached **Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration**. Location maps and photos are included in the Initial Study including Figure 1: Project Location Map and Figure 2: Project Limits Map. Schematics of proposed restoration project are found in the Appendix N: Adams Pond Restoration Project Plans.

Findings: An Initial Study was prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to evaluate the Project's potential environmental effects. The IS determined that while potential significant impacts were identified in Biological Resources, Geology and Soils, Hydrology and Water Quality, and Hazards and Hazardous Materials, these impacts can be reduced to less than significant levels with the implementation of specific mitigation measures. Based on the Initial Study, the RCDTC has determined that the proposed Project will not have

a significant impact on the environment as Mitigation Measures will be implemented to reduce impacts to less-than-significant levels. This conclusion is supported by the following findings:

1. The proposed Project would have no impact on:

- a. Aesthetics
- b. Agricultural and Forest Resources
- c. Land Use and Planning
- d. Mineral Resources
- e. Population and Housing
- f. Recreation

2. The proposed Project would result in a less-than-significant impact on:

- a. Air Quality
- b. Cultural Resources
- c. Energy
- d. Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- e. Noise
- f. Public Services
- g. Transportation
- h. Tribal Cultural Resources
- i. Utilities/Service Systems
- j. Wildfire

3. Mitigation Measures have been adopted by the RCDTC to reduce potentially significant impacts to less-than-significant levels on:

- a. Biological Resources
- c. Geology and Soils
- d. Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- e. Hydrology and Water Quality

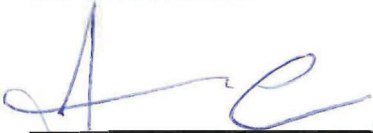
STATEMENT OF NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECT

In accordance with Section 21082.1 of the California Environmental Quality Act, RCD of Tehama County staff have independently reviewed and analyzed the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration prepared for the **Adams Pond Restoration Project** and find that the Initial Study and Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration reflect the independent judgment of RCDTC staff.

The RCDTC has reviewed potential environmental effects related to implementation of the **Adams Pond Restoration Project**. Incorporated into this Mitigated Negative Declaration is an Initial Study in which potential impacts of the proposed Project are discussed. The Initial Study identified ten resource areas that could be potentially affected by the proposed

Project. Those resources determined to have less than significant impacts include **Air Quality, Cultural Resources, Energy, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Noise, Public Services, Transportation, Tribal Cultural Resources, Utilities/Service Systems, and Wildfire**. Those resources in which potential Project related impacts could be significant and thus require the implementation of Mitigation Measures include **Biological Resources, Geology and Soils, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, and Hydrology and Water Quality**. A number of special-status animals were identified within or adjacent to the Project Limits. Although the proposed Project will benefit these species and the natural environment overall, adverse impacts from proposed Project implementation are possible. Various environmental commitments and formally established Mitigation Measures have been developed and described in the Initial Study to avoid or minimize impacts to such species that can typically occur during project implementation.

The RCDTC finds these environmental protection measures adequate to reduce potential impacts that could occur during proposed Project implementation to less than significant levels. Consequently, the RCDTC has determined that the **Adams Pond Restoration Project** as developed, implemented, and mitigated, would not have a significant impact on the environment.



Jon Barrett, District Manager
Resource Conservation District of Tehama County

3-4-2026

Date

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

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

This project will not have a "Potential Significant Impact" on any of the environmental factors listed above; therefore, no boxes are checked.

The Project Site is not on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5.

MITIGATION MEASURES

An array of Mitigation Measures has been developed and will be implemented by the Resource Conservation District of Tehama County, any contractors, and their subcontractors along with responsible agencies, in order to avoid or minimize potential environmental impacts during the execution of the **Adams Pond Restoration Project** work. These are shown in **Appendix A: Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan** and **Appendix D: Erosion Control / Turtle Exclusion Fence Plan**, along with the entity responsible for any required monitoring and reporting. Through the implementation of these Mitigation Measures, along with the Best Management Practices listed in **Appendix B: Best Management Practices, Appendix C: Best Management Practices Plan Sheets, Appendix E: Water Management Plan** and the **Appendix N: Project Plans**, the potential for environmental impacts related to this Project will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

LEAD AGENCY DETERMINATIONS/STATEMENT OF NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECT

The Resource Conservation District of Tehama County (RCDTC) has determined that the **Adams Pond Restoration Project** (proposed Project) would not have a significant adverse effect on the environment. This conclusion is based upon the Project design as well as the Mitigation Measures, Best Management Practices and environmental commitments that would be incorporated into the proposed Project. RCDTC has identified the possibility of

potential environmental impacts related to Project implementation that could be significant without the implementation of Mitigation Measures. These include Biological Resources, Geology and Soils, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, and Hydrology and Water Quality. The proposed Project, its potential impact on the Project Area, and the protection measures to be taken during Project implementation that avoid, reduce, or mitigate environmental impacts are described in this Initial Study. The evidence supporting this determination is drawn from information developed by RCDTC staff, Nevada Environmental Consulting, LLC, and Mountain G Enterprises Inc.

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

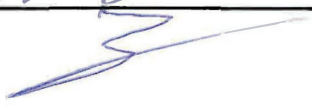
☐ I find that the proposed Project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☒ 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 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.


Signature


Date

BOARD PRESIDENT
Print Name and Title

INITIAL STUDY / MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

ADAMS POND RESTORATION PROJECT

Project Title:	Adams Pond Restoration Project
Lead Agency:	Tehama County Resource Conservation District (RCDTC)
Address:	202 Walnut Street, PO Box 1232, Red Bluff, CA 96080
Contact Person:	Lori Macdonald, Project Manager
Email:	lmacdonald@tehamacountyrcd.org
Phone:	(530) 727-1280
Project Location:	Western Tehama County, off Vestal Road, approximately 30 miles west of Red Bluff, California, on Stinking Creek, a tributary to Salt Creek, within the Cottonwood Creek Watershed (40.230943°N, -122.715017°W).
Assessor's Parcel Number:	Private parcels; specific APNs withheld for confidentiality.
Project Proponent:	Tehama County Resource Conservation District (RCDTC)
Project Funding:	USDA Forest Service, Region 5 – State and Private Forestry (Grant No. 22-DG-11052021-206) administered by the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts.
General Plan Designation:	Upland Agricultural (UA)
Zoning:	AG-1 - Agricultural
Project Limits:	The Project Limits are 29.4 acres and include the limits of the pond excavation, disposal site, haul roads, existing access road, staging areas and associated buffers.
Project Impacts:	The Project Impacts are approximately 6.64 acres of impact which include the limits of the pond excavation, disposal site, haul roads, existing access road, and staging areas.

Project Title:	Adams Pond Restoration Project
Project Description (Summary):	The Adams Pond Restoration Project will remove approximately 80,000 cubic yards of post-fire sediment from a private, permitted agricultural pond, restore aquatic and riparian habitats, stabilize upland soils, and re-establish native vegetation. Construction will occur during a 4–5 week dry-season window (August 1 – October 1) to avoid aquatic impacts. Excavated materials will be placed in a State drainage and associated upland slopes south of the pond and stabilized with native vegetation.
Primary Objectives:	Restore pond hydrologic and storage capacity; improve aquatic and riparian habitat; reduce sedimentation; enhance watershed and drought resilience.
Environmental Determination:	Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) — The Initial Study determined that all potential impacts can be mitigated to less-than-significant levels under CEQA.
Mitigation Measures Implemented For:	Biological Resources, Geology and Soils, Hydrology and Water Quality, and Hazardous Materials.
Findings:	With implementation of mitigation measures and BMPs, the Project will not result in significant environmental impacts and will provide long-term watershed restoration and habitat benefits.
Document Type:	Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) prepared in accordance with CEQA Guidelines §§15063–15075.
Public Review Period:	January 15, 2026, at 5 p.m. – February 15, 2026, at 5 p.m. (30 days)
Document Availability:	Available for review at the RCDTC Office (202 Walnut Street, Red Bluff, CA 96080) and online at http://www.tehamacountyrcd.org/notices

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abbreviations.....	vi
I. Project Description	1
Executive Summary.....	1
Public Benefit Summary	2
Project Site	2
Directions to the Site	2
Existing Conditions	2
Purpose and Need.....	3
Project Objectives.....	4
Proposed Activity	4
Lead Agency Determination.....	5
Mitigation Summary	6
II. Aesthetics.....	7
Environmental Setting.....	7
Regulatory Framework	7
Impact Analysis.....	8
III. Agriculture and Forestry Resources	9
Environmental Setting.....	9
Regulatory Framework	9
Impact Analysis.....	10
IV. Air Quality.....	11
Environmental Setting.....	11
Regulatory Framework	11
Impact Analysis.....	12
Construction-Phase Emissions	12
Operational-Phase Emissions.....	13
V. Biological Resources	14
Environmental Setting.....	14
Biological Resources	15
California Wildlife Habitat.....	15
Wildlife	15

Natural Communities	15
Rare Plants	15
Jurisdictional Waters	22
Regulatory Framework	22
Impact Analysis.....	23
Mitigation Measures	26
Conclusion.....	26
VI. Cultural Resources	27
Environmental Setting.....	27
Regulatory Framework	27
Impact Analysis.....	28
VII. Energy.....	29
Environmental Setting.....	29
Regulatory Framework	29
Impact Analysis.....	30
VIII. Geology and Soils	31
Environmental Setting.....	31
Regulatory Framework	32
Impact Analysis.....	32
Conclusion.....	34
IX. Greenhouse Gas Emissions	35
Environmental Setting.....	35
Regulatory Framework	35
Impact Analysis.....	37
Construction-Phase Emissions	37
Operational-Phase Emissions.....	39
X. Hazards and Hazardous Materials.....	40
Environmental Setting.....	40
Regulatory Framework	41
Impact Analysis.....	41
Conclusion.....	43
XI. Hydrology and Water Quality	44

Environmental Setting.....	44
Regulatory Framework	45
Impact Analysis.....	45
Conclusion.....	47
XII. Land Use and Planning	48
Regulatory Framework	48
Impact Analysis.....	49
XIII. Mineral Resources.....	51
Environmental Setting.....	51
Regulatory Framework	51
Impact Analysis.....	52
XIV. Noise.....	53
Environmental Setting.....	53
Regulatory Framework	53
Impact Analysis.....	54
XV. Population and Housing	56
Environmental Setting.....	56
Regulatory Framework	56
Impact Analysis.....	57
XVI. Public Services.....	58
Environmental Setting.....	58
Regulatory Framework	59
Impact Analysis.....	59
XVII. Recreation	61
Environmental Setting.....	61
Regulatory Framework	61
Impact Analysis.....	62
XVIII. Transportation	63
Environmental Setting.....	63
Regulatory Framework	63
Impact Analysis.....	64
XIX. Tribal Cultural Resources	66

Environmental Setting.....	66
Regulatory Framework	67
Tribal Consultation (AB 52 Process)	67
Impact Analysis.....	68
i) Listed or eligible for listing	68
ii) Resource Determined by the lead agency to be significant.....	68
XX. Utilities and Service Systems	69
Environmental Setting.....	69
Regulatory Framework	69
Impact Analysis.....	70
XXI. Wildfire.....	73
Environmental Setting.....	73
Regulatory Framework	73
Impact Analysis.....	74
XXII. Mandatory Findings of Significance	76
Regulatory Context.....	76
XXIII. Summary of Environmental Conclusions	79
Conclusion.....	79
Certification.....	79
XXIV. References	80
Agriculture.....	80
Biological.....	80
Cultural/Tribal Resources	84
Geology and Soils	84
Greenhouse Gas Emissions / Air Quality	85
Hazards and Hazardous Materials.....	85
Hydrology and Water Quality	85
Land Use and Planning	86
Noise.....	86

FIGURES

Figure 1: Location Map

Figure 2: Project Limits

Figure 3: Adams Pond – Pre and Post McFarland Fire

Figure 4: Adams Pond as of September 2025

Figure 5: Project Impact Map

Figure 6: WHRS Vegetation Habitat Map

Figure 7: 9 Quad CNDDDB Occurrence Map

PHOTOS

APPENDIX A: MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM

APPENDIX B: BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

APPENDIX C: BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES PLAN SHEETS

APPENDIX D: EROSION CONTROL / TURTLE EXCLUSION FENCE PLAN

APPENDIX E: WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN

APPENDIX F: POST CONSTRUCTION RESTORATION PLAN

APPENDIX G: POST CONSTRUCTION MONITORING PLAN

APPENDIX H: BIOLOGICAL RESOURCE EVALUATION

APPENDIX I: JURISDICTION DETERMINATION REPORT

APPENDIX J: ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY REPORT & TRIBAL CONSULTATION
DOCUMENTATION

APPENDIX K: AGENCY CONSULTATION AND CORRESPONDENCE RECORD

APPENDIX L: MCFARLAND FIRE STATE OF EMERGENCY EXECUTIVE

ORDER N-13-21

APPENDIX M: GRADING EXEMPTION

APPENDIX N: PROJECT PLANS

Abbreviations

AC	Acres
ACOE	Army Corps of Engineers
AQAP	Air Quality Attainment Plan
BGEPA	Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act
BMP	Best Management Practices
BRE	Biological Resource Evaluation
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CBC	California Building Code
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEC	California Energy Commission
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CGS	California Geological Survey
CH ₄	Methane
CHRIS	California Historical Resources Information System
CNDDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
CO	Carbon Monoxide
CO ₂	Carbon Dioxide
CRHR	California Register of Historical Resources
CWA	Clean Water Act
CWA	Clean Water Act
CWHR	California Wildlife Habitat Relationship
CWPP	Community Wildfire Protection Plan
CY	Cubic Yards
DTSC	California Department of Toxic Substances Control
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Federal Endangered Species Act
FHSZ	Fire Hazard Severity Zone
FMMP	Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GIS	Geographic Information System
HASP	Health and Safety Plan
HCP	Habitat Conservation Plan
HDPE	high-density polyethylene
IS	Initial Study
LF	Linear Feet

LSAA	Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MGE	Mountain G Enterprises Inc.
MMRP	Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
MND	Mitigated Negative Declaration
MRZ	Mineral Resource Zone
MTCO ₂ e	metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent
N ₂ O	Nitrous Oxide
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NCCP	Natural Community Conservation Plan
NEIC	Northeastern Information Center
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NPDES	National Pollution Discharge Elimination System
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NSVAB	Northern Sacramento Valley Air Basin
NWPT	Northwestern Pond Turtle
OHWM	Ordinary High Water Mark
OSHA	Occupational Health and Safety Administration
RCDDTC	Resource Conservation District of Tehama County
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
RGP	Regional General Permit
RWQRCB	Regional Water Quality Resource Control Board
RWRCB	Regional Water Resource Control Board
SMARA	Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975
SPERP	Spill Prevention and Emergency Response Plan
SRA	State Responsibility Area
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TCAPCD	Tehama County Air Pollution Control District
TCR	Tribal Cultural Resources
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey
VMT	Vehicle Miles Traveled
WOTS	Waters of the State
WOTUS	Waters of the United States
WQC	Water Quality Certification

Adams Pond Restoration Project Initial Study

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Executive Summary

The Adams Pond Restoration Project is a post-fire watershed restoration effort located on private land in western Tehama County, California. The Project addresses substantial sedimentation caused by the 2021 McFarland Fire, which resulted in extensive vegetation loss and accelerated erosion in the upper Stinking Creek watershed. As a result, approximately 75 percent of Adams Pond's original water storage capacity has been lost due to sediment deposition.

The proposed Project will remove accumulated sediment from Adams Pond, restore aquatic and riparian habitat, stabilize disturbed upland areas, and re-establish native vegetation. Construction activities will occur during a 4–5 week dry-season window (August 1 through October 1), when inflows to the pond have ceased and downstream connectivity is absent. This timing avoids impacts to downstream waters and aquatic resources while allowing work to occur in predominantly dry conditions.

The Project will restore the pond's hydrologic and storage capacity, improve water quality, enhance habitat for wildlife including the Northwestern Pond Turtle, and reduce anticipated future sediment delivery to downstream watersheds. In addition, the Project will improve long-term watershed resilience to wildfire and drought while maintaining agricultural and fire protection water storage benefits. The Project is funded through a federal grant from the USDA Forest Service Region 5, State and Private Forestry Program, administered to the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (Grant Awardee) and passed through to the Resource Conservation District of Tehama County (Grant - Sub awardee) in 2022 for Storm Damage Post Fire Disaster Recovery.

The project is in direct response to Executive Order N-13-21, where Governor Gavin Newsom proclaimed a State of Emergency to exist in Tehama County due to the McFarland and Dixie Fires and ordered that State statutes, rules, regulations, and requirements were hereby suspended to the extent they would prevent, hinder, or delay the following activities:

“Necessary restoration and rehabilitation of timberland, streams, rivers, and other waterways. Such statutes, rules, regulations, and requirements are hereby suspended only to the extent necessary for expediting the removal and cleanup of debris from the fires, and for implementing any restoration plan. Individuals who desire to conduct activities under this suspension of statutes, rules, regulations, and requirements shall first request that the appropriate Agency Secretary, or the Secretary's designee, make a determination that the proposed activities are eligible to be conducted under this suspension.”

An Initial Study was prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to evaluate the Project's potential environmental effects. The analysis determined that the Project would result in no impacts or less-than-significant impacts in most resource areas. Potentially adverse effects related to Biological Resources, Geology and Soils, Hydrology and Water Quality,

and Hazardous Materials would be reduced to less-than-significant levels through implementation of identified mitigation measures and best management practices.

With incorporation of mitigation measures, regulatory permit conditions, and construction best management practices, the Project would not have a significant effect on the environment. Accordingly, a Mitigated Negative Declaration is appropriate.

Public Benefit Summary

The Project restores a fire-damaged pond and associated aquatic habitat, reduces the potential for future downstream sedimentation, and enhances water storage for agriculture and fire protection, without causing significant environmental impacts.

Project Site

The Project Site is located on private ranchland in Tehama County, California, off Vestal Road, approximately 30 miles west of Red Bluff (40.230943°N, -122.715017°W), within the 2022 Cold Fork, CA 7.5-minute series, 1:24,000 scale, United States Geological Survey (USGS) Quadrangle (Figure 1). Elevations within the Project Limits range from approximately 1,000 feet above mean sea level at the pond to 1,200 feet at the highest point south of the pond.

The Project encompasses 29.4 acres (1,281,084 square feet) and includes the limits of excavation, fill areas, staging areas, potential haul road alignments, an ephemeral stream crossing, and a buffer zone around these features (Figure 2). The Project Limits also include a portion of the existing access road from Staging Area 1 to Staging Area 2 and a buffer from the access roads outer edge.

Directions to the Site

Access to the Project Site is with permission only. Access to the property is via State Route (SR) 36. From SR 36, turn south onto Vestal Road, a dirt road. Drive south on Vestal Road for approximately 4.32 miles and turn right onto the Site access road and past the locked gate. Follow the Site access road for 2.1 miles to the property access drive and 2nd locked gate. Once past the second gate, travel approximately 650 feet to Staging Area 1 and the existing barn. Vestal Road crosses Salt Creek three times, along with other intermittent watercourses, on its way to the Site. These crossings are existing, at-grade crossings and will remain unchanged during construction. The Project will not alter the current use of the road. The road is currently used for agricultural purposes, residential access and the transport of cattle.

Existing Conditions

Adams Pond is a privately owned, licensed agricultural pond that provides seasonal water storage for agricultural and fire suppression use and habitat for aquatic and riparian species. Adam's Pond is a main channel in-line reservoir on Stinking Creek that discharges seasonally through a concrete spillway. The pond is fed by seasonal inflows from Stinking Creek and ephemeral inflows from the direct contribution area. During a typical dry season, inflows cease in mid to late July and the pond level drops below its spillway elevation preventing downstream discharge until winter storms renew inflows from the upper watershed.

Stinking Creek is a Class I tributary to Salt Creek, which flows into Dry Creek, then to South Fork Cottonwood Creek, and then to Cottonwood Creek, and ultimately to the Sacramento River located approximately 29 miles to the northeast of the Project Area. Stinking Creek within the Project Limits flows generally west to east. Within the Project Limits, several state and federally regulated ephemeral streams, and one state regulated drainage discharges to Stinking Creek.

The property owner has the right to use the waters of Stinking Creek for the purpose of Domestic, Stock watering, Recreational, Wildlife Enhancement, and Fire Protection under Permit 20469 of the State Water Resource Control Board (WRCB) which became effective on September 15, 1987. Permit 20469 is currently valid and in good standing. The amount of water to which this right is entitled shall not exceed forty-two (42) acre-feet per annum collected from October 1 of each year to May 31 of the succeeding year. The maximum amount of water collected for storage under License 12331 must not exceed 45 acre-feet per year and the capacity of the reservoir must not exceed 45 acre-feet.

The area exhibits a natural and visually secluded character, typical of the foothill region of the Coast Ranges. There are no nearby residences or recreation. Access to the pond is via private ranch roads and gated property.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has mapped the primary soil units within the Project Limits as Lodo and Maymen Shaly Loams with 30 to 65 percent slopes, and Rockland (NRCS WebSoils). These soil types are typically found on steep gradients and are prone to erosion and sediment transport. The surrounding soils that contribute direct runoff to the pond are eroded into steep ravines with narrow, low sinuosity steep gradient channels of fragmented shale (serpentine) and clays. Deposits from numerous inflow events have filled the pond. The sediment profile within the pond varies in grain size generally less than ½" diameter with the grain size generally larger to the west and finer to the east.

Prior to the **2021 McFarland Fire**, Adams Pond featured open water surrounded by riparian vegetation, willows, and cattails with foothill pine and blue oak in the upland. Post-fire erosion and sedimentation have filled approximately 75% of the pond basin, leaving large expanses of bare sediment and disturbed soils (Figures 3 and Figure 4 and Photos). Willows have started to colonize the dry portions of the pond basin. Blue Oak / Foothill Pine habitat that was lost during the fire has been replaced with Annual Grassland with charred snags of various diameters and heights and downed large wood. The original cabin located south of the pond was also lost to the fire and only concrete components remain. North of the pond, on an upper terrace, there is a barn and staged construction equipment. An existing dirt access road and drive connect the barn area to the original cabin location. Dirt access roads and paths are located past the original cabin location.

Purpose and Need

The 2021 McFarland Fire destabilized soil in the upper Stinking Creek watershed resulting in significant post-fire sedimentation, which reduced the water carrying capacity of Adams Pond and impaired its ecological functions. The pond supports a population of Northwestern Pond Turtle, a state species of special concern and a proposed federal threatened species under the Endangered

Species Act. This sedimentation event resulted in a 75% reduction of the pond's original volume, reducing the ponds' surface areas from its original 4.2 acres to approximately one acre and significantly impacting water storage capacity, aquatic habitat volume, and seasonal water quality. It is anticipated that over time more of Adams Pond's storage capacity will be lost due to sedimentation which will further reduce NWPT habitat and eventually result in the transport of sediment past the concrete spillway to downstream streams and reservoirs.

Project Objectives

- Restore the storage capacity of Adams Pond to pre-fire conditions.
- Re-establish aquatic and riparian habitats lost to post-fire sedimentation.

Proposed Activity

The Adams Pond Restoration Project will remove sediment that accumulated in Adams Pond following the 2021 McFarland Fire.

The Project will:

- Excavate approximately **80,000 cubic yards (CY)** of sediment from Adams Pond;
- Restore approximately **3.2 acres (ac.)** of aquatic and riparian habitat regulated as Waters of the State of California (WOTS) and Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS);
- Restore approximately **3,500 linear feet (LF)** of pond bank; and,
- Enhance long-term water storage capacity, aquatic habitat function, and drought resilience.

The Project will also contribute to regional watershed restoration and recovery and enhance water quality. The Project aligns with state policy under the California Water Code (Section 13100 et seq.) and the Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq. (CEQA).

The Project will directly impact approximately 6.64 acres and includes the limits of sediment removal, the staging areas, a temporary haul road, a proposed temporary culvert, and the existing access road (Figure 2 & Figure 5).

Project Impact Area in Acres

Sediment Removal Limits	3.2
Limits of Sediment Disposal	1.95
Proposed Temporary Culvert	0.014
Haul Road (Approx.)	0.45
Existing Roads	0.47
Staging Area 1	0.32
Staging Area 2	0.24
	6.64

Given the steep slopes and remote location, material excavated from the pond will be disposed of in a state drainage regulated under the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act of California, resulting in 0.025 ac. (360 LF) (26.5 CY) of permanent impacts to WOTS.

Excavated sediment will be transported to the disposal site, approximately 2,000 feet south of the pond rather than being trucked off site. A proposed haul road, approximately 12 feet wide, will be constructed from the pond to the sediment disposal site. The haul road will cross an ephemeral stream regulated as WOTUS and WOTS resulting in approximately 0.003 ac. (20 LF) of temporary impacts to the stream channel and bank. The temporary crossing will be constructed using high-density polyethylene (HDPE) pipe covered with stone. The alignment of the haul road will be adjusted in the field as needed.

Additional activities include clearing previously altered upland areas for staging. Construction staging will occur at two locations: Staging Area 1 (the barn site) located north of the pond, at the site entrance, and Staging Area 2 (the cabin site) located south of the pond. Both areas were originally developed as part of the property's infrastructure.

After work is complete, the temporary culvert crossing will be removed, and the stream will be restored to pre-construction conditions. Within the disposal area, a new drainage channel will be re-established in the same general horizontal alignment as the original drainage but at a higher elevation on top of the fill. The disposal area will be seeded and revegetated, and wattles and erosion control blankets will be installed to further stabilize the area. The pond banks will be reestablished, stabilized and revegetated with native seed and pole cuttings. All disturbed upland soils within the Project Limits will be stabilized and planted and/or seeded with native vegetation. In addition, 1:1 mitigation credit will be purchased from a state approved mitigation bank to mitigate for the 0.025 acres of permanent impacts to WOTS.

The proposed project will result in over 1.0 acres of earth disturbance and will require a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit (CGP) and an associated Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP).

Construction will take 4-5 weeks and will occur during the late summer dry season when inflows have ceased, and the pond water level is below the overflow. This will allow excavation of dry sediment without disturbing wetland resources. Water levels will be carefully controlled during construction to optimize excavation efficiency and geotechnical stability. Sediment removal from dry areas will occur first prior to manually altering the water levels. The total project duration is estimated at 60 days, with final grading followed by revegetation using native seeds and pole cuttings. The sediment removal activities may occur over the course of 2-3 seasons depending on the availability of funds.

Lead Agency Determination

The Tehama County Resource Conservation District (RCDTC), as the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), is proposing that the Project will not have a significant effect on the environment with implementation of identified mitigation measures. Accordingly, an Initial Study (IS) / Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) has been prepared pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §§15070–15075.

Mitigation Summary

Mitigation measures are incorporated to reduce all potential short-term construction impacts to **less-than-significant levels**. These include, but are not limited to:

- **Biological Resources:** Pre-construction surveys and education, dry season work window, construction monitoring, installation of erosion controls and turtle exclusion fencing, habitat restoration, and revegetation monitoring.
- **Geology and Soils:** Erosion control, stormwater BMPs, soil compaction, revegetation, upland stabilization, and post construction monitoring.
- **Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** Spill prevention, fuel containment, and CAL FIRE coordination.
- **Hydrology and Water Quality:** Spill prevention and fuel containment, erosion control, soil compaction, revegetation, upland stabilization and post construction monitoring.

All mitigation measures are detailed in the **Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP)** (Appendix A) and on the Erosion Control/Turtle Exclusion Fence Plan (Appendix D). Best Management Practices (BMPs) are listed in Appendix B and the BMP Plans and are in Appendix C. The Water Management Plan is in Appendix E. The Post Construction Restoration Plan and Monitoring Plan are in Appendix F and G respectively. The project plan-set is in Appendix N. All project Figures and Photos are at the end of the document, before the start of the Appendices.

II. AESTHETICS

AESTHETICS AND SCENIC RESOURCES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant <u>With</u> Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:				
a. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista that is visible from a <u>City</u> scenic corridor?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Substantially alter or damage a scenic resource that is visible from a City scenic corridor?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c. Conflict with applicable General Plan policies or zoning 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 Limits and adjacent lands are remote and support Foothill Pine, Foothill Pine / Blue Oak Woodland, Valley-foothill riparian, Mixed chaparral, Annual grassland, and Lacustrine communities. Post-fire erosion and sedimentation have filled much of the pond basin, leaving large expanses of bare sediment and disturbed soils. Willows have started to colonize the dry portions of the pond basin. The upland areas surrounding the pond have been converted to Annual Grassland with charred snags and charred downed wood scattered throughout the area.

There are no nearby residences, recreation areas, or public viewpoints, and the site is not visible from public highways or scenic vistas. Access to the pond is via private ranch roads and gated property, with no visual exposure to the general public.

Regulatory Framework

The following plans and policies guide visual resource protection in Tehama County:

- **Tehama County General Plan (2009) – Open Space and Conservation Elements:**
Encourages preservation of scenic natural areas, riparian corridors, and rural character, and requires that land management projects minimize visual scarring and restore disturbed landscapes.
- **California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, Appendix G:**
Identifies potential impacts related to scenic vistas, scenic resources, visual character, and light or glare.
- **California Scenic Highway Program (Streets and Highways Code §260 et seq.):**
Protects officially designated scenic highways and adjacent resources. The Project Area is **not** located within a designated or eligible State Scenic Highway corridor.

Impact Analysis

a. Scenic Vistas

The Project is not visible from any designated scenic highway, public recreation area, or established viewpoint. The nearest public roadway is located over two miles away, and intervening topography and vegetation fully obscure the Project Limits from public view. Because the Project occurs on private land and within an enclosed watershed, no impact to scenic vistas will occur.

Finding: No Impact.

b. Scenic Resources

No officially designated scenic resources—such as historic trees, rock outcrops, or cultural landmarks—exist within or adjacent to the Project Limits.

Finding: No Impact.

c. Visual Character and Quality

The Project Limits are located on private property surrounded by natural hills and private ranch roads. The nearest residential property is over 1 mile away. The Project Limits are not visible from publicly accessible vantage points.

Finding: No Impact.

d. Light and Glare

The Project will not introduce artificial lighting or reflective materials. All work will occur during daylight hours. No permanent structures, signage, or lighting will be installed.

Therefore, no source of light or glare will be created.

Finding: No impact.

III. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

AGRICULTURE RESOURCES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant <u>With</u> Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Convert Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland (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. Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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 property is used historically for low-intensity rangeland and watershed management but does not support irrigated crops, orchards, or timber production. Surrounding lands are similarly undeveloped, supporting native vegetation, wildlife habitat, and intermittent grazing. According to the California Important Farmland Finder Map (California Department of Conservation, 2022), the Project Limits are designated as “Grazing Land”, not as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance.

Regulatory Framework

The following regulations and policies govern agricultural and forest resources relevant to the Project:

- **California Land Conservation Act of 1965 (Williamson Act):** Encourages the preservation of agricultural and open space lands through property tax incentives.
- **California Public Resources Code (PRC) §§ 4526–4597:** Regulates commercial timber harvesting and forest practice standards under CAL FIRE’s jurisdiction.
- **Tehama County General Plan (2009):**

- *Agriculture Element*: Protects agricultural lands and promotes compatible land uses.
- *Open Space and Conservation Elements*: Support maintenance of natural habitats and watershed lands.
- **Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP)**: Identifies and tracks conversion of agricultural lands statewide.

Impact Analysis

a. Farmland Conversion

The Project Limits are designated as Grazing Land under the FMMP, not as Prime, Unique, or Statewide Important Farmland. The Project will not convert any active agricultural land or disturb any cropland, orchards, or vineyards. Sediment removal and restoration activities are confined to the existing pond footprint and adjacent uplands. Because the Project does not alter land use or zoning and will not introduce incompatible uses, no conversion of farmland will occur.

Finding: No Impact.

b. Williamson Act Contracts

The Project Limits are not under a Williamson Act contract, and the proposed activity is consistent with surrounding open space and grazing uses.

Finding: No impact.

c. Agricultural Zoning and Compatibility

Tehama County zoning designations for the Project Area include Upland Agricultural (UA) and AG-1 Agriculture, which allow habitat restoration, watershed management, and conservation projects as compatible uses. The Project will not require any zoning changes or variances and will not conflict with any agricultural operations.

Finding: No impact.

d. Forest Land and Timber Resources

The Project Limits and adjacent lands support Foothill Pine, Foothill Pine / Blue Oak Woodland, Valley-foothill riparian, Mixed chaparral, Annual grassland, and Lacustrine communities. There are no commercial forest land or timber resources as defined by Public Resources Code § 4526 within the limits of impact. The Project will remove minimal vegetation (primarily willows, sedges, and non-native herbaceous species) as part of pond sediment removal, followed by native revegetation and Lacustrine, Riparian and Grassland restoration. No commercial timberland will be affected.

Finding: No impact.

e. Indirect Conversion of Agricultural or Forest Land

Because the Project Limits are isolated and surrounded by undeveloped open space, it will not induce growth, new access, or infrastructure development that could indirectly lead to farmland or forestland conversion. The restoration will maintain open space and ecological functions, thereby discouraging future conversion.

Finding: No impact.

IV. AIR QUALITY

AIR QUALITY	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant <u>With</u> Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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:				
a. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality 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

The Project Limits and adjacent lands are remote and support Foothill Pine, Foothill Pine / Blue Oak Woodland, Valley-foothill riparian, Mixed chaparral, Annual grassland, and Lacustrine communities. The Project will require the use of heavy equipment during construction activities involved in soil excavation, grading, construction of a haul road, and the hauling of soils resulting in the production of fugitive dust and a local, temporary increase in emissions. The closest neighbor is more than 1 mile away from the project.

The area experiences a Mediterranean climate—hot, dry summers and cool, wet winters—with air quality influenced primarily by agricultural operations, vehicle emissions, and wildfire activity.

Regulatory Framework

The Project is within the Northern Sacramento Valley Air Basin (NSVAB) and under the jurisdiction of the Tehama County Air Pollution Control District (TCAPCD). Air quality in Tehama County is managed under the Northern Sacramento Valley Planning Area Air Quality Attainment Plan (AQAP) and TCAPCD Rules and Regulations.

The TCAQPCD is responsible for the planning, maintenance and attainment of the local air quality standards based on provisions of the Federal and State Clean Air Acts.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the California Air Resources Board (CARB) have established ambient air quality standards (AAQS) for six criteria pollutants: ozone (O₃), carbon

monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}), and lead (Pb).

Tehama County has been designated as a non-attainment area for state and federal ambient ozone standards and state inhalable particulate matter (PM₁₀) standards.

Ozone

- **State Standard:** Tehama County is a nonattainment area (classified as moderate) for the state ozone standard.
- **Federal Standard:** The Tuscan Buttes area within the county is designated as a Marginal nonattainment area for the federal ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

PM₁₀ (Particulate Matter 10 microns in diameter or less)

- **State Standard:** The county is designated as a nonattainment area for the state PM₁₀ standard.
- **Federal Standard:** The Sacramento region, which includes Tehama County, currently meets the federal PM₁₀ standard.

The Project will also be subject to the NPDES CGP and the associated SWPPP.

Impact Analysis

a. Quality Plan Conflict

The Project will not conflict with or obstruct the implementation of the Northern Sacramento Valley Planning Area Air Quality Attainment Plan (AQAP) and TCAPCD Rules and Regulations, including:

- Rule 4:14 – Fugitive Dust Emissions
- Rule 4:3 – Visible Emissions
- Rule 4:31 – Open Burning

Standard Construction practices required by State and local air officials and the NPDES CGP SWPPP will be utilized in the operation of equipment and in the control or containment of fugitive dust as required.

Finding: Less than significant impact.

b. Increase of Criteria Pollutant

Construction-Phase Emissions

Short-term emissions during construction would result primarily from diesel-powered equipment used for excavation, grading, and hauling of approximately 80,000 cubic yards of sediment. These emissions would include PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, NO_x, ROG, and CO.

Construction would occur over a 4–5 week period during the dry season, limiting total operational hours. Because construction activity is temporary, limited in scope, and subject to TCAPCD dust

control and emission rules and the NPDES CGP and associated SWPPP, emissions are expected to be well below regional thresholds for both criteria pollutants and GHGs.

Since the sediment will be disposed of on-site, the Project will result in fewer emissions compared to the emissions that would occur if the sediment were hauled off-site.

Operational-Phase Emissions

Following project completion, no ongoing emissions-generating activities are anticipated. Occasional maintenance or vegetation management would be infrequent, and minor compared to regional emissions levels. The restored pond and riparian zone will not generate new traffic, fuel use, or industrial activity.

Standard construction practices required by State and local air officials will be utilized when operating equipment to reduce the release of any construction related pollutants. Construction will be temporary and confined to a remote area of Tehama County. There will be no cumulative considerable net increase of any non-attainment criteria pollutants.

Finding: Less than significant impact.

c. Exposure Sensitive Receptors

There are no sensitive receptors within 1 mile of the work limits.

Finding: No impact.

d. Other Emissions

The Project is located in a remote rural location with no immediate adjacent neighbors or sensitive receptors. Construction will be temporary and the area will return to preconstruction emission levels after work is complete. The Project will not affect a substantial number of people. The Project is in a remote location, and it is not anticipated that other major projects would be contributing to a major increase in emissions in the same area during the Project construction window.

Finding: No impact.

V. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b. Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or the 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d. Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Environmental Setting

Adam's Pond is a main channel inline reservoir on Stinking Creek that discharges seasonally through a concrete spillway. The property owner has the right to use the waters of Stinking Creek for the purpose of Domestic, Stock watering, Recreational, Wildlife Enhancement, and Fire Protection under Permit 20469 of the State Water Resource Control Board (WRCB) which became effective on September 15, 1987. Permit 20469 is currently valid and in good standing. The amount of water to

which this right is entitled shall not exceed forty-two (42) acre-feet per annum collected from October 1 of each year to May 31 of the succeeding year. The maximum amount of water collected for storage under License 12331 must not exceed 45 acre-feet per year and the capacity of the reservoir must not exceed 45 acre-feet.

Biological Resources

A Biological Resource Evaluation (BRE) (Appendix H) was prepared for the Project in December 2025, by the RCDTC. A summary of the BRE findings is discussed here.

California Wildlife Habitat

California Wildlife Habitat Relationship (CWHR) vegetation communities identified within the Project Limits include Valley Foothill Riparian, Lacustrine, and Annual Grassland (Figure 6).

Wildlife

The site provides aquatic, riparian, and upland habitat for a range of wildlife species typical of the region. After reviewing the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) (Figure 7) and CWHR System, completing site surveys, and talking to the property owner, it was determined that several special status wildlife species were either known to occur or had the potential of occurrence within the Project Limits. **Northwestern pond turtle**, were observed in Adams Pond during site surveys. **Golden Eagle, Bald Eagle, and Mountain Lion** have been observed within the Project Area by others. Site surveys and database searches identified suitable habitat present within the Project Limits for several other Special Status Species including, **Foothill yellow-legged frog, Grasshopper sparrow, Yellow warbler, Yellow-breasted chat, Pallid bad, Western red bat, and American badger** (Table 1).

In addition, there is a potential that birds protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), the federal Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) and / or under several sections of the California Fish and Game Code may nest within the Project Area during construction.

Natural Communities

There are no Natural Communities within the Project Limits according to the CNDDDB. Site visits also did not identify any rare communities.

Rare Plants

No known rare plants were observed during site visits. According to a 9-Quadrangle CNDDDB records search completed for the Project, 17 California Rare Plant species have been found within a 10-mile radius of the center of the Project Limits (Table 2) (Figure 4). No federally listed rare plants are included in the CNDDDB list of sightings or in the IPAC report completed for the Project.

There is a potential to impact rare plants as a result of earth work if rare plants are identified within the limits of work.

Table 1. Special-Status Species Known or with the Potential to Occur in the Adams Pond Project Area

PLANTS / NATURAL COMMUNITIES				
Special-Status Plants	—	—	May Occur	No special-status plant species recorded during surveys; Additional surveys to be completed prior to construction.
Sensitive Natural Communities	—	—	None Present	CNDDB search and field review confirmed no listed or high-priority communities.

SPECIES Common Name (Scientific Name)	LISTING STATUS		GENERAL HABITAT	SPECIAL HABITAT REQUIREMENTS	POTENTIAL FOR OCCURANCE
	Federal	State			
AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES					
Northwestern Pond Turtle (<i>Actinemys marmorata</i>)	PT	CSC	Uses ponds, lakes, sloughs, marshes, streams, and irrigation canals, plus adjacent uplands for basking, nesting, and terrestrial refuge. Use adjacent uplands to nest and overwinter.	Prefers loose substrate such as sands and loams for nesting. Requires basking substrate (e.g. logs, large rocks, etc.)	Known to Occur within the Project Limits.
Foothill Yellow-legged Frog (<i>Rana boylei</i>)	-	CSC	Aquatic, Klamath/North coast flowing waters, Riparian Forest, Riparian scrub, Riparian woodland	Instream dependent species. Prefers rocky, sunlit channels with riffles, pools, and exposed cobble bars in chaparral, oak woodland, and lower coniferous zones, usually below 6,000 ft. Avoids still water and is rarely found far from moving streams. Needs at least some cobble-sized substrate for egg-laying and at least 15 weeks to attain metamorphosis.	Low likelihood of occurrence. No suitable breeding habitat within the Study Area. May use creeks as migration corridors and may use pond for refuge. According to the CNDDB database, there are two recent (1993 & 2014) occurrences and one older (1943) occurrence within 10 miles from the Study Area (Figure 4).
California Red-legged Frog (<i>Rana draytonii</i>)	T	CSC	Lowlands and foothills in or near permanent sources of deep water with dense, shrubby or emergent riparian vegetation	Requires 11-26 weeks of permanent water for larval development. Must have access to estivation habitat.	Not Likely to Occur. It is believed that CRLF has been extirpated from the area plus there are several predators on site including NWPT, brook trout and bullfrogs.
Western Spadefoot (<i>Spea hammondi</i>)	PT	CSC	Occurs primarily in grassland habitats but can be found in valley-foothill hardwood woodlands. Most of the year is spent in underground burrows up to 0.9 m (36 in) deep (Stebbins 1972), which they construct themselves. Some individuals also use mammal burrows.	Vernal Pools are essential for breeding and egg-laying.	Not Likely to Occur. There are ephemeral pools located within and adjacent to the Study Area. However, the presence of bullfrogs and NWPT reduce the chances of presence.

SPECIES Common Name (Scientific Name)	LISTING STATUS		GENERAL HABITAT	SPECIAL HABITAT REQUIREMENTS	POTENTIAL FOR OCCURANCE
	Federal	State			
BIRDS					
Tricolored Blackbird (<i>Agelaius tricolor</i>)	-	T	Most closely associated with Fresh Emergent Wetland, Wet Meadow, Cropland, and Pasture.	Nests in enormous colonies in cattails, bulrushes, Himalayan blackberry, or other dense vegetation near water, usually in the Central Valley and coastal lowlands. It occurs from sea level to about 1,200 m in elevation.	Not likely to occur. Limited cattails, bulrushes, blackberry and willow around the perimeter of the pond for large colonies of blackbirds. There are no known colonies in the Study Area.
Grasshopper Sparrow (<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>)	-	CSC	Primary CWHR habitat types are Annual and Perennial Grassland, and occasionally Valley Foothill Grassland or Coastal Scrub where vegetation density is sufficient.	Thick grass and forb cover are essential for concealment. It favors native grasslands with a mix of grasses, tall forbs, and scattered shrubs that provide both nesting cover and singing perches. Nests are built from grasses and forbs in slight ground depressions, hidden beneath overhanging vegetation, and require thick herbaceous cover for concealment. <u>Nests from April through July.</u>	Low likelihood of nesting within the Study Area. Limited areas of dense Annual Grassland habitat within the Study Area.
Golden Eagle (<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>)	-	FP	CWHR habitat associations include Annual Grassland, Valley Foothill Riparian 3D, Mixed Chaparral 2S, Montane Hardwood, Pinyon-Juniper, and Montane Chaparral.	The most common nesting sites for golden eagles are on platforms on steep cliffs. Sometimes nests in trees near open habitats for hunting.	Known to Occur. Not likely to nest within the Study Area. However, may nest within 1 mile.
Northern harrier (<i>Circus hudsonius</i>)	-	CSC	Primarily occupies annual and perennial grasslands, fresh emergent wetlands, and wet meadows, where it nests and forages in tall, dense vegetation near open water or moist ground.	Nests on the ground in flat or gently rolling open areas with tall, dense vegetation, such as emergent wetlands, grasslands, grain fields, or sagebrush flats, often near rivers, lakes, or moist meadows, but sometimes several miles from water. Prey-rich grasslands and wet meadow ecosystems are essential to their survival.	Not Likely to Occur. Limited flat areas on site to nest. No marshes or agricultural fields on site or in the area. Low likelihood of hunting within the Study Area.
Olive-sided Flycatcher (<i>Contopus cooperi</i>)	-	CSC	Lower montane coniferous forest, Redwood, Upper montane coniferous forest	Require large, tall trees, chiefly conifers, for nesting & roosting, & uses dead tips or the uppermost branches of the tallest nearby trees as hunting perches. Honey bees are a favored food source.	Not Likely to Occur. Study Area is outside this species range. No suitable breeding habitat within the Study Area.
White-tailed Kite (<i>Elanus leucurus</i>)	-	FP	Associated with Annual Grassland, Cropland, Wet Meadow, and Riverine habitats.	Uses herbaceous lowlands with variable tree growth and dense population of voles. Substantial groves of dense, broad-leaved deciduous trees used for nesting and roosting. Rarely found away from agricultural areas.	Not Likely to Occur. No agriculture and dense deciduous trees present. May fly over or hunt.

SPECIES Common Name (Scientific Name)	LISTING STATUS		GENERAL HABITAT	SPECIAL HABITAT REQUIREMENTS	POTENTIAL FOR OCCURRENCE
	Federal	State			
BIRDS					
Bald Eagle (<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>)	-	E	Associated with Lacustrine, Riverine, and Montane Riparian habitats	Most often associated with large lakes, reservoirs, and major rivers. Requires large, old-growth trees or snags in remote, mixed stands near water. Bald Eagles require large bodies of water, or free flowing rivers with abundant fish, and adjacent snags or other perches.	Known to Occur. Not likely to nest within the Study Area. May be found hunting within the Study Area.
Yellow-breasted Chat (<i>Icteria virens</i>)	-	CSC	Associated with Valley Foothill Riparian, Montane Riparian, and Coastal Scrub habitats	Breeds in dense riparian thickets and shrubby habitats near water. <u>Nesting takes place between May and July</u>	Low likelihood of occurrence. The Valley Foothill Riparian within Study Area has little suitable nesting habitat.
Loggerhead Shrike (<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>)	-	CSC	Within Tehama County, the species primarily utilizes Valley Foothill Hardwood, Valley Foothill Hardwood-Conifer, and Valley Foothill Riparian habitat	Suitable nesting cover consists of densely foliated shrubs or small trees that provide concealment and structural stability for the nest. Adjacent Annual Grassland with suitable perches are needed for foraging. <u>Nesting occurs from March through May, with young becoming independent by July or August.</u>	Not Likely to Occur. Loggerhead shrikes defend their territories year-round, and no shrikes were observed during site visits.
Yellow Warbler (<i>Setophaga petechia</i>)	-	CSC	Associated with Montane Riparian, Valley Foothill Riparian, and Wet Meadow habitats	Prefers dense willows and cottonwood. <u>Nesting occurs from mid-April through early August</u>	May Occur. There are dense willows suitable for nesting and suitable cover and foraging habitat. According to the CNDDDB database, there was one occurrence within 10 miles reported in 1986. This individual was in chaparral adjacent to a small patch of riparian vegetation along Cottonwood Creek.
Northern Spotted Owl (<i>Strix occidentalis caurina</i>)	T	T	Occur in the northern and western upland portions of Tehama County in Douglas-Fir, Mixed Conifer, Montane Hardwood-Conifer, Ponderosa Pine and Montane Riparian habitats.	Requires mature to old-growth coniferous forests that provide a combination of dense canopy cover, large trees, and complex vertical structure for nesting, roosting, and foraging. The species is strongly dependent on late-successional forest characteristics. Nests are usually located in natural tree cavities, broken treetops, large mistletoe clumps, or abandoned raptor nests.	Not Likely to Occur. The project Study Area is outside the range of Northern Spotted Owl. No suitable breeding habitat within the Study Area.

SPECIES Common Name (Scientific Name)	LISTING STATUS		GENERAL HABITAT	SPECIAL HABITAT REQUIREMENTS	POTENTIAL FOR OCCURANCE
	Federal	State			
FISH					
Steelhead - Central Valley DPS (<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus</i> pop. 11)	T	CSC	Aquatic, Sacramento/San Joaquin flowing waters	Spawns in cool, clear with gravel in Sacramento River and perennial tributaries.	Not Likely to Occur. The Study Area lacks suitable spawning habitat, and the Study Area is not within the corridor of a known spawning stream. According to the CNDDB database, there is a known occurrence from 2011 reporting Chinook in Beegum Creek within 10 miles from the Study Area (Figure 4).
Chinook Calmon - Central Valley Spring-run ESU (<i>Oncorhynchus tshawytscha</i> pop. 11)	T	T	Aquatic, Sacramento/San Joaquin flowing waters	Spawns in cool, clear with gravel in Sacramento River and perennial tributaries.	Not Likely to Occur. The Study Area lacks suitable spawning habitat, and the Study Area is not within the corridor of a known spawning stream. According to the CNDDB database, there is a known occurrence from 1995 reporting Chinook in South Fork Cottonwood Creek within 10 miles from the Study Area (Figure 4).
MAMMALS					
Pallid bat (<i>Antrozous pallidus</i>)	-	CSC	CWHR habitats include Annual Grassland, Desert Scrub, Oak Woodland, and Chamise-Redshrub Chaparra, Mixed Chaparral 2S and Valley Foothill Riparian 3D.	Roosts in caves, crevices, mines, and occasionally in hollow trees and buildings during the day. More open sites such as porches and open buildings are used at night. In winter, they likely use rock crevices for hibernation, near day roost. 95% roost in groups of 20, or more with young occupying the center of the cluster. Known to roost with other bat species. This species is very sensitive to disturbance of roosting sites.	May Occur. Roosting, maternity, and foraging habitat present on site and within the Study Area.
Townsend's Big-eared Bat (<i>Corynorhinus townsendii</i>)	-	CSC	This species is found in all but subalpine and alpine habitats and may be found at any season throughout its range.	This species is closely tied to cave-like structures. Primary roosts include caves, lava tubes, abandoned mines, tunnels, and occasionally large old buildings. Maternity colonies form in large, cavernous spaces, while hibernation sites are typically deep, cold caves or mines.	Not Likely to Occur. Although foraging habitat exists on site. There are no hibernaculum or maternity sites within the Study Area. According to the CNDDB Database, there was one sighting in 1938 at approx. elev. 4,000 feet within forested habitat (Figure 4).

SPECIES Common Name (Scientific Name)	LISTING STATUS		GENERAL HABITAT	SPECIAL HABITAT REQUIREMENTS	POTENTIAL FOR OCCURANCE
MAMMALS					
Northern California Ringtail (<i>Bassariscus astutus raptor</i>)	-	FP	Key CWHR habitats include Montane Hardwood, and Montane Riparian. Can be found in Mixed Chaparral 2S and Valley Foothill Riparian.	Closely tied to riparian areas & rocky, brushy mosaics within forests and shrublands. They typically remain within about one kilometer of permanent water. Important cover includes hollow logs, large snags, rock crevices, woodrat nests, and abandoned burrows.	Not Likely to Occur. Habitat on site is poor with little to no tree cover. There are no populations of ringtails located in Western Tehama County according to the California Ringtail Project. Ringtail may visit the pond at night.
Western Red Bat (<i>Lasiurus blossevillii</i>)	-	CSC	CWHR habitats include Valley Foothill Riparian, Montane Riparian, and Urban.	Highly dependent on mature riparian cover for roosting & reproduction. Prefers edges or habitat mosaics with trees for roosting & open areas for foraging adjacent to streams, fields or urban areas. Require water. Roosts primarily in trees, less often in shrubs. Preferred roost sites protected from above, open below, & above dark groundcover.	May occur. Riparian roosting, birthing, and maternity habitat are present within the project Study Area.
Humboldt Marten (<i>Martes caurina humboldtensis</i>)	T	E / CSC	North coast coniferous forest, Old growth, Redwood - Occurs only in the coastal redwood zone from the Oregon Border south to Sonoma County.	Associated with late-successional conifer forests. Prefers forests with low, overhead cover.	Not Likely to Occur. The Study Area is outside the species' range & lacks suitable habitat. According to the CNDDDB database (Fig 4) one sighting was reported at elevation 6,000 feet in Pine/Fir forested habitat in 1974.
Fisher (<i>Pekania pennanti</i>)	-	CSC	North coast coniferous forest, Old growth, Riparian Forest. Fisher habitat centers on late-successional conifer and mixed-conifer-hardwood forests with high structural complexity.	Suitable habitat consists of large areas of mature, dense forest stands with snags and greater than 50% canopy closure. Fishers den in a variety of protected cavities, brush piles, logs, or under an upturned tree. Hollow logs, trees, and snags are especially important	Not Likely to Occur. The Study Area is outside the range of this species, and the Study Area lacks suitable habitat.
Mountain Lion (<i>Puma concolor</i>)	-	FP	Main CWHR habitats include Montane Hardwood, Montane Riparian, Chaparral, and Ponderosa Pine.	Caves, other natural cavities, thickets are used for denning. Require extensive areas of riparian vegetation & brushy stages of various habitats, with interspersions of irregular terrain, rocky outcrops, and tree/brush edges.	Known to Occur. There is suitable hunting habitat and Stinking Creek may be used as a migratory corridor within the Study Area.
American badger (<i>Taxidea taxus</i>)	-	CSC	Uncommon, permanent resident found throughout most of the state, except northern North Coast area (Grinnell et al. 1937). Habitats include Valley & foothill grassland, Valley Foothill Riparian and Mixed Chaparral.	Suitable habitat for badgers is characterized by herbaceous, shrubs, and open stages of most habitats with dry, friable soils. Frequently reuse old burrows, although some may dig a new den each night, especially in summer.	Low likelihood of occurrence. No dens observed during site visits. There is hunting habitat within the Study Area. Pond may be visited & Stinking Creek may be used as a migratory corridor.
LEGEND: Federal - Endangered (E), Threatened (T), Proposed Threatened (PT), Proposed Endangered (PE), Candidate (C) State - Endangered (E), Threatened (T), California Special Concern (CSC), California Fully Protected (FP)					

Table 2. Rare Plant Species Found within 10 miles of the Project Limits according to the CNDDDB.

Common Name	Scientific Name	PLANT RANK	GENERAL HABITAT	MICRO HABITAT
Dimorphic Snapdragon	<i>Antirrhinum subcordatum</i>	4.3	CHAPARRAL, LOWER MONTANE CONIFEROUS FOREST.	GENERALLY ON SERPENTINE OR SHALE IN FOOTHILL WOODLAND OR CHAPARRAL ON S- AND W-FACING SLOPES
Jepson's Milk-Vetch	<i>Astragalus rattanii</i> var. <i>jepsonianus</i>	1B.2	CISMONTANE WOODLAND, VALLEY AND FOOTHILL GRASSLAND, CHAPARRAL	COMMONLY ON SERPENTINE IN GRASSLAND OR OPENINGS IN CHAPARRAL.
Tracy's Eriastrum	<i>Eriastrum tracyi</i>	3.2	CHAPARRAL, CISMONTANE WOODLAND, VALLEY AND FOOTHILL GRASSLAND.	GRAVELLY SHALE OR CLAY; OFTEN IN OPEN AREAS.
Stony Creek Spurge	<i>Euphorbia ocellata</i> ssp. <i>rattanii</i>	1B.2	VALLEY AND FOOTHILL GRASSLAND, CHAPARRAL, RIPARIAN SCRUB.	SANDY OR ROCKY SOILS
Stebbins' Harmonia	<i>Harmonia stebbinsii</i>	1B.2	CHAPARRAL, LOWER MONTANE CONIFEROUS FOREST.	SERPENTINE SOILS; OFTEN ALONG ROADS.
Woolly Meadowfoam	<i>Limnanthes floccosa</i> ssp. <i>floccosa</i>	4.2	CHAPARRAL, CISMONTANE WOODLAND, VALLEY AND FOOTHILL GRASSLAND, VERNAL POOLS.	VERNALLY WET AREAS, DITCHES, AND PONDS.
Starry-Tentacled Bushmallow	<i>Malacothamnus astrotentaculatus</i>	1B.3	CHAPARRAL, RIPARIAN WOODLAND, CISMONTANE WOODLAND.	BURNED AREAS
Sanhedrin Mountain Stonecrop	<i>Sedum sanhedrinum</i>	1B.2	CHAPARRAL, LOWER MONTANE CONIFEROUS FOREST, UPPER MONTANE CONIFEROUS FOREST.	OPENINGS, ROCKY, TALUS, ROCK CREVICES, SERPENTINITE, GABBROIC, METAMORPHIC.

California Rare Plant Rankings

1A: Plants presumed extirpated in CA and either rare or extinct elsewhere

1B: Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in CA and elsewhere

2A: Plants presumed extirpated in CA but common elsewhere

2B: Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in CA but common elsewhere

3: Plants about which more information is needed, a review list

4: Plants of limited distribution, a watch list

0.1-Seriously threatened in CA (over 80% of occurrences threatened/high degree and immediacy of threat)

0.2-Moderately threatened in CA (20-80% occurrences threatened/moderate degree and immediacy of threat)

0.3-Not very threatened in CA (less than 20% of occurrences threatened/low degree and immediacy of threat or no current threats known)

Jurisdictional Waters

On November 1st, 2024, Nevada Environmental Consulting, LLC visited Adam's Pond to survey the Project Area for the presence of State and Federal regulated wetland resources (Appendix I). The site was surveyed to determine the location of the Ordinary High-Water Mark (OHWM) and define and delineate the aquatic resources and wetlands in accordance with the US Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) 2008 Field Guide to Identification of the OHWM (Arid West Region) and state jurisdiction. The OHWM was confirmed in the field through visual assessment of key geomorphic, hydrologic, and vegetation indicators, such as matted vegetation, and sediment layers, using the ACOE Rapid OHWM Field Identification Sheet. Observations were cross-referenced with NRCS soil data, GIS analyses, and USGS mapping, incorporating the Blue Line Drainage as an approximated jurisdictional feature under regulatory standards.

The results of the delineation revealed that the OHWM of Adams Pond is controlled by the spillway elevation plus the depth of average discharge over the spillway. This elevation was cast to the western end of the pond as shown on all plans and figures. Sediment has buried the historic OHWM at the far west limits of the Project. The OHWM is encompassing of the wetland features along the riparia zone of the ponds edge. Notable transitions in vegetation type and density are evidenced, with distinct shifts from wetland to riparian species near the edge of water to arid upland species with little facultative wetland species present. Cattails and rush are found in clusters near the immediate edges of water and emergent zone. Pacific and Coyote willows and black Cottonwoods comprise a riparian overstory upslope from the OHWM.

A well-defined ephemeral drainage regulated as WOTUS and WOTS enters the pond from the south. This ephemeral channel is void of hydrophytic vegetation but has a well-defined bed and bank structure. This channel will be temporarily impacted by the proposed haul road.

A state regulated drainage was identified on site which discharges directly to Adams Pond. Since there are no other locations to dispose of the material on site and it is too far a distance to transport the materials off site for disposal, the sediment removed from the pond will be disposed of in this drainage resulting in permanent impacts to WOTS.

Regulatory Framework

The following laws and regulations govern biological resources relevant to the Project:

- **Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA):** Protects listed species and their habitats.
- **Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA):** Protects migratory birds, their nests, and eggs.
- **Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA):** Prohibits disturbance, take, or possession of eagles or their parts, nests, or eggs.
- **California Endangered Species Act (CESA):** Protects state-listed threatened and endangered species.
- **California Fish and Game Code §§ 3503, 3503.5, 3511, and 4700:** Protects nesting birds, raptors, and Fully Protected species such as White-tailed kite and ringtail.
- **California Fish and Game Code §§1600–1616 (Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement):** Requires notification to and authorization from the California Department

of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for any project that will substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow, or alter the bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream, or lake. The Adams Pond Restoration Project will require a CDFW 1600 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement (LSAA) because the Project will involve excavation, regrading, and sediment removal within Waters of the State connected to Stinking Creek and its tributary drainages.

- **Federal Clean Water Act (Section 404 & Section 401) and California Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act:** Regulate discharges and work within waters and wetlands.
- **Tehama County General Plan (2009):** Conservation Element promotes the protection of riparian corridors, native vegetation, and wildlife habitat.

Impact Analysis

a. Special-Status Species

Biological field and desktop surveys were completed by the RCDTC and Nevada Environmental Consulting, LLC. to identify potential habitat within the Project Limits for several special-status species. A detailed discussion of biological resources, potential impacts, and mitigation measures may be found in the state Biological Resource Evaluation completed in December of 2025 and the federal Biological Assessment completed in 2025. The Project will have no negative permanent impacts on wildlife. Several species including NWPT and common fish species will benefit from the project. The removal of accumulated sediment and the restoration of the Pond's capacity will restore lost aquatic habitat, resulting in improvements to the Pond's dissolved oxygen and water temperature levels.

There is a potential for the Project to significantly impact special-status species during construction. Harassment, injury, or mortality of wildlife may occur during sediment removal activities, when transporting materials, equipment, and sediment, during water diversion activities, due to construction and post-construction related erosion and associated sedimentation, or due to an accidental release of hazardous materials.

Mitigation Measures will be implemented to protect biological resources within the Project Limits. The measures include but are not limited to:

- Pre-construction biological surveys and worker training;
- Installation and monitoring of erosion controls / turtle exclusion fence (Appendix D);
- Species-specific avoidance (timing work outside breeding seasons or peak nesting seasons);
- Establishment of buffers around active nests, roosts, and dens; and
- Biological monitoring requirements.

All mitigation measures are detailed in Appendix A: Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) and Appendix D: Erosion Control / Turtle Exclusion Fence Plan.

Through the implementation of these Mitigation Measures, along with the Best Management Practices listed in Appendix B, Appendix C: Best Management Practices Plan Sheets, Appendix

E: Water Management Plan and the Appendix N: Project Plans, the potential for environmental impacts related to this Project will be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Finding: Less than significant with measures incorporated.

b. Riparian Habitat and Sensitive Communities

The Project involves restoring Adams Pond to pre-fire conditions. Original lacustrine habitat was impacted by sedimentation and is in the process of phasing into Riparian habitat. Adams Pond will be restored to its original Lacustrine habitat. The banks of Adams Pond will be restored and revegetated with native species after work is complete.

There are no sensitive communities within the Project Limits.

In the long term, the Project will have a positive effect and will:

- Restore the hydrologic and storage capacity of Adams Pond to pre-fire conditions.
- Re-establish aquatic and riparian habitats lost to post-fire sedimentation.
- Support watershed recovery and enhance ecological resilience to drought and wildfire.
- Improve water quality and habitat continuity within the Cottonwood Creek watershed.

The Project will comply with mitigation measures found in Appendix A and Appendix D, construction BMPs listed in Appendix B, C and E and the Project Plans in Appendix N.

All disturbed aquatic areas will be restored to pre-project conditions and monitored for success following construction (Appendix N: Project Plans, Appendix F: Post Construction Restoration Plan, and Appendix G: Post Construction Monitoring Plan) and the Project will comply with permit conditions issued in accordance with:

- CWA Section 404 (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)
- Water Quality Certification issued in accordance with Section 401 of the CWA and the California Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (Regional Water Quality Control Board)
- Fish and Game Code §1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement (California Department of Fish and Wildlife)

Finding: Less than significant.

c. State or Federally Protected Wetlands

The Project will not have a substantial adverse effect federal or state wetlands or other sensitive habitats. There will be minor temporary and permanent impacts associated with the Project. Work will occur below the OHWM of Adam Pond and in an ephemeral drainage both regulated under Section 404 and 401 of the Federal Clean Water Act and under the CA Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. The Project will also impact a drainage system only regulated under the CA Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act.

Approximately 3.2 acres of land below the OHWM of Adams Pond will be temporarily impacted when removing sediment from the pond and restoring the pond to pre-fire conditions. The removal of sediment from Adams Pond will be completed in the dry during the dry season when

flow to the Pond has stopped. Excavation will be upstream from the currently ponded section of Adams Pond so there is no chance for sediment or silt to move downstream off site, past the Pond's overflow structure.

The Project will also temporarily impact 0.003 acres of an ephemeral drainage located south of Adams Pond in order to construct the temporary haul road. This ephemeral drainage will be impacted when installing a pipe culvert and back filling the culvert with soil to create the haul road crossing. The haul road and culvert materials will be removed after the Project is complete and the 20 linear feet of ephemeral drainage will be restored by regrading the ephemeral stream channel and banks to preconstruction conditions and revegetating the area.

	Acres	Cubic Yards	Linear Feet
Temporary Impacts			
Lake Reservoir (Adams Pond)	3.2	80,000	1,440
Stream Channel	0.003	5	20
Permanent Impacts			
Stream Channel	0.025	26.5	360

The excavated sediment from the pond will be disposed of in a state drainage regulated under the California Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. The filling of the drainage will result in the loss of 0.025 acres (360 linear feet) (26.5 cubic yards) of State Waters. These impacts are minor and will be mitigated through the purchase of 1:1 compensatory credit at a state-approved mitigation bank. The compensatory credit purchase process will be completed during the Water Quality Certification process. In addition, a new drainage channel will be constructed within the proposed sediment disposal area along the same alignment of the original drainage, but at a higher elevation and at a more gradual slope.

Permit Type	Status	Filing Date
401 – Central Valley RWQCB	Draft Filed 5/13/25. Denied 9/25/2025 due to Incomplete Application.	Refilling Winter 2026
ACOE 404 Permit	Application Filed	11/24/2025
LSA 1600-CDFW	Draft Being Prepared	Winter 2026

All work will comply with associated Wetland and Water Resource permit conditions found in the WQC, ACOE Permit, and Streambed Alteration Agreement and in accordance with the NPDES SWPPP. Erosion controls and other BMPs will be used to avoid and minimize impacts to wetland and water resources during construction. Disturbed slopes will be stabilized and revegetated upon completion of construction and monitored for one year to ensure the slopes remain stable. The introduction of invasive species will be avoided by washing equipment and vehicles before entering the site.

Finding: Less than significant.

d. Wildlife Corridors and Nursery Sites

There were no major wildlife corridors or native wildlife nursery sites within the Project Limits. The Project will temporarily limit wildlife movement within the immediate work area. Preconstruction surveys and biological monitoring will ensure avoidance of impacts to active nests, roosts, and dens. Temporary silt fencing will be installed per the Erosion Control and Turtle Exclusion Fence Plan found in Appendix D. Heavy equipment and vehicle access will be controls and only allowed past the site entrance with a Biological Monitor present. The sanitary facilities and daily staff parking will be required to park at Staging Area 1 and not allowed past the site entrance. Silt fencing will be removed after work is complete and amphibians and NWPT movement will return to pre-construction conditions. The restoration of aquatic habitat will improve habitat and conditions for amphibians, NWPT and local freshwater fish using the pond.

Finding: Less than significant.

e. Conflict with Local Policies

The Project is consistent with Tehama County's General Plan goals for habitat conservation and watershed management and is not located within any Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) or Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP) area.

Finding: No impact.

f. Conflict with Habitat Conservation Plan

The Project is not located within any areas with an adopted HCP or NCCP or other approved habitat conservation plan.

Finding: No impact.

Mitigation Measures

The Project will have less than significant impacts with measures incorporated.

Conclusion

The Project will result in temporary, localized impacts to common riparian and upland vegetation and to special-status wildlife species. With implementation of mitigation measures, the adherence to conditions listed in State and Federal Wetland and Water Resource Permits and the NPDES SWPPP, the Project will not result in significant biological resource impacts under CEQA. In the long term, the Project will enhance aquatic, riparian, and upland habitat quality, contributing to ecosystem resilience and watershed recovery following the McFarland Wildfire and associated sedimentation events.

With implementation of Mitigation Measures listed in Appendix A and Appendix D, standard construction BMPs, and conditions found in the NPDES SWPPP and wetland and water resource permits, the Project will not result in significant adverse impacts to special-status species, riparian or aquatic habitats, or wildlife movement. The Project will result in net beneficial effects through restoration of native vegetation, restoration of aquatic and riparian habitat, and improved watershed and rangeland stability.

VI. CULTURAL RESOURCES

CULTURAL RESOURCES AND TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant <u>With</u> Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to § 15064.5?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Environmental Setting

The Project Limits are located on private land historically used for grazing and watershed management, with the remains of concrete associated with a cabin lost to the 2021 McFarland Fire and a barn structure that survived. No buildings, bridges, culverts, or other human-made features of historic or architectural significance are present within the Project footprint.

A Cultural Resources Records Search was conducted through the Northeastern Information Center (NEIC) of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) and reviewed. The search included the Project Area and a 0.5-mile radius. Results indicated:

- No previously recorded cultural resources (prehistoric or historic) within or adjacent to the Project footprint.
- Low potential for buried archaeological deposits, given the high degree of natural sedimentation and erosion, and the absence of historic land use.

Based on the archaeological survey undertaken by Mountain G Enterprises Inc. on August 19, 2025, there are no cultural resources within the Project Area (Appendix J). MGE determined that the Project would have No Effect on Historic Properties, in accordance with 36 CFR 800.4(d)(1).

Regulatory Framework

Cultural and historical resources are protected under multiple federal and state laws and guidelines, including:

- **National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (Section 106):** Requires federal agencies to consider effects on historic properties listed or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

- **California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code §21083.2, §21084.1):** Defines and protects historical resources and unique archaeological resources.
- **California Public Resources Code §5097.5 and Health & Safety Code §7050.5:** Protect cultural sites and human remains, requiring consultation and appropriate treatment if discovered.
- **Tehama County General Plan (2009) – Conservation and Open Space Element:** Seeks to identify, protect, and preserve significant cultural, historical, and archaeological resources.

Impact Analysis

a. Historical Resources

No historical structures, buildings, or features exist within the Project Area. The site has remained undeveloped since its construction as a private pond in the early 1980s.

No resources eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) or NRHP are present or expected.

Finding: No impact.

b. Archaeological Resources

The NEIC records search and field survey revealed no known prehistoric or historic archaeological sites within or adjacent to the Project Area. The area has experienced extensive post-fire erosion and sedimentation, which may have buried or transported any shallow cultural deposits.

Although the potential for discovery is low, unanticipated finds are possible during excavation. Therefore, standard accidental discovery protocols will be implemented.

Finding: Less than significant impact.

c. Human Remains

No human remains are known or expected within the Project Site. However, in accordance with Health and Safety Code §7050.5 and Public Resources Code §5097.98, procedures will be followed if remains are encountered, including cessation of work and notification of the Tehama County Coroner and the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), if appropriate.

Finding: Less than significant impact.

VII. ENERGY

ENERGY	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant <u>With</u> Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Result in potentially significant environmental impact 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

The Project Site is accessed via existing private ranch roads and has no electrical or natural gas infrastructure. The surrounding area is undeveloped and not connected to public utilities. Energy use in the Project vicinity is limited to agricultural and ranching operations, vehicle travel, and occasional off-grid power equipment. No permanent power lines, fuel storage facilities, or energy distribution systems are located within or adjacent to the Project Area. The Project's energy consumption will occur solely during construction activities (short-term) and will not include long-term operational energy use.

Regulatory Framework

Energy use and conservation are regulated at the state and local levels through the following key policies and laws:

- **California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Appendix F:** Requires evaluation of a project's potential to waste energy or use energy inefficiently.
- **California Energy Commission (CEC) State Energy Conservation Plan:** Promotes energy efficiency and the reduction of petroleum dependence.
- **California Code of Regulations, Title 24 (California Building Standards Code):** Establishes energy efficiency standards for building construction and equipment (not applicable here, as no structures are proposed).
- **CARB Scoping Plan (AB 32 & SB 32):** Identifies strategies to reduce fossil fuel consumption and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
- **Tehama County General Plan (2009) – Conservation Element:** Encourages energy conservation and the use of efficient construction and transportation practices.

Impact Analysis

a. Short-Term Construction Energy Use

Construction of the Adams Pond Restoration Project will involve earthmoving, grading, and hauling over an estimated 4–5 week period during the dry season. Energy will be consumed primarily as diesel fuel used by heavy equipment such as excavators, dozers, and haul trucks.

This temporary energy use is typical for small-scale restoration projects and is not excessive relative to regional construction activity. Contractors will be required to maintain equipment in good working condition and minimize idling to reduce fuel consumption. The contractor will also minimize travel distances from the pond to the disposal site as site conditions allow.

Given the limited duration and scale of the Project, energy use will be temporary, localized, and efficient.

The Project will not include permanent facilities, mechanical systems, lighting, or infrastructure that consume electricity or natural gas. Routine maintenance (e.g., vegetation monitoring or erosion repair) will occur infrequently and will require only light vehicle use. Because no operational energy demands are introduced, there will be no long-term energy consumption beyond baseline conditions.

The Project has been designed to maximize energy efficiency through the following measures:

- Implementation of emission and efficiency standards for all equipment.
- Use of local materials and on-site sediment disposal, minimizing haul distances.
- Revegetation and soil stabilization, which increase long-term carbon sequestration and climate resilience.

These measures ensure that The Project does not involve wasteful or inefficient energy practices and is consistent with the State Energy Conservation Plan.

Finding: Less than significant impact.

b. Consistency with State and Local Plans

The Project supports California's energy and climate goals by enhancing ecosystem resilience, improving water retention, and contributing to long-term carbon sequestration.

It will not conflict with any adopted energy plan, building efficiency code, or renewable energy policy.

Finding: No impact.

VIII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

GEOLOGY AND SOILS	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant <u>With</u> Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: 1. Rupture of a known earthquake fault, 2. Strong seismic ground shaking, 3. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction; or 4. Landslides?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c. Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the Project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d. Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative <u>waste water</u> disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of <u>waste water</u> ?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative <u>waste water</u> disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of <u>waste water</u> ?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Environmental Setting

The Project Limits are located in the foothill region of western Tehama County, within the Coast Ranges Geologic Province of California. This region is characterized by steep, dissected terrain composed of Jurassic and Cretaceous sedimentary and metamorphic rocks, including shale, sandstone, and serpentized ultramafic units. The Project Limits lie within the Stinking Creek subwatershed, a tributary to Salt Creek, which drains into the Cottonwood Creek Watershed.

According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Survey for Tehama County, the predominant soil mapping units at the Project Site are:

- Lodo and Maymen Shaly Loams (30–65% slopes): Shallow, well-drained soils on upland slopes and ridges; highly susceptible to erosion when disturbed.
- Millsholm Loams and Clay Loams (15–50% slopes): Moderately deep soils with high runoff potential and moderate to severe erosion hazard.

These soils are typical of steep foothill terrain and have a low shrink–swell potential, low permeability, and limited topsoil development. The Project Area exhibits clear evidence of post-fire erosion, including rilling and gullying that contribute to high sediment delivery into Adams Pond.

Regulatory Framework

Geological and soil resources are regulated under several state and local programs, including:

- **California Building Code (CBC), Title 24, Part 2:** Establishes seismic safety standards for construction to resist ground shaking and liquefaction.
- **Tehama County General Plan, Safety Element (2010):** Includes policies to minimize soil erosion and protect water quality through grading and erosion control standards.
- **Clean Water Act (CWA) and Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act:** Require erosion and sedimentation controls for activities that may affect Waters of the U.S. or Waters of the State.
- **National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Construction General Permit (ORDER WQ 2022-0057-DWQ):** Requires development and implementation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) for ground-disturbing activities exceeding one acre.

Impact Analysis

a. Seismic Hazards

The Project Limits are not within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone, and there are no mapped active faults within or adjacent to the site. The nearest active fault is the Battle Creek Fault Zone, located approximately 20 miles east of the Project Area. No active or inferred fault traces cross the Project Site. The region is considered to have moderate seismicity consistent with the Northern California Coast Ranges. The potential for surface fault rupture is negligible. Given the small-scale and temporary nature of construction, and the absence of permanent structures or occupied facilities, seismic ground shaking would not pose a significant hazard. Standard design and construction practices will ensure slope and material stability during and after excavation. There is a potential that a landslide would occur if the disposal area is not appropriately stabilized. Measures have been incorporated into the Project to avoid and minimize the chance of landslides occurring (Appendix A)

Finding: Less than significant with measure incorporated.

b. Soil Erosion and Topsoil Loss

Construction will involve excavation and relocation of approximately 80,000 cubic yards of sediment from the pond bottom and adjacent upland disposal areas. These activities temporarily

increase the potential for erosion, sedimentation, and soil loss, particularly given the steep topography and high erodibility of Lodo and Maymen soils.

However, the Project incorporates robust erosion and sediment control BMPs consistent with TCAPCD and SWPPP standards and the WQC conditions, including:

- Temporary erosion control measures such as straw wattles, silt fencing, and fiber rolls;
- Watering and dust suppression to reduce soil particle transport;
- Sediment barriers along drainages and slopes;
- Immediate revegetation of disturbed areas using native seed, plants, and pole cuttings.
- 6-12" of topsoil will be set aside prior to excavating and then placed within the original soil horizon found prior to the start of construction.

With implementation of these measures, soil erosion and loss of topsoil will be temporary and less than significant.

Finding: Less than significant with measures incorporated.

c. Soil Stability, Landslides, and Ground Failure

The steep uplands adjacent to the Project Site have experienced increased surface instability due to vegetation loss following the 2021 McFarland Fire. Nonetheless, the Project avoids deep cuts or permanent structural loads on slopes and includes grading design to promote stable drainage and soil retention.

Sediment disposal area is located in state regulated drainage with a limited watershed. A new drainage channel will be constructed within the fill and will continue to carry drainage to Adams Pond. The fill will be compacted and stabilized with native vegetation and permanent erosion controls such as wattles and erosion control blankets to minimize future erosion. Inspections will be completed during and after the rainy season and any erosion issues will be corrected upon discovery. Additional detailed information is provided in the Project Plans (Appendix N), project BMPs (Appendix B, C and E), the Post Construction Restoration Plan (Appendix F), and the Post Construction Monitoring Plan (Appendix G).

Therefore, risks related to landslides, slope failure, or soil instability are less than significant with measures.

Finding: Less than significant with measures incorporated.

d. Expansive Soils

The NRCS identifies the Project soils as having low shrink–swell potential. Because the Project does not involve the construction of foundations, pavements, or habitable structures, no impacts related to expansive soils are anticipated.

Finding: No impact.

f. Suitability for Septic Tanks or Alternative Wase Water Disposal Systems

The Project does not involve the installation or reconstruction of any septic systems or alternative wastewater disposal systems.

Finding: No Impact.

f. Unique Geologic Features

No paleontological resources, mineral resources, or unique geologic formations have been documented within the Project Area. The site is underlain by common sedimentary substrates with no known scientific or educational value.

Finding: No Impact.

Conclusion

In addition to adhering to standard construction BMPs, permit application conditions, and the NPDES SWPPP, mitigation measures identified in Appendix A and Appendix D will be employed to ensure substantial erosion and the loss of slopes will not occur after construction is complete.

IX. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant <u>With</u> Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. <u>Generate</u> 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

The Project is in western Tehama County, within the Northern Sacramento Valley Air Basin (NSVAB) and under the jurisdiction of the Tehama County Air Pollution Control District (TCAPCD). This project will require the use of heavy equipment during construction activities involved in soil excavation, grading, construction of a haul road, and the hauling of soils to the on-site disposal area.

The Project will be advertised for construction through the competitive bid process so we are unable to provide a specific amount of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions the Project will Generate. The following are the anticipated numbers of trips that may occur when transporting sediment from the pond to the disposal area depending on which size dump truck the contractor may use and the length of the haul road:

Standard (10 yd³): 80,000 yd³ / 10 yd³/truck = 8,000 trips to the disposal site x 2 = 16,000 round trips.

Large Tri-Axle (15 yd³): 80,000 yd³ / 15 yd³/truck = ~5,333 trips x 2 = 10,666 round trips.

Semi-Trailer (25 yd³): 80,000 yd³ / 25 yd³/truck = 3,200 trips x 2 = 6,400 round trips.

The haul road length is approximately 1,523 linear feet one way or 3,046 linear feet round trip.

Using a fleet of 6 single 10-yard dump trucks to move 80,000 cubic yards will take approximately 42 to 56 eight (8) hour workdays.

Regulatory Framework

This section describes the federal, State, and local regulations related to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change.

Federal Regulations Pertaining to GHG Emissions

At the federal level, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) administers the Clean Air Act (CAA). In 2007, the United States Supreme Court ruled that GHGs are “pollutants” under the CAA. In 2009, the EPA found that six GHGs constitute a threat to public health and welfare, and that the combined emissions from motor vehicles cause and contribute to climate change. These findings serve as a prerequisite to regulations of GHG emissions from motor vehicles, construction equipment, and large stationary emitters of GHGs. On April 1, 2010, the EPA and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration established a program to reduce GHG emissions and improve fuel economy standards for new model year 2012-2016 cars and light trucks. On August 9, 2011, the EPA and the NHTSA announced standards to reduce GHG emissions and improve fuel efficiency for heavy-duty trucks and buses.

State Regulations Pertaining to GHG Emissions

The State of California has enacted several policies and plans to address GHG emissions and climate change. In 2006, AB 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act was passed, which set the overall goals for reducing California’s GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. Executive Orders S-3-05 and B-16-2012 further extend this goal to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. In April 2015 Governor Brown issued EO B-30-15, which established a GHG reduction target of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. CARB has completed rulemakings to implement several GHG emission reduction regulations and continues to investigate the feasibility of implementing additional GHG emission reduction regulations. CARB approved the First Update to the AB 32 Scoping Plan on May 22, 2014 (California Air Pollution Control Officers Association 2008). This update defined climate change priorities for the following five years and sets the groundwork to reach long-term goals set forth in EOs S-3-05 and B-16-2012. The update also highlights California’s progress toward meeting the near-term 2020 GHG emission reduction goals and evaluates how to align the State’s longer-term GHG reduction strategies with other State policy priorities for water, waste, natural resources, clean energy, transportation, and land use.

Senate Bill (SB) 97, which was signed in 2007 and went into effect in 2010, requires that project proponents estimate the GHG emissions that will result from a project as part of the environmental review process under CEQA. Jurisdictions that have adopted a Qualified GHG Reduction Strategy can streamline the GHG review if the project is shown to be compliant with the strategy by meeting the requirements in CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.5(b). While this Inventory does not constitute a complete Qualified GHG Reduction Strategy, it can be used to support the creation and adoption of such a document. SB 97 also requires the Office of Planning and Research to develop amendments to the CEQA Guidelines that address the analysis and mitigation of GHG emissions. The California Natural Resources Agency adopted the amendments to the CEQA Guidelines in 2010. Key points of these amendments include:

Lead agencies must analyze the GHG emissions of proposed projects and reach a conclusion regarding the significance of those emissions (See CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.4). When a project’s GHG emissions may be significant, lead agencies must consider a range of potential Mitigation Measures to reduce those emissions (See CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4[c]). Lead agencies may significantly streamline the analysis of GHGs at the project level by using a

programmatic GHG emissions-reduction plan that meets certain criteria (See CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.5[b]).

Local Efforts and Regulations Pertaining to GHG Emissions

Tehama County lies within the jurisdiction of the Tehama County Air Pollution Control District. Air Districts have direct and indirect regulatory authority over sources of air pollution and GHGs within their territory and can inform and guide how laws on air pollution and GHGs are applied. They play a critical role in providing support and guidance to jurisdictions, although they do not officially certify Qualified GHG Reduction Strategies. The Tehama County General Plan states that Tehama County will work with the TCAPCD to prepare a Climate Action Plan for the county (Tehama County 2009). The TCAPCD has not yet adopted plan-level guidelines for GHG reduction within Tehama County.

Impact Analysis

a. Generate GGE that significantly impacts the environment

GHG emissions are typically expressed as metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO₂e). Common GHGs include CO₂, CH₄, and N₂O. These emissions contribute to global climate change rather than localized air quality effects.

Tehama County uses a 900 metric ton screening criteria (CO₂ or CO₂ equivalents generated annually) as referenced in the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) whitepaper as a conservative criterion for determining which projects require further analysis and mitigation with regard to Climate Change (Tehama County Air Quality Planning & Permitting Handbook, 2015). This is more conservative than the standard recognized screening level for land development (construction) of 1,100 MTCO₂e per year, based on common California Air Pollution Control District (APCD) standards.

The Project would generate a minimal, short-term increase in GHG emissions from construction equipment and vehicle trips. However, given the small project size, limited construction period, and lack of long-term emission sources, the total project GHG output would be well below the County standard recognized screening level of 900 MTCO₂e per year.

Construction-Phase Emissions

Short-term emissions during construction would result primarily from diesel-powered equipment used for excavation, grading, and hauling of approximately 80,000 cubic yards of sediment. These emissions would include PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, NO_x, ROG, and CO.

CO₂ equivalent (MTCO₂e): To transport 80,000 cubic yards using a 10-cubic yard truck over a 3,046-foot round trip for a total 16,000 round trips, you would travel a total distance of 4,873,600 feet, which is approximately 923 miles. The total Project Emissions associated with the transport of the sediment alone is approximately 5.4828 MTCO₂e using the following calculations:

Emission Factor Basis: A standard diesel dump truck (Heavy-Heavy Duty Truck or HHDT) emits roughly 1,600 to 2,050 grams of CO₂ per mile depending on payload and engine age.

Calculation: 3,046 total round-trip miles × 1,800 CO₂ per mile (estimated average) = 5,482,800 grams ≈ 5.4828 MTCO₂e total for the project for the year to haul sediment from the pond to the disposal area.

The TCAPCD utilizes specific daily thresholds to determine if a project's criteria pollutants (NO_x, PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}) are significant as outlined in the table below:

Table 3: Thresholds of Significant for Criterial Pollutants of Concern

Pollutant	Level A	Level B	Level C
NO _x	≤ 25 lbs/day	> 25 lbs/day	> 137 lbs/day
ROG	≤ 25 lbs/day	> 25 lbs/day	> 137 lbs/day
PM ₁₀	≤ 80 lbs/day	> 80 lbs/day	> 137 lbs/day
Level of Significance	Potentially Significant Impacts	Potentially Significant Impacts	Significant Impacts
Environmental Document	Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) or ND	Mitigated ND or EIR	EIR

Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x): Heavy-duty diesel trucks are a primary source of construction emissions. For a project this size in Tehama County, if daily emissions exceed 137 lbs/day, the project would be considered significant. Given 16,000 round trips over a standard construction season of 60 days, daily NO_x is typically well below this level for a 10-yard truck project. A modern heavy-duty truck (Model Year 2010+) emits roughly 0.015 to 0.025 lbs of NO_x per mile. Total round-trip miles traveled to dispose of the material on site is 923 miles resulting in 0.61 lbs of NO_x a day for 60 days less than 1% of the significance threshold and would be considered a Level A source of NO_x pollutants. Even with concentrated travel within the 3,046-foot loop within the Project Limits, the volume of 16,000 trips is not high enough to create a NO_x "hotspot." Sensitive Receptors are not located within 500 feet of the Haul Road. It is anticipated that NO_x concentrations will disperse rapidly and will not reach levels that trigger health risk significance. Standard BMPs (limiting idling to 5 minutes) further ensure that NO_x does not accumulate in a single location.

Particulate Matter (PM₁₀): The county typically uses thresholds of 137 lbs/day for PM₁₀. Modern heavy-duty diesel engines (2010+ and the new 2024–2026 "Omnibus" standard) emit extremely low amounts of PM—roughly 0.005 to 0.008 grams per mile or a total of approximately 7.384 grams or 0.0162787 lbs for the project. Tailpipe emissions associated with the hauling of sediment would total less than 0.123 grams per day or 0.00027 lbs/day for 60 days, which is negligible.

Particulate Matter (PM2.5): Tehama County, through its Air Pollution Control District (APCD), regulates particulate matter (PM) emissions, including fine particles (PM2.5), using both state (CARB) and federal (EPA) standards, requiring measures like dust control plans for construction to meet limits like the federal 24-hour standard of $<9 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. Standard BMPs will be used to control dust during construction.

Construction would occur over a 4–5 week period (60 days) within one construction season, limiting total operational hours. The sediment removal activities may occur over the course of 2–3 seasons depending on the availability of funds. Because construction activity is temporary, limited in scope and subject to TCAPCD dust control and emission rules, emissions are expected to be well below regional thresholds for both criteria pollutants and GHGs.

Operational-Phase Emissions

Following project completion, no ongoing emissions-generating activities are anticipated. Occasional maintenance or vegetation management would be infrequent, and minor compared to regional emissions levels. The restored pond and riparian zone will not generate new traffic, fuel use, or industrial activity.

The Project will result in a net reduction in atmospheric carbon over time by:

- Restoring riparian and emergent vegetation, which will enhance carbon sequestration;
- Improving hydrologic and soil stability, reducing erosion and sediment transport that would otherwise degrade downstream carbon storage;
- Enhancing ecosystem resilience following wildfire-related disturbance.

Therefore, the Project will contribute positively over the long-term to regional and statewide climate goals by promoting vegetative regrowth and watershed stability.

Finding: Less than significant impact. The project will use standard BMPs.

b. Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation

This project does not conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing emissions of greenhouse gases.

Finding: No Impact.

X. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant <u>With</u> Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through 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 materials 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 § 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 significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Environmental Setting

Land uses within and adjacent to the Project are primarily rangeland and forest with no history of industrial activity or hazardous materials storage. No schools, residential neighborhoods, or urban development occur within two miles of the Project Site. The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) EnviroStor and State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) GeoTracker databases show no known hazardous waste sites, cleanup sites, leaking underground storage tanks, or hazardous material generators within a 1-mile radius of the Project Site.

The 2021 McFarland Fire burned through much of the watershed, but no chemical retardant spills or hazardous debris deposits have been recorded in or near the Project Area. The site's remote location and absence of structures or infrastructure mean there are no hazardous building materials (asbestos, lead-based paint, etc.) present.

Construction activities will involve standard heavy equipment (excavators, dozers, haul trucks) that require the temporary, limited use of fuels, lubricants, and hydraulic fluids.

Regulatory Framework

The handling, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials are governed by multiple federal, state, and local regulations, including:

- **Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA):** Federal framework for the management of hazardous waste.
- **Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA, "Superfund"):** Governs cleanup of hazardous substance releases.
- **California Hazardous Waste Control Law (Health & Safety Code §25100 et seq.):** Establishes requirements for the generation, transportation, and disposal of hazardous waste.
- **California Fire Code and Health & Safety Code §25500 et seq.:** Requires proper storage and secondary containment of fuels and chemicals.
- **Tehama County General Plan – Safety Element:** Encourages avoidance of hazardous materials exposure through BMPs and emergency response preparedness.
- **Cal/OSHA Safety Standards (8 CCR §5194):** Requires hazard communication and worker protection training for handling hazardous substances.

The Project will comply with all applicable laws and regulations administered by the Tehama County Environmental Health Department, DTSC, and RWQCB.

Impact Analysis

a. Use, Storage, and Transport of Hazardous Materials

Project activities will involve the temporary use and storage of petroleum-based products such as diesel fuel, lubricants, and hydraulic oil for construction equipment. These substances will be handled in compliance with state and local hazardous materials regulations, including proper labeling, containment, and spill prevention practices.

The only flat areas suitable for staging are located at the barn (Staging Area 1) and at the site of the cabin remains (Staging Area 2). Active construction equipment must be located within Staging Area 2 during construction to avoid impacts Northwestern Pond Turtle and other aquatic wildlife. Staging Area 2 is less than 100 feet from the OHWM of Adams Pond. Due to the location of Staging Area 2, all refueling will occur within the silt fence enclosed Staging Areas, at least 50 feet from aquatic resources, with secondary containment (e.g., bermed or lined fueling zones). Spill kits and absorbent materials will be available on-site at all times. Contractors will

be trained in spill response and containment procedures under Cal/OSHA and Hazard Communication Standards.

Because hazardous materials will be used only in small, controlled quantities, and BMPs will prevent release to soil or water, the risk of contamination is less than significant with measures.

Finding: Less than significant with measures implemented.

b. Accidental Release of Hazardous Materials

There is a low potential for accidental release due to equipment malfunction or fuel handling errors. However, the Project will implement a Spill Prevention and Emergency Response Plan (SPERP) as part of the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). If a spill occurs, immediate containment, cleanup, and reporting to the appropriate agencies will occur per regulatory requirements.

Given the limited scale and controlled nature of project activities, the likelihood of a release affecting the environment or public health is **very low**.

However, should a release occur, there is a potential for that release to significantly impact biological resources including rare wildlife, such as NWPT, and aquatic habitat. The Project will involve work close to water resources and the staging of equipment and materials will occur approximately 50 feet from the OHWM of Adams Pond, which is closer than the industry standard of 100 feet. The steep terrain and presence of NWPT habitat on both sides of the site access road, limit where staging can occur.

To avoid potentially impacting rare wildlife and aquatic habitat, additional Mitigation Measures such as surrounding staging areas with silt fencing will be implemented in addition to strict adherence to standard BMPs as required by permit applications and the NPDES SWPPP.

Finding: Less than significant with measures implemented.

c. Proximity to Schools

The Project Site is remote and unpopulated. The nearest school is over five miles away, the closest home is over 1 mile away, and there are no sensitive receptors within the Project vicinity. Therefore, there is no potential for exposure to the public or sensitive populations.

Finding: No Impact.

d. Known Hazardous Sites

A review of the DTSC EnviroStor and SWRCB GeoTracker databases confirmed that the Project Site is not listed on or adjacent to any known hazardous materials site pursuant to Government Code §65962.5. As such, the Project will not occur on or near a contaminated site, and no impact will occur.

Finding: No Impact.

e. Located within an Airport Land Use Plan

The Project is not located within two miles of a public airport or public use airport.

Finding: No Impact.

f. Emergency Response and Evacuation

The Project will not interfere with emergency response routes. Construction access will utilize existing private ranch roads connected to rural county routes. The Project's Health and Safety Plan (HASP) will include emergency contact procedures, equipment refueling safety, fire prevention measures, and worker evacuation protocols. Therefore, there will be no interference with emergency response plans or evacuation routes.

Finding: No Impact.

f. Wildfire Risk

The Project Site lies within a State Responsibility Area (SRA) classified as a Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zone. Construction equipment could pose ignition risk in dry vegetation conditions. However, strict fire prevention BMPs will be implemented, including:

- Maintaining operational fire extinguishers on all heavy equipment;
- Prohibiting idling near dry vegetation;
- Designating staging and refueling areas in cleared, non-vegetated zones;
- Ceasing operations during Red Flag Warning conditions if required by CAL FIRE or Tehama County.

Finding: Less than significant impact.

Conclusion

The Project will have less than significant impacts associated with Hazards and Hazardous Materials with Measures in place (Appendix A and Appendix D) and with the strict adherence to permit conditions, the NPDES SWPPP, and BMPs (Appendix B, C and E).

XI. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant <u>With</u> Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
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 a substantial erosion or siltation on- or <u>off-site</u> :				
ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or <u>offsite</u> :	☐	☒	☐	☐
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 <u>runoff</u> :				
iv) impede or redirect flood flows?				
d. In flood hazard, tsunami, or <u>seiche</u> 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

Adams Pond is an in-line reservoir along Stinking Creek which was constructed in the early 1980s on private land. The Pond historically covered approximately 4.2 acres, but post-fire sedimentation following the 2021 McFarland Fire has reduced it to roughly one acre, significantly impairing storage capacity and aquatic habitat.

The property owner has the right to use the waters of Stinking Creek for the purpose of Domestic, Stock watering, Recreational, Wildlife Enhancement, and Fire Protection under Permit 20469 of the State Water Resource Control Board (WRCB) which became effective on September 15, 1987. Permit 20469 is currently valid and in good standing. The amount of water to which this right is entitled shall not exceed forty-two (42) acre-feet per annum collected

from October 1 of each year to May 31 of the succeeding year. The maximum amount of water collected for storage under License 12331 must not exceed 45 acre-feet per year and the capacity of the reservoir must not exceed 45 acre-feet.

Hydrologically, the pond receives seasonal inflows from Stinking Creek and ephemeral runoff from adjacent uplands. During typical dry seasons, inflows cease by midsummer, and the pond level drops below the spillway, preventing downstream discharge until the next winter rainfall. The surrounding upland soils—Lodo, Maymen, and Millsholm Loams—are steep and erosion-prone, contributing to elevated sediment loads and turbidity in post-fire years.

The Project lies within the jurisdiction of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) and must comply with applicable provisions of the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, and the Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 401 Water Quality Certification.

Because the Project is receiving federal funds, it is not subject to local regulations including the Tehama County grading and erosion control ordinances.

Regulatory Framework

The Project is subject to the following federal, state, and local regulations:

- **Clean Water Act (CWA) Sections 401 and 404:** Regulate discharge of dredged or fill material into Waters of the U.S. and require certification of no adverse water quality impacts.
- **Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (California Water Code § 13000 et seq.):** Governs discharges to Waters of the State and requires implementation of best management practices (BMPs).
- **State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Construction General Permit (Order 2009-0009-DWQ, as amended):** Requires a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) for construction disturbing one acre or more.
- **Tehama County General Plan – Conservation and Safety Elements:** Mandate measures to prevent sedimentation, manage runoff, and maintain natural hydrologic function.

Impact Analysis

a. Surface Water Quality

The primary temporary water-quality concern is sediment mobilization during sediment excavation, haul, and disposal. Work will occur during the dry-season window (August–October) when surface flow through Stinking Creek is absent, and the pond is isolated from downstream waters. Consequently, no active discharge or downstream sediment transport will occur during construction.

BMPs and Mitigation Measures will include silt fencing, straw wattles, and designated staging zones enclosed with silt fencing to prevent runoff (Appendix A through Appendix D and Appendix N). The SWPPP specify inspection and maintenance procedures. All disturbed areas will be stabilized with native seed, pole cuttings, and mulch within 14 days of completion.

During construction, the contractor will be required to follow the Water Management Plan when drawing down the pond (Appendix E).

The only flat areas suitable for staging are located at the barn (Staging Area 1) and at the site of the cabin remains (Staging Area 2). Active construction equipment must be located within Staging Area 2 during construction to avoid impacts Northwestern Pond Turtle and other aquatic wildlife. Staging Area 2 is less than 100 feet from the OHWM of Adams Pond. Due to the location of Staging Area 2, all refueling will occur within the silt fence enclosed Staging Areas, at least 50 feet from aquatic resources, with secondary containment (e.g., bermed or lined fueling zones). Spill kits and absorbent materials will be available on-site at all times. Contractors will be trained in spill response and containment procedures under Cal/OSHA and Hazard Communication Standards.

Post construction revegetation, soils stabilization and monitoring will avoid and minimize any potential future impacts to wetland and water resources (Appendix F and Appendix G).

With standard BMPs found in the WQC, 404 Permit and NPDES SWPPP and mitigation measures, short-term sedimentation or turbidity increases that could impact water quality will be less than significant.

Finding: Less than significant with measures implemented.

b. Groundwater and Infiltration

The Project will not involve groundwater extraction or injection. Excavation will occur above the regional water table, and no dewatering is required. Sediment disposal will occur on stable uplands designed to promote infiltration and vegetative stabilization. Therefore, no impacts to groundwater quality or recharge are anticipated.

Finding: No Impact.

c. Drainage Patterns and Erosion

Because the Project restores the original pond basin configuration and does not alter channel alignment, long-term drainage patterns will be improved rather than disrupted. Sediment removal will increase storage capacity and reduce downstream sediment loading. Temporary erosion control structures will prevent any short-term disturbance to ephemeral channels, including the small temporary haul-road crossing. The installation of the temporary culvert along the haul road will result in less than 10 cubic yards of fill and impact 200 square feet of channel which will be fully restored to pre-project condition upon project completion.

The steep uplands adjacent to the Project Site have experienced increased surface instability due to vegetation loss following the 2021 McFarland Fire. Nonetheless, the Project avoids deep cuts or permanent structural loads on slopes and includes grading design to promote stable drainage and soil retention.

The sediment disposal area is located within a drainage regulated as WOTS with a small local watershed. After filling the drainage, a new drainage channel will be constructed within the footprint of the fill, but at a higher elevation. The new drainage will continue to carry flows to

Adams Pond from the small local watershed. The newly constructed drainage channel and associated side slopes will be compacted and revegetated to prevent future erosion from occurring. In addition, permanent erosion controls such as wattles and erosion control blankets will be installed to ensure the new channel and slopes stay in place. A post construction monitoring plan will involve yearly site inspections during and after the rainy season (Appendix G). Additional detailed information is provided in the Project Plans (Appendix N), project BMPs (Appendix B, C and E), and the Post Construction Restoration Plan (Appendix F).

The risks related to substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site, landslides, slope failure, or soil instability are less than significant with mitigation measures.

Finding: Less than significant with measures implemented.

d. Flooding and Hydrologic Capacity

The Project is not located within a flood hazard, tsunami or seiche zone.

Finding: No impact.

e. Water Quality Standards Compliance

All in-water work and upland stabilization measures will comply with:

- CWA § 401 Water Quality Certification conditions;
- Regional Water Board BMP and inspection requirements;
- Tehama County grading permit conditions.

These controls ensure that no violation of water quality standards or waste discharge requirements will occur. All work will be completed in the dry. Equipment will not be allowed to work in the water. A Water Management Plan (Appendix E) has been developed for the Project which includes construction practices that ensure the worksite remains as dry as conditions allow. The Project will not conflict or obstruct the implementation of a water quality control plan or substantial groundwater management plan.

Finding: No impact.

Conclusion

In addition to adhering to construction BMPs, permit application conditions, and the NPDES SWPPP, mitigation measures found in Appendix A and Appendix D will be employed to ensure construction impacts to Hydrology and Water Quality are reduced to less than significant and that substantial erosion and the loss of slopes will not occur after construction is complete.

XII. LAND USE AND PLANNING

LAND USE AND PLANNING	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant <u>With</u> Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
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 area is used for low-intensity grazing and watershed management. There are no incorporated cities, subdivisions, or urbanized areas in the Project vicinity.

The Project Site is not within any city limits or specific plan area and lies entirely within the jurisdiction of Tehama County. No residential, commercial, or industrial developments occur within several miles of the Project Site.

According to the Tehama County General Plan (2009) and Zoning Ordinance (Title 17), the site is designated as:

- Land Use Designation: Upland Agricultural (UA)
- Zoning District: AG-1 – Agricultural

These designations are intended to preserve natural open space, allow low-intensity agricultural and grazing activities, and support habitat conservation, watershed protection, and compatible resource management projects.

Regulatory Framework

The following policies and regulations guide land use, resource management, and conservation in the Project Area:

- **Tehama County General Plan (2009):**
 - *Open Space Element* – Encourages preservation of natural open spaces, and watershed function, promotes erosion control, water quality and quantity protection, water supply development, and habitat restoration.
 - *Safety Element* – Seeks to reduce fire hazards.
 - *Economic Development Element* – Protect and preserve natural resources.
- **Tehama County Zoning Ordinance (Title 17):**

- The *AG-1 Agricultural/upland* zoning district allows open space uses, watershed management, and environmental restoration as compatible activities.
- **California Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act):**
 - Provides property tax incentives to maintain agricultural land uses. The Project Site is **not enrolled** in a Williamson Act contract.
- **California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA):**
 - Requires evaluation of a project's consistency with applicable land use plans, policies, and regulations.

Impact Analysis

a. Division of an Established Community

The Project occurs in a remote, unpopulated watershed area and will not introduce new roads, barriers, or permanent structures that could divide or isolate an established community. The Project footprint is limited to the existing pond, adjacent upland sediment disposal area, and temporary access routes on private land.

No residential areas, communities, or population centers occur nearby. Therefore, the Project will not physically divide an established community.

Finding: No impact.

b. Cause a Significant Environmental Impact due to Conflict with Regulations or Plans

The Project is consistent with the *Upland Agricultural (UA)* General Plan designation and Agricultural zoning, both of which permit land and water management activities that conserve natural resources. The Project directly supports the Tehama County policy goals including:

- **Economic Development 7.1:** The County shall continue to preserve Tehama County's natural resources including: agriculture, timberlands, water and water quality, wildlife resources, minerals, natural resource lands, recreation lands, scenic highways, and historic and archaeological resources. The protection of natural resources is of the utmost importance and promoting business expansion, retention, and recruitment should complement and enhance the natural resources while reducing negative impacts.
- **Open Space Policy 1.2:** The County shall work to ensure continued reasonable alternate water supplies.
- **Open Space Policy 1.3:** Surface water quality and stream flows for water supply, water recharge, recreation, and aquatic ecosystem maintenance shall be protected while respecting adjudicated and appropriated (California recognized water rights) rights of use.
- **Open Space Policy 1.6:** The County shall explore and encourage new water storage projects that are of local benefit. The County shall explore and encourage new water storage projects that are of local benefit.
- **Open Space Policy 3.1:** The County shall preserve and protect environmentally sensitive and significant lands and water valuable for their plant and wildlife habitat, natural appearance, and character.

- **Open Space Policy 3.5:** The County shall work with State and Federal agencies to control and eliminate invasive plants from the County.
- **Open Space Policy 9.1:** The County shall strive for the protection and enhancement of resource lands for the continued benefit of agriculture, timber, grazing, recreation, waterfowl, wildlife habitat, watersheds, and quality of life.
- **Open Space Policy 10.1:** The County should protect and preserve significant archaeological and cultural resources.
- **Open Space Policy 12.3:** The County shall continue to encourage sound soil management, erosion prevention and control programs and projects, including the use of windbreaks, minimum tillage practices, grazing management, and riparian rehabilitation.
- **Safety Policy 3.1:** The County shall require accepted fire-resistive construction practices, including but not limited to site design and layout; use of appropriate landscaping and building materials; and the installation of automatic fire sprinklers on new and redevelopment projects to the extent permitted by law.

Because the Project contributes to the advancement or adheres to these policies, it is fully consistent with County plans. No conflicts with local, regional, or state land use policies have been identified.

Finding: No Impact

XIII. MINERAL RESOURCES

MINERAL RESOURCES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant <u>With</u> Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region or 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

The Project Site lies within the Coast Ranges Geologic Province, characterized by metamorphic and sedimentary rock formations, including shale, sandstone, and serpentine units. The surrounding region has historically supported limited mineral extraction, primarily small-scale gravel and aggregate operations located along the Sacramento River corridor and major tributaries to the east. The western uplands, where the Project is situated, are not identified as containing regionally significant mineral deposits.

According to the California Department of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology (now the California Geological Survey, CGS), Tehama County's Mineral Resource Zone (MRZ) classifications designate much of the western foothill region, including the Project Area, as:

- MRZ-3a or MRZ-3b – Areas where mineral deposits are present or potentially present, but the significance cannot be evaluated from available data.

No active mining claims, mineral extraction operations, or known commercially valuable mineral resources exist within or adjacent to the Adams Pond property. The soils within The Project Area — primarily Lodo, Maymen, and Millsholm Loams — contain no economic mineral value and are not suitable for commercial aggregate production. The area's steep terrain and land use designation further preclude extractive use.

Regulatory Framework

The management and protection of mineral resources are governed by several state and local regulations, including:

- **Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) of 1975 (Public Resources Code §§2710–2796):**
Requires identification and conservation of significant mineral resource areas (MRZs) and regulation of surface mining operations.

- **California Geological Survey (CGS) Mineral Resource Zone (MRZ) System:**
Classifies lands based on the likelihood of significant mineral deposits.
- **Tehama County General Plan (2009) – Economic Development and Open Space Elements:**
Recognizes the importance of conserving mineral resources while maintaining compatibility with environmental and land use objectives. The Plan designates mineral resource areas primarily along the **Sacramento River and Highway 99 corridor**, not in the western foothills.
 - **Open Space 8.1:** The County shall require that development of natural gas and mineral resources be designed and conducted in a manner that minimizes incompatibility with nearby and adjacent land uses and minimizes impacts to local resident roadways, services, and facilities.
 - **Economic Development Policy 7.1:** The County shall continue to preserve Tehama County’s natural resources including: agriculture, timberlands, water and water quality, wildlife resources, minerals, natural resource lands, recreation lands, scenic highways, and historic and archaeological resources. The protection of natural resources is of the utmost importance and promoting business expansion, retention, and recruitment should complement and enhance the natural resources while reducing negative impacts.
- **Tehama County Zoning Ordinance (Title 17):**
Mining and mineral extraction are allowed only within specific zoning districts under use permit, none of which apply to the Adams Pond site.

Impact Analysis

a. Loss of Availability of Known Mineral Resources

No known mineral resource extraction sites or valuable mineral deposits have been identified within or adjacent to the Project Site. The CGS and Tehama County General Plan do not designate this area as containing regionally significant mineral resources.

The Project involves restoration and sediment removal only — no excavation or grading for mineral recovery purposes — and will not preclude or alter the availability of any mineral deposits.

Finding: No impact.

b. Loss of Locally Important Mineral Resource Recovery Sites

The Project is located in a non-mineral resource area and is not identified in any County or State mapping as a mineral recovery site. The surrounding lands are primarily managed for open space, grazing, and watershed protection.

The Project will not introduce land uses that would restrict future mineral extraction where it is otherwise permitted.

Finding: No impact.

XIV. NOISE

NOISE	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project result in:				
a. Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the Project <u>in excess of</u> standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Generation of excessive <u>groundborne</u> vibration or <u>groundborne</u> 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 landscape surrounding the Project consists of undeveloped foothill pine and oak woodlands, chaparral, and annual grassland with scattered private ranch lands and no residential or commercial development in the immediate vicinity. The Project Site is accessed by private ranch roads, with the nearest residence located more than one mile from the pond.

The ambient noise environment with the Project Area is characterized primarily by natural sounds such as wind in vegetation, birds, and occasional vehicle or agricultural equipment activity. Existing background noise levels are very low, typically ranging from 30 to 40 dBA (Leq), which is consistent with rural open space environments.

Regulatory Framework

Noise generation is regulated under the following authorities:

- **California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA):** Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines identifies criteria for evaluating significant noise impacts.
- Tehama County General Plan – Noise Element (2009):
 - Establishes 50 dBA Leq (daytime) and 45 dBA Leq (nighttime) as acceptable outdoor thresholds for noise-sensitive land uses (residential).

- Establishes acceptable noise exposure limits for various land uses and requires the control of construction noise through BMPs.
 - Noise Policy 2.4: The County shall restrict construction activities to the hours as determined in the Countywide Noise Control Ordinance, if such an Ordinance is adopted.
- **Tehama County's Noise Control Ordinance (17.77.10):** The General Rule states that it is unlawful to make noise that disturbs neighborhood peace or annoys a reasonable person. The only construction related rule is related to construction within 1,000 feet of a residential area.
- **California Code of Regulations, Title 8 (Cal/OSHA):** Establishes occupational noise exposure limits to protect workers from hearing loss.
- **Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Construction Noise Assessment Guidance (2006):** Provides reference noise levels for construction equipment and distance-based attenuation models.

Impact Analysis

a. Generation of Substantial Temporary or Permanent in Ambient Noise Levels

There will be an increase in ambient noise during construction. However, the Project is in a remote area with the nearest home located more than 1 mile away from the Project. There are no schools, hospitals, residences, or other sensitive receptors within the Project Area. Ambient noise levels will return to normal upon completion of construction.

i. Construction Noise

Short-term noise generation will occur during sediment removal, grading, and haul activities. Equipment such as excavators, dozers, haul trucks, and water trucks will generate noise levels typical of medium-scale construction, ranging from 75 to 85 dBA at 50 feet from the source. These noise levels will diminish with distance according to standard attenuation (approximately 6 dBA reduction per doubling of distance).

Given that the nearest occupied structure is more than one mile away, noise levels at any residence would attenuate to below 40 dBA, which is indistinguishable from background rural noise. Additionally, all work will occur during daytime hours (between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.) to comply with Tehama County noise control policies. Therefore, construction noise impacts will be temporary, localized, and less than significant.

ii. Operational Noise

Following construction, the Project will not include permanent machinery, traffic increases, or other noise-generating activities. Occasional site maintenance (e.g., vegetation monitoring or sediment inspection) will involve only light vehicle use and hand tools, similar to noise levels currently experienced on site. The Project will result in no impact from operational noise after work is complete.

Finding: Less than significant impact.

b. Groundborne Vibration

Construction equipment such as dozers and trucks may produce minor vibration; however, no pile driving, blasting, or compaction with high-intensity rollers is proposed. Because the nearest structure is over one mile away, no perceptible vibration impacts will occur.

Finding: No Impact.

c. Airport Noise

The Project Site is not located within an airport land use plan area and is more than 20 miles from the Red Bluff Municipal Airport. There are no private airstrips in the immediate vicinity. Therefore, no airport-related noise exposure will occur.

Finding: No Impact.

XV. POPULATION AND HOUSING

POPULATION AND HOUSING	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes or 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

The Project Site is situated on private land used for rangeland and watershed management. The nearest rural residences are located more than one mile from the Project Limits, and there are no permanent dwellings, employee housing, or occupied structures on or adjacent to the site.

Tehama County's overall population growth remains modest, with the majority of housing and development concentrated near Red Bluff, Corning, and Los Molinos. The Project Area lies entirely outside any urban growth boundary, community plan area, or city limits.

The Project is a short-term resource restoration project, not a development or infrastructure expansion project, and therefore the Project will not contribute to population or housing changes.

Regulatory Framework

The following state and local plans and policies provide context for population and housing considerations:

- **California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Appendix G:**
Requires evaluation of whether a project would induce population growth or displace housing or people.
- **Tehama County General Plan (2009):**
- **Tehama County Zoning Ordinance (Title 17):**
Designates the Project Area as **AG-1 - Agricultural**, which allows natural resource conservation and watershed management but prohibits residential development without discretionary approval.

Impact Analysis

a. Population Growth Inducement

The Project will not construct housing, extend utilities, or establish infrastructure that could support new population or development. It involves temporary restoration activities focused on removing sediment, stabilizing soils, and re-establishing aquatic and riparian habitat within the existing pond footprint.

The Project is consistent with the Tehama County General Plan and Housing Element policies that promote the preservation of open space and direct growth toward established urban centers. The Project will not conflict with adopted land use or housing policies and will help protect natural resources that support the county's long-term sustainability goals.

Because the Project will not improve public access, expand transportation networks, or provide new services or employment opportunities beyond short-term construction jobs, it will not induce direct or indirect population growth in Tehama County or the surrounding region.

Finding: No impact.

b. Displacement of Housing or People

There are no housing units or residential structures within or adjacent to the Project Area. The site has historically been used for grazing and watershed management, with no existing or planned housing.

Construction will not displace any individuals or residences, nor will it necessitate construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

Finding: No impact.

XVI. PUBLIC SERVICES

PUBLIC SERVICES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. 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, <u>in order to</u> maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
Fire Protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
Police Protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Schools?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Parks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Other Public Facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Environmental Setting

The Project Site lies on private property surrounded by undeveloped rangeland, consisting primarily of rolling foothill pine and oak woodlands, chaparral, and annual grassland, interspersed with seasonal drainages and ranch roads. There are no residential developments, schools, or public facilities within the immediate project vicinity.

Public services in this region are limited due to its low population density. Relevant service providers include:

- **Fire Protection:** *California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)* – Tehama-Glenn Unit, serving State Responsibility Areas (SRAs), including the Project Site.
- **Law Enforcement:** *Tehama County Sheriff's Office*, providing general law enforcement and emergency response.

- **Schools:** The nearest public schools are located in Red Bluff, over 25 miles east of the site.
- **Parks and Recreation:** No public parks, recreation facilities, or managed open space lands are located near the Project Site.
- **Other Services:** Road maintenance and emergency medical services are provided by Tehama County and regional response agencies.

Because the Adams Pond site is uninhabited and the Project does not involve new development or occupation, there is no demand for new or expanded public services.

Regulatory Framework

The following local and state frameworks guide the provision of public services in Tehama County:

- **Tehama County General Plan (2009):**
 - *Public Services and Facilities Element:* Seeks to provide adequate and efficient public services in areas planned for growth while protecting open space and agricultural lands.
 - *Safety Element:* Promotes coordination with CAL FIRE, law enforcement, and emergency responders to minimize fire hazards and ensure adequate access for emergency vehicles.
- **California Fire Code (Title 24, Part 9):**
Establishes standards for fire prevention, access, and emergency response during construction activities.
- **California Health and Safety Code §7050 et seq.:**
Requires proper handling of any hazardous materials, waste, or potential emergencies that could involve public agencies.

Impact Analysis

a. Fire Protection Services

The Project Site is located within a SRA managed by CAL FIRE and subject to CAL FIRE's fire prevention and response standards. Construction activities — including excavation, hauling, and grading — will occur during the dry season and will use heavy equipment that could pose a minor fire ignition risk.

However, fire prevention and emergency response BMPs will be implemented (e.g., spark arresters, extinguishers, cleared staging areas), and the Project will coordinate with CAL FIRE's local fire prevention requirements.

The restoration of the Adams Pond will restore the water supply used for fire suppression.

No new structures, residential development, or increased fire protection demand will occur.

Finding: Less than significant impact.

b. Police Protection Services

The Tehama County Sheriff's Office provides law enforcement and patrol services throughout unincorporated areas. The Project will not introduce new population, infrastructure, or activities requiring additional policing. Construction is temporary and limited in scale, and all work will occur on private land under RCDTC supervision.

Finding: No impact.

c. Schools

The Project will not generate new housing or population and therefore will not increase school enrollment or require expansion of educational facilities.

Finding: No impact.

d. Parks and Recreation

The Project will not result in population growth or increased demand for recreational facilities. The Project Area is private property and not open to public access; therefore, there will be no impact on park or recreation services.

Finding: No impact.

e. Other Public Facilities

The Project does not involve permanent occupation, new roadways, or water/sewer infrastructure. Consequently, it will not require new or expanded county, emergency, or utility services. Restoration activities are self-contained and supported by mobile equipment and on-site facilities.

Finding: No impact.

XVII. RECREATION

RECREATION	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant <u>With</u> Mitigation	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

The Project Site is accessed via private ranch roads and is not open to the public.

The surrounding area is composed of foothill pine and oak woodland, chaparral, and annual grassland, with limited rural residences and no public recreational access or recreational infrastructure. There are no public trails, parks, or designated recreational areas within or adjacent to the Project Limits.

Publicly accessible recreational opportunities are located within the region such as:

- Mendocino National Forest (approximately 5 miles west),
- Lassen National Forest (approximately 20 miles northeast),
- Whiskeytown National Recreation Area (approximately 35 miles northwest), and
- Tehama Wildlife Area and Sacramento River recreation sites (east of Red Bluff).

The Project Limits are privately owned and used for watershed management and rangeland activities, not recreation.

Regulatory Framework

- **Tehama County General Plan (2009) – Parks and Recreation Element:**
Encourages enhancement of recreational opportunities within incorporated areas and conservation of open spaces for passive recreation. However, private lands such as the Adams Pond site are not designated for recreational use or public access.
- **California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Appendix G:**
Requires analysis of potential effects on public recreational facilities or opportunities.

- **California Public Resources Code §21083 and §21083.1:**
Requires evaluation of physical effects on existing recreational facilities and increased demand for new ones.

Impact Analysis

a. Use of Existing Recreational Facilities

The Adams Pond project will not generate new population, residential development, or visitor traffic that could increase the use of nearby recreational facilities. The site is not publicly accessible and will remain private property following restoration.

Project activities will not attract visitors or recreational users, nor will they alter regional access to public lands. The Project is not a residential or commercial development project. Therefore, the Project will not increase demand for existing recreational resources.

Finding: No impact.

b. Construction or Expansion of Recreational Facilities

The Project involves sediment removal, pond restoration, and native revegetation, not the construction or improvement of recreational facilities. No trails, picnic areas, or public amenities will be developed. The site will continue to function as a natural, privately managed agricultural pond.

Finding: No impact.

XVIII. TRANSPORTATION

TRANSPORTATION	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant <u>With</u> Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c. Substantially increase hazards due 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 Limits are accessed by private ranch and fire access roads that connect to State Route (SR) 36 to the north and SR 162 to the south, both low-volume county-maintained roads. These roads primarily support agricultural, ranching, and resource management uses and experience minimal daily traffic volumes.

There are no public transportation routes, bike paths, or pedestrian facilities near the site. Roadways are narrow, unpaved, and used seasonally. The site is not located within or near an incorporated community, urban growth area, or roadway network identified in the Tehama County General Plan Circulation Element (2009).

The proposed project consists of short-term sediment removal and restoration activities using heavy equipment and haul trucks for approximately 4–5 weeks (60 days) during the dry season. The sediment removal activities may occur over the course of 2-3 seasons depending on the availability of funds. No permanent facilities or operational traffic will result from the Project.

Regulatory Framework

Transportation and circulation in Tehama County are governed by the following regulations and plans:

- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (2020 Update – SB 743):**
 Requires analysis of transportation impacts based on **Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)** rather than Level of Service (LOS) for most projects.

- **Tehama County General Plan (2009) – Circulation Element:**
Seeks to maintain safe, efficient rural roadways and ensure that new development does not degrade county road infrastructure or traffic safety.
- **Tehama County Public Works Department:**
Regulates road use, encroachment permits, and haul routes for temporary construction access on county-maintained roads.
- **California Vehicle Code:**
Establishes operational and safety requirements for vehicles, including construction equipment and heavy trucks.

Impact Analysis

a. Conflict with Circulation Plans or Policies

The Project does not involve new development or land use change that would alter existing transportation patterns. Construction traffic will be temporary, low in volume, and limited to local access roads.

Heavy construction equipment will be brought on site and remain on site until construction is complete. Approximately 5–8 haul truck trips per work week and a few light vehicle trips for crew transport per day are anticipated during the 4–5 week construction period. These trips are well within the capacity of rural Tehama County roads and will comply with all county road-use requirements.

The Project does not conflict with the Tehama County General Plan Circulation Element or any adopted transportation plan.

Finding: No impact.

b. Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)

Under **SB 743 (2013)** and **CEQA Guidelines §15064.3**, transportation impacts are evaluated based on VMT rather than roadway capacity.

Because the Project:

- Is temporary and construction-related,
- Does not generate permanent vehicle trips, and
- Does not include residential, commercial, or employment-generating uses,

it is not considered a VMT-generating project. Once construction is complete, no operational trips will occur beyond periodic site monitoring.

Therefore, the Project will not result in an increase in vehicle miles traveled or conflict with applicable VMT thresholds.

Finding: No impact.

c. Hazards Due to Design or Incompatible Uses

The Project will not construct new public roads or modify existing roadway alignments. Temporary use of ranch and county roads will occur under safe operating conditions.

The RCDTC will coordinate with the Tehama County Public Works Department to ensure access and haul routes meet safety standards, and traffic control measures (e.g., warning signs, flagging, speed limits) will be used as needed.

All equipment access routes will be restored to pre-project condition following construction.

Finding: Less than significant impact.

d. Emergency Access

The Project Site is accessible via existing private roads that also serve as fire access routes under CAL FIRE jurisdiction. No permanent structures or road closures will occur. Construction activities will not block or restrict emergency access, and vehicles will be required to maintain unobstructed ingress/egress at all times.

The Project includes a Fire Prevention and Emergency Response Plan to ensure access and communication during construction.

Finding: Less than significant impact.

XIX. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant <u>With</u> Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code § 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:				
i. 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 § 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code § 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	☐	☐	☐	☒

Environmental Setting

The Project lies within the Stinking Creek subwatershed, part of the Cottonwood Creek watershed, an area historically inhabited and utilized by Native American groups including the Nomlaki Central Wintun peoples.

The broader region contains archaeological and ethnographic sites associated with traditional hunting, gathering, and seasonal habitation near riparian corridors. However, the Project Area itself — which consists of a sediment-filled inline reservoir, upland disposal area, and access road — has been heavily disturbed by past construction (1980s pond excavation) and post-2021 McFarland Fire sedimentation.

A records search conducted through the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) found no known Tribal Cultural Resources (TCRs) or archaeological materials within or adjacent to the Project footprint. According to Mountain G Enterprises Inc.'s (MGE) archaeological survey completed on August 19, 2025, there are no cultural resources within the Project Area (Appendix J). MGE determined that the Project would have No Effect on Historic

Properties, in accordance with 36 CFR 800.4(d)(1). Final Section 106 clearance will be completed through the ACOE Permitting Process.

Regulatory Framework

- **Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52; Public Resources Code §§21073, 21074, 21080.3.1–21080.3.2):**
Requires consultation with California Native American Tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with a Project Area if requested by the tribe.
- **Public Resources Code §21074:**
Defines *Tribal Cultural Resources* as either (1) sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, or objects with cultural value to a California Native American Tribe that are included in or eligible for listing on the **California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR)**, or (2) resources determined by the lead agency, in consultation with the tribe, to be significant.
- **Health and Safety Code §7050.5 and PRC §5097.98:**
Establish procedures to protect human remains and require consultation with the **Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC)** and Most Likely Descendant (MLD) if Native American remains are discovered.
- **Tehama County General Plan (2009) – Conservation and Open Space Elements:**
Emphasize protection of cultural and tribal resources and early coordination with tribal governments.

Tribal Consultation (AB 52 Process)

In accordance with AB 52, the RCDTC, as the CEQA Lead Agency, notified Native American tribes that are culturally affiliated with the Project Limits. On September 9, 2025, consultation letters were e-mailed (Appendix J) to the following tribes:

- Nor-Rel-Muk Wintu Nation
- Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians
- Redding Rancheria
- Round Valley Reservation/ Covelo Indian Community
- Winnemem Wintu Tribe
- Wintu Tribe of Northern California

Each tribe was provided a project description, location map, and invitation to consult under AB 52.

The tribes were also emailed a copy of the Notice of Intent, the Project Description and a Project Map on January 15, 2026, with directions on the comment procedures and the comment period (Appendix J). As of the posting of the draft IS/MND on January 15, 2025, no requests for consultation or identification of TCRs have been received. If consultation is initiated prior to project approval, the RCDTC will engage in good-faith discussions to identify and protect any potential TCRs consistent with PRC §21080.3.2.

Impact Analysis

a. Substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, and that is:

i) Listed or eligible for listing

No known or recorded TCRs are present within or near the Adams Pond Project Site. The pond area was constructed in the 1980s and has since undergone multiple sediment deposition events, substantially disturbing native soils. No tribal resources were identified during the CHRIS records search or field survey.

Although the likelihood is low, there remains a possibility that previously undiscovered TCRs could be encountered during ground-disturbing activities. To ensure protection of such resources, the Project will implement discovery and consultation procedures consistent with PRC §§21083.2, 5097.98, and 21074.

If previously unknown TCRs are identified, work will halt, and consultation will occur with the Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians or other appropriate tribes to determine treatment and disposition.

Because no TCRs are known to exist in the Project Area, no direct impact is anticipated.

Finding: Less than significant impact.

ii) Resource Determined by the lead agency to be significant

There are no resources determined to be significant by the RCDTC.

Finding: No Impact.

XX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant <u>With</u> Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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 <u>waste water</u> treatment provider, which serves or may serve the <u>Project</u> that it has adequate capacity to serve the Project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d. Generate solid waste <u>in excess of</u> state or local standards, or <u>in excess of</u> 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

The Project Site is privately owned and surrounded by undeveloped rangeland, consisting primarily of rolling foothill pine and oak woodlands, chaparral, and annual grassland, interspersed with seasonal drainages and ranch roads. There are no public utilities or service infrastructure (water, sewer, power, or waste management) within or adjacent to the Project Limits.

The Project Site is accessed via existing private ranch roads. Power and communications infrastructure do not extend to the property, and all project activities will be self-contained, using temporary construction equipment and mobile facilities.

Regulatory Framework

The following regulations and local plans govern utility management and service provision in Tehama County:

- **California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Appendix G:**
Requires assessment of impacts related to wastewater treatment, water supply, solid waste disposal, and energy systems.
- **California Integrated Waste Management Act (AB 939, Sher, Chapter 1095, Statutes of 1989 as amended [IWMA]):**
Requires solid waste diversion and recycling programs to reduce landfill disposal.
- **Mandatory Commercial Organics Recycling (AB 1826, Chesbro, 2014)**
Requires Businesses to recycle their organic waste.
- **California's Mandatory Commercial Recycling Law (AB 341, Chesbro, Chapter 476, Statutes of 2011)**
Requires a business (includes public entities) that generates **four (4) cubic yards** or more of commercial solid waste per week...to arrange for recycling services. Businesses can take one or any combination of the following in order to reuse, recycle, compost or otherwise divert solid waste from disposal:
 - Self-haul.
 - Subscribe to a hauler(s).
 - Arrange for the pickup of recyclable materials.
 - Subscribe to a recycling service that may include mixed waste processing that yields diversion results comparable to source separation.
- **California Short-Lived Climate Pollutant Reduction (SB 1383, Lara, Chapter 395, Statutes of 2016 [SLCP]):**
Aims to reduce short-lived climate pollutants, primarily methane from landfills, by diverting organic waste (food scraps, yard waste, wood) and recovering edible food, with goals of 75% organic waste reduction by 2025. Failure to comply can result in penalties from your local jurisdiction
- **Tehama County General Plan (2009) – Public Services and Facilities Element:**
Promotes efficient provision of utilities, waste management, and conservation of resources, particularly in rural and open space areas.
- **Tehama County Solid Waste Management Agency:**
Oversees waste reduction and disposal operations countywide.
- **Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Region):**
Regulates wastewater discharges, stormwater, and construction-related runoff under the **Clean Water Act**.

Impact Analysis

a. Relocation or construction of new or expanded systems

The Project will not construct or connect to new energy, telecommunications, or utility infrastructure. All energy used during construction will be limited to diesel fuel for equipment and will not necessitate any upgrades to regional power or fuel distribution systems. Following completion, the Project will not require energy inputs for operation except for the potential need for post construction vegetation and slope management.

The Project will not install new impervious surfaces or alter natural drainage patterns. Temporary disturbance during sediment removal and disposal will be stabilized using BMPs such as erosion control matting, silt fencing, straw wattles, and revegetation.

Post-construction, the Project will improve natural hydrology and stormwater retention by restoring pond capacity and stabilizing upland slopes.

Finding: No impact.

b. Water Supply

Water will be required temporarily for dust suppression and equipment cleaning during the 4–5 week construction period. Water will be sourced from Adams Pond itself or other on-site sources, consistent with County and State regulations. The total water use will be minor and temporary, not affecting regional water availability. No long-term or operational water demand will occur.

Finding: Less than significant impact.

c. Wastewater

Construction activities will generate minimal wastewater, limited to portable restroom use by crew members. Sanitation facilities will be self-contained, regularly serviced, and disposed of at permitted wastewater treatment facilities. No permanent wastewater generation or septic systems are proposed.

Finding: No impact.

d. Solid Waste

California's main solid waste reduction goal, driven by SB 1383, focuses on cutting landfill organic waste by 75% by 2025 (from 2014 levels), to reduce methane emissions and rescue edible food, requiring universal organic waste collection and increased use of recycled organic products by local governments. Beyond organics, California has a long-standing commitment to "Zero Waste," aiming for high diversion rates (like 90%) and reduced per capita waste generation through programs like Pay-As-You-Throw (PYT) and improved recycling of various materials.

Construction will generate a small quantity of solid waste (less than 4 cubic yards), including packaging, general debris, and minor equipment waste. The main waste item generated by the project will be approximately 2,600 linear feet of silt fencing used to protect aquatic habitat and NWPT. Assuming the silt fencing is bundled or rolled for disposal, an estimated 0.7 cubic yards of waste is generated from every 1,000 linear feet of silt fencing and wood stakes.

All waste will be collected, segregated, and hauled to a permitted disposal or recycling facility in Tehama County (e.g., Red Bluff Landfill), which has adequate capacity for regional demand. Solid waste amounts generated by the project will be well below state or local standards and below local infrastructure capacity exceedances. The Project will not impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals.

No hazardous waste or contaminated materials are expected; if any are encountered (e.g., fuel-contaminated soil), they will be handled and disposed of according to Title 22, California Code of Regulations and Tehama County hazardous materials protocols.

Finding: No Impact.

e. Conflict with Statutes and Regulations

The Project will comply with all applicable federal, State of California, and local regulations governing solid waste management and waste reduction.

The Project does not involve permanent facilities, ongoing operations, or long-term waste generation. All solid waste generated during construction, including construction debris, packaging materials, and routine refuse from workers—will be managed on a temporary basis and handled in accordance with applicable regulations.

No solid waste disposal will occur on-site, and no permanent waste management infrastructure is proposed. All waste materials will be removed from the Project Limits following construction. Upon project completion, the restoration site will not generate solid waste requiring ongoing management.

Finding: No impact.

XXI. WILDFIRE

WILDFIRE	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant <u>With</u> Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:				
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 <u>to</u> the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, <u>as a result of</u> runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Environmental Setting

The Project Site lies within a State Responsibility Area (SRA) managed by CAL FIRE for wildfire protection. The surrounding landscape consists of foothill pine and oak woodland, chaparral, and grassland, which are naturally adapted to periodic fire. The area experienced significant wildfire disturbance during the 2021 McFarland Fire, which burned through much of the Stinking Creek watershed, removing vegetative cover and increasing erosion potential.

CAL FIRE's Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) mapping classifies the Project vicinity as a Moderate FHSZ in SRA lands. The area is accessible via existing ranch and forest roads that connect to low-traffic county routes. There are no residences or critical infrastructure within the immediate project vicinity.

The Tehama County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) identifies post-fire restoration and fuel management in the Cottonwood Creek watershed as a priority strategy for reducing future wildfire intensity and improving watershed resilience.

Regulatory Framework

Wildfire prevention and response are governed by the following federal, state, and local plans and regulations:

- **Public Resources Code (PRC) §§ 4291–4299:** Establishes defensible space requirements and fire hazard reduction standards in SRAs.
- **California Fire Code (Title 24, Part 9):** Addresses construction safety, spark arresters, and equipment-related fire prevention.
- **Tehama County General Plan – Safety Element (2009):** Identifies wildfire risk reduction policies emphasizing defensible space, fuel management, and coordination with CAL FIRE.
- **CAL FIRE Fire Hazard Severity Zones (2022):** Provides mapping and risk designations that guide fuel reduction and land management.
- **Tehama County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP):** Establishes local priorities for wildfire mitigation, emergency access, and post-fire recovery.

Impact Analysis

a. Emergency Access and Evacuation

The Project will utilize existing ranch and forest access roads for equipment mobilization. No new public roads or permanent facilities are proposed.

Because work will occur during the dry-season window (August–October) under CAL FIRE and Tehama County fire restrictions, all construction vehicles and crews will have clear evacuation routes and communication with emergency services.

The Project does not interfere with any emergency response or evacuation routes, and coordination with CAL FIRE will ensure compliance with local fire access standards.

Finding: Less than significant impact.

b. Wildfire Ignition Risk During Construction

Heavy equipment (excavators, dozers, trucks) poses a potential ignition source through heat, sparks, or fuel handling. However, the Project incorporates strict fire prevention BMPs, including:

- Conducting work only during approved fire-safe weather conditions;
- Equipping all vehicles and heavy machinery with operational spark arresters and fire extinguishers;
- Staging and refueling equipment in cleared, non-vegetated areas at least 100 feet from vegetation or aquatic features;
- Maintaining on-site water trucks available for dust suppression and emergency fire response; and
- Complying with all Red Flag Warning restrictions and CAL FIRE daily fire safety advisories.

Given these controls, the likelihood of wildfire ignition during construction is very low, and the impact is less than significant.

Finding: Less than significant impact.

c. Post-Project Conditions and Long-Term Fire Risk

The Project will reduce wildfire risk over the long term by removing excess wood and restoring vegetation structure and hydrologic function in an area previously degraded by fire and erosion. The re-establishment of native riparian and upland plant communities will increase soil moisture retention, stabilize sediment, and promote more resilient fuel conditions. Thus, the Project will enhance regional wildfire resilience rather than exacerbate wildfire hazards.

Finding: Less than significant - Beneficial.

d. Post-Fire Erosion and Runoff

The Project's primary purpose — sediment removal and upland stabilization — directly mitigates post-fire erosion and runoff impacts. By restoring pond capacity and reestablishing vegetation on disposal and temporary haul road areas, the Project will eliminate the threat of future sediment delivery to downstream waterways and improve watershed hydrologic stability following future wildfires.

Finding: Less than significant - Beneficial.

XXII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant <u>With</u> Mitigation	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 will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Regulatory Context

Under CEQA Guidelines §15065, a lead agency must make specific findings regarding a project's potential to significantly affect the environment. These "Mandatory Findings of Significance" ensure that all environmental topics have been evaluated comprehensively and that appropriate mitigation has been identified where necessary.

A project may have a significant effect on the environment if it:

1. Has the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce habitat for fish or wildlife species, or eliminate important examples of California's natural heritage;
2. Has the potential to achieve short-term environmental goals to the disadvantage of long-term environmental goals;
3. Has potential cumulative impacts that are considerable when viewed in connection with other past, present, or probable future projects; or
4. Will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly.

(a) Potential to Degrade the Quality of the Environment

The Project will not substantially degrade the quality of the environment. On the contrary, it is specifically designed to restore degraded aquatic habitat, improve watershed function, and stabilize upland soils following post-fire sedimentation from the 2021 McFarland Fire.

Short-term construction impacts — including temporary disturbance to soils, vegetation, and biological resources — have been evaluated and determined to be less than significant with implementation of standard BMPs and mitigation measures.

There are no fish or wildlife species considered endangered or threatened under the ESA located within the Project Limits that could be impacted by the project. Northwestern Pond Turtle (a candidate threatened species under the federal ESA and CA special concern species), and other special status species have the potential of being significantly impacted during construction. Mitigation measures and BMPs have been adopted to avoid and minimize construction related impacts to special status wildlife and rare plants. No long-term impacts to biological resources are anticipated to occur.

Future erosion, sedimentation and water quality impacts associated with the loss of post construction slopes may occur. Such impacts will be minimized by ensuring filled areas and recontoured slopes are properly compacted and revegetated. Permanent erosion controls will be installed on slopes and along the reconstructed drainage to ensure run-off is controlled and to allow vegetation to take hold. A post construction monitoring plan will ensure the site is inspected during and after the rainy season and that erosion and sedimentation issues are corrected upon discovery.

There is a potential to impact Adams Pond when refueling or storing hazardous materials at Staging Area 2. There is also a potential that the Project activities could initiate a fire. With standard BMPs, regulatory compliance, and implementation of the identified mitigation measures, impacts are less than significant with measures in place.

With mitigation incorporated, no project-related activities will substantially degrade the environment or reduce habitat quality. Instead, the Project will provide a long-term ecological benefit by restoring hydrologic capacity, improving aquatic habitat, and enhancing the resilience of the Stinking Creek watershed.

Finding: Less than significant impact with Mitigation Incorporated.

(b) Potential for Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts were evaluated across all resource areas. The **Adams Pond Restoration Project** is a **standalone restoration effort** that complements ongoing watershed and post-fire recovery projects in western Tehama County.

- The Project will not contribute to cumulative increases in noise, air pollution, or traffic due to its short duration and remote location.
- Restoration of the sediment-impacted pond and riparian areas will improve watershed stability and downstream water quality, contributing **positively to regional environmental goals**.

- No cumulative biological, hydrologic, or land use conflicts have been identified, and no significant cumulative impacts are expected when viewed in context with other similar restoration projects.

Because the Project is **restorative in purpose and limited in scope**, it will **not result in cumulatively considerable impacts** on the environment, either independently or in conjunction with other actions.

Finding: Less than significant impacts.

(c) Potential to Cause Substantial Adverse Effects on Human Beings, Directly or Indirectly

The Project will not cause substantial adverse effects on human beings.

- **Air Quality and Noise:** Construction emissions and equipment noise will be temporary, minor, and well below regulatory thresholds. The nearest residence is over one mile away, ensuring no exposure of people to adverse air or noise levels.
- **Hazards and Wildfire:** All hazardous materials will be managed under approved safety and spill prevention protocols. Wildfire risk will be reduced through vegetation management, equipment restrictions, and CAL FIRE coordination.
- **Public Health and Safety:** The Project will stabilize soils, reduce erosion and the potential for downstream sedimentation, improve water quality, and restore pre-fire water storage capacity for fire suppression — all contributing to public environmental health and safety.

There are no activities associated with this project that would result in permanent or substantial adverse effects on people.

Finding: Less than significant impact.

XXIII. SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONCLUSIONS

The Initial Study determined that the Adams Pond Restoration Project will not result in any significant and unavoidable environmental impacts. All potential impacts are either *less than significant* or *less than significant with mitigation incorporated*.

Implementation of the identified mitigation measures and BMPs will ensure that all resource areas remain below the CEQA significance thresholds.

Furthermore, the Project supports key objectives of the Tehama County General Plan and State environmental policies, including:

- Restoration of aquatic habitats;
- Improvement of water quality and watershed resilience;
- Reduction of post-fire sedimentation; and
- Enhancement of climate and drought resilience.

Overall, the Project will result in **long-term beneficial environmental outcomes** that improve the ecological integrity of the Cottonwood Creek watershed, restore aquatic habitat essential for the existing Northwestern Pond Turtle population as well as other wildlife, and support sustainable land management in Tehama County.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis presented in this Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND), the Tehama County Resource Conservation District (RCDTC), as Lead Agency under CEQA, finds that:

1. All potential environmental impacts can be mitigated to a **less-than-significant level**;
2. The Project will not result in significant cumulative or irreversible environmental effects; and
3. The Project will **improve environmental quality** and support long-term ecological restoration goals.

Therefore, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §§15070–15075, the RCDTC concludes that adoption of a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) is appropriate for the Adams Pond Restoration Project.

Certification

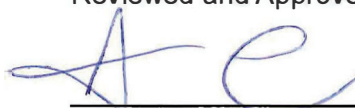
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Date: 3-4-2026

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