



County of Calaveras Department of Planning

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Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration

Review Period: January 30, 2026, through March 2, 2026

Initial Study ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

For: SAC Wireless for Verizon Wireless/Pinnacle Cellular Inc.
Administrative Use Permit 2023-052
Assessor's Parcel No. 048-021-092

1. **Project Title** 2023-052 Administrative Use Permit for SAC Wireless for Verizon Wireless/Pinnacle Cellular Inc.
2. **Lead Agency Name and Address** Calaveras County Planning Department
891 Mountain Ranch Road
San Andreas, CA 95249
3. **Contact Person and Phone Number** Bret Sampson, (209) 754-2850
4. **Project Location** 8094 Southworth Road, Valley Springs, CA
APN 048-021-092
Section 35, T04N, R09E (See **Figures 1, 2, and 3**)
5. **Project Sponsor’s Name and Address** SAC Wireless for Verizon Wireless/
Pinnacle Cellular Inc.
333 University Ave, Suite 200
Sacramento, CA 95825
6. **General Plan Designation** Rural Transition B (RTB)
7. **Zoning** Residential Agriculture (RA)
8. **Project Description** An application has been received by the Calaveras County Planning Department requesting an Administrative Use Permit (AUP) to install a new unmanned wireless telecommunications tower (monopole) and supporting ground equipment. The request includes installation of a new 130-foot (ft.) stealth mono-Oak with nine (9) panel antennas, six (6) Radio Units, and three (3) equipment cabinets, one of which will contain a battery backup for any future power failures. All facility equipment will be contained within a 30 ft. by 30 ft. fenced lease area surrounded by 8 ft., chain link fence, located approximately 61 ft. from the nearest property boundary.
9. **Surrounding Land Uses and Setting**

Location	General Plan Designation	Zoning	Land Use
North	Rural Transition B	Residential Agriculture	Residential
South	Resource Production	Agriculture Preserve	Residential, vacant
East	Rural Transition B, Resource Production	Residential Agriculture, Rural Residential, Agriculture Preserve	Residential
West	Rural Transition B	Residential Agriculture	Residential, Agriculture

10. Other public agencies whose approval is required: **NONE**

11. Have California Native American Tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code §21080.3.1? **NO**

If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.? **NO.**

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

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.

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural and Forestry Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geology/Soils | <input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazards & Hazardous Materials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology/Water Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use / Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noise | <input type="checkbox"/> Population / Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal Cultural Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Service Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildfire | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance |

DETERMINATION (To be completed by Lead Agency):

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 original scope of the proposed project **COULD** have had a potentially significant effect on the environment, there **WILL NOT** be a significant effect because revisions/mitigations to the project have been made by or agreed to by the applicant. A **MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.

I find that the proposed project **MAY** have a potentially significant effect on the environment and an **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** or its functional equivalent will be prepared.

I find that the proposed project **MAY** have a potentially significant impact on the environment. However, at least one impact has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document, pursuant to applicable legal standards, and has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis, as described in the report's attachments. An **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required, but it must analyze only the impacts not sufficiently addressed in previous documents.

I find that, although the proposed project could have had a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects have been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or Negative Declaration, pursuant to applicable standards, and have been avoided or mitigated, pursuant to an earlier EIR, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, all impacts have been avoided or mitigated to a less-than-significant level and no further action is required.



Bret Sampson
Planning Director

_____ 1/30/2026 _____
Date

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

1. A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
2. All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
3. Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
4. "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level (mitigation measures from "Earlier Analyses," as described in (5) below, may be cross-referenced).
5. Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
 - a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
 - b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
 - c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.
6. Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
7. Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
8. This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project's environmental effects in whatever format is selected.
9. The explanation of each issue should identify:
 - a) the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
 - b) the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance

Environmental Impact Analysis

This Initial Study has been prepared for Administrative Use Permit 2023-052 – SAC Wireless for Verizon Wireless/Pinnacle Cellular Inc. which proposes to install a new unmanned wireless telecommunications tower (monopole) and supporting ground equipment. The request includes installation of a new 130-foot (ft.) stealth mono-Oak with nine (9) panel antennas, six (6) Radio Units, and three (3) equipment cabinets, one of which will contain a battery backup for any future power failures. All facility equipment will be contained within a 30 ft. by 30 ft. fenced lease area surrounded by 8 ft., chain link fence, located approximately 61 ft. from the nearest property boundary. Multiple trenches will be used for the installation of the electrical and fiber utility lines. One option will be to trench approximately 610 ft. to the North and then to the East for power. The other option will be to trench approximately 260 ft. to the existing power pole on the property, install a new meter, and use the existing overhead power poles going North approximately 290 ft. The fiber route will require approximately 1,430ft of boring South to the Southernmost property line that front Southworth Road (See **Figures 4-7** for site improvements).

The Project site is 20.06 acres, and currently developed with a single-family residence and accessory structures. The parcel currently takes access from Southworth Road, which is a county-maintained road. An existing dirt road provides access to the site and will require improvements.

The Project site has a land use designation of Rural Transition B and is zoned Residential Agriculture (RA). The RA zone is intended to be a district in which an equal emphasis is assigned to residential and agricultural uses. The RA zone is established to provide lands for small-scale and personal-scale farming and ranching, as well as larger residential parcels. Telecommunications facilities are allowed in the Residential Agriculture (RA) zone with approval of an Administrative Use Permit (AUP).

The purpose of an AUP is to allow uses that are generally low impact to the community and environment. The planning director may impose requirements and conditions with respect to location, siting, construction, maintenance, operation, duration, and overall development as deemed reasonable and necessary for the protection of the public health, safety, and general welfare, and must make the findings in Section 17.83.020 in the Calaveras County Code.

The proposed project will have ***less than significant impact with Mitigation Measures*** incorporated into the construction of the project (See Section IV, Biological Resources, for required Mitigation Measures).

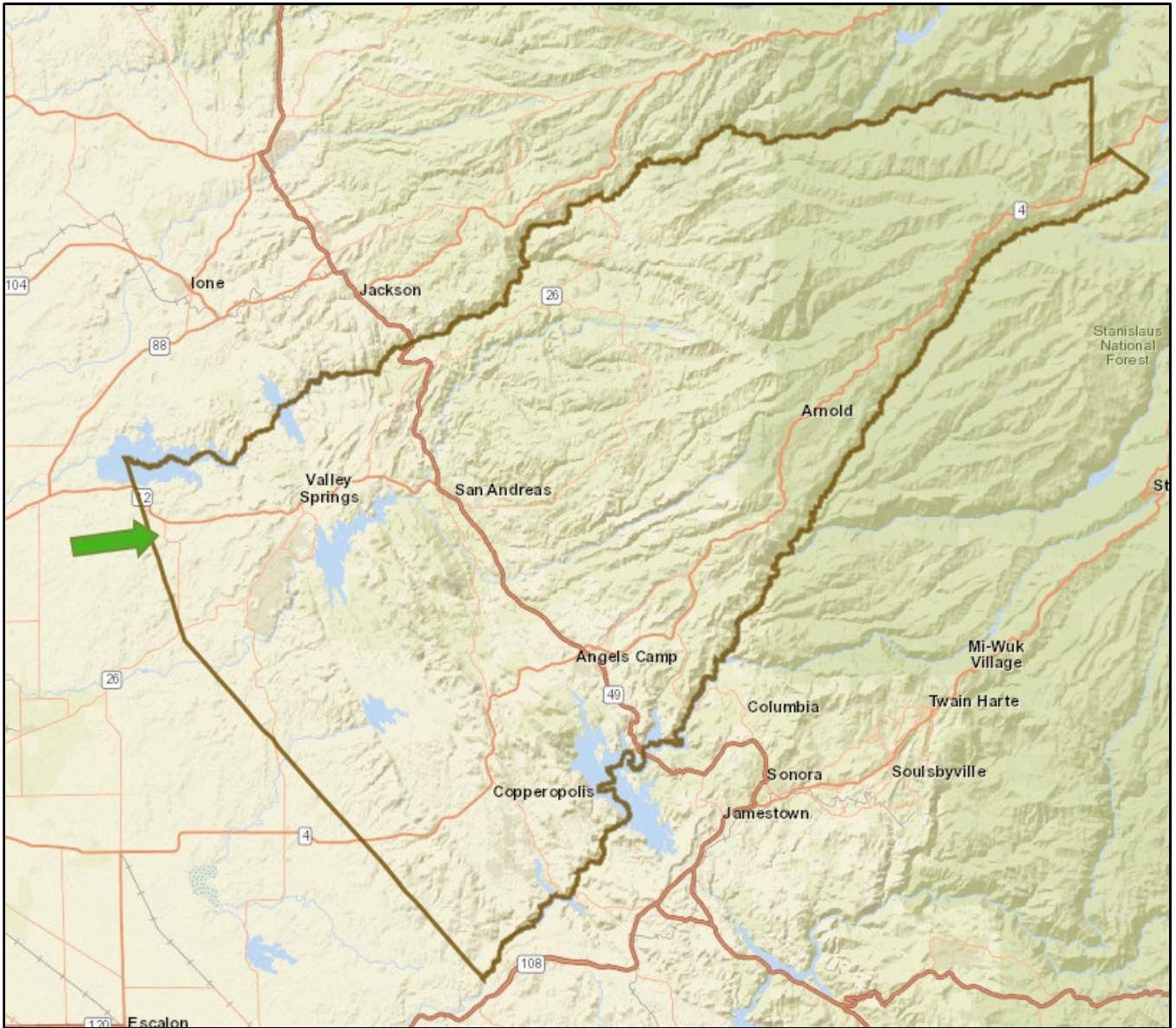


Figure 1 – Project Location in Calaveras County



Figure 2 – Location in Wallace

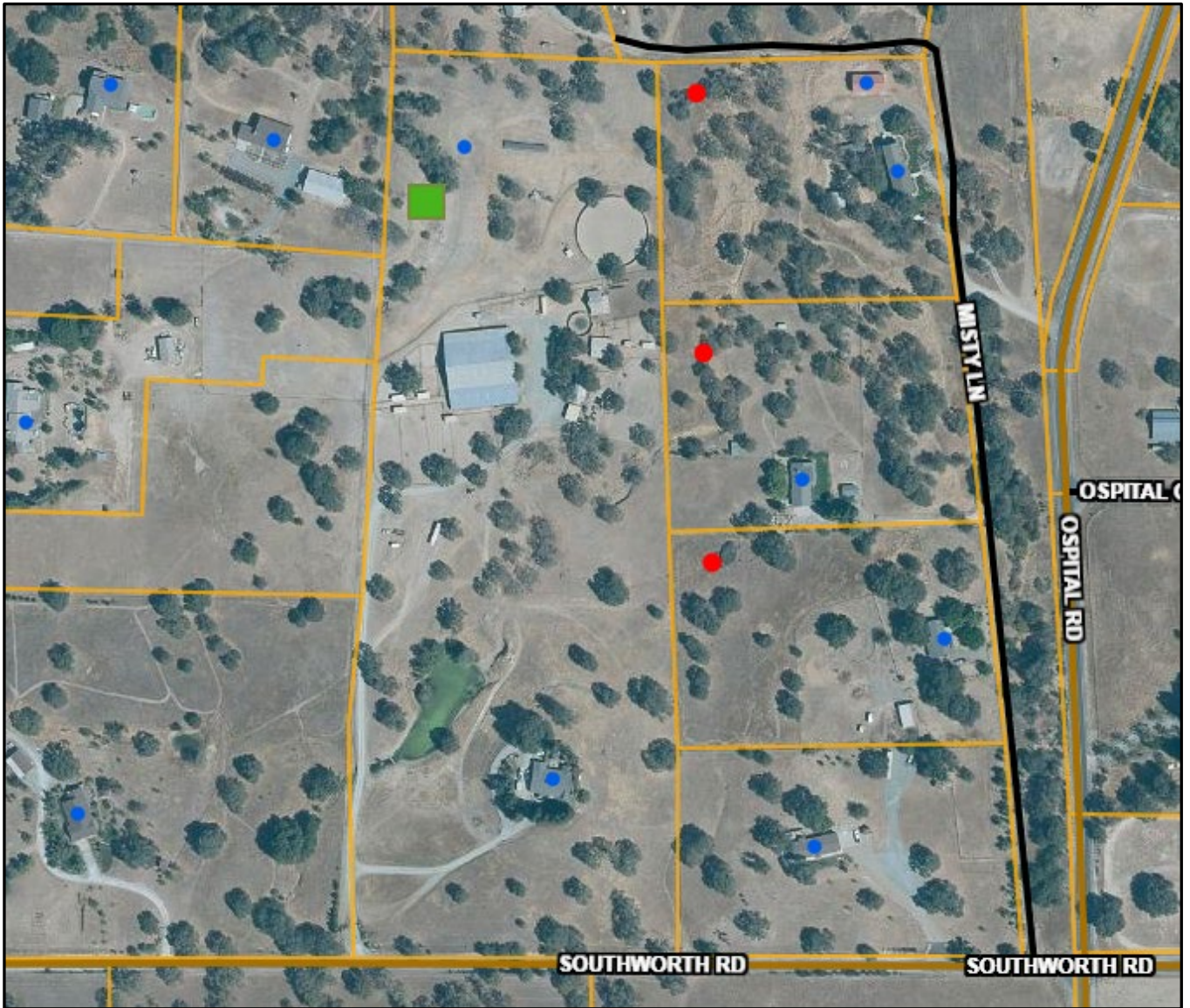


Figure 3 – Aerial Photo with Approximate Location of Proposed Tower (Parcel boundary lines shown are approximate)

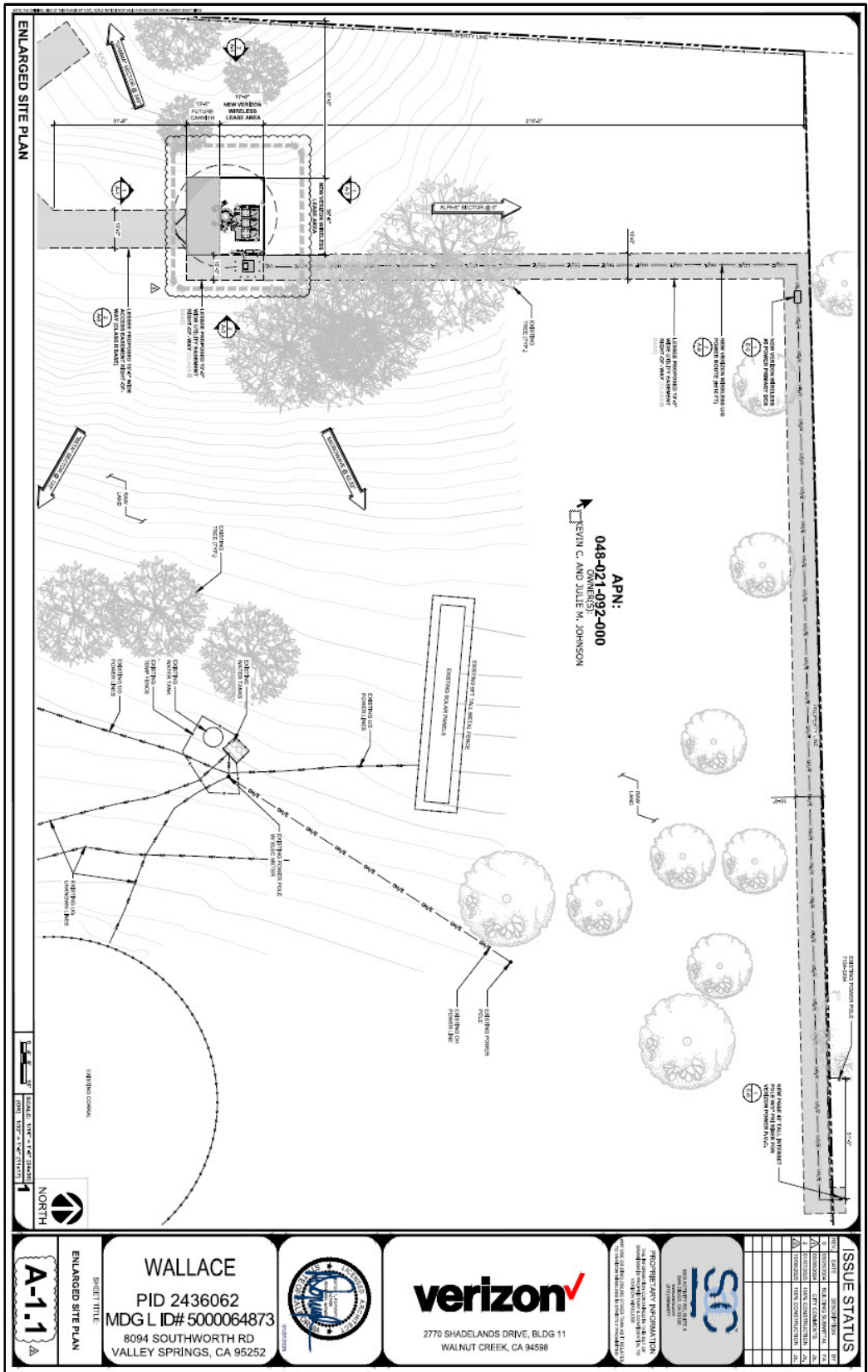


Figure 5 – Telecommunications Facility Site Development Plan



Figure 8 – Photo Simulation from Southworth



Figure 9 – Photo Simulation from Maintenance Road



Figure 10 – Photo Simulation of yard

I. AESTHETICS

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
Except as provided in Public Resources Code §21099, would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage points). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

a&c) **Less Than Significant Impact** – A scenic vista is defined as an area that is designated, signed, and accessible to the public for the express purposes of viewing and sightseeing. The County General Plan’s Conservation and Open Space Element notes that the County’s scenic resources are some of its most valued assets and include forests, rolling hills, ranches, agricultural land, historic landscapes, oak woodlands, rock formations and other unique topographical features, river corridors, lakes, and streams. The Project site located off of Southworth Road in Wallace on a 20-acre parcel developed with a single-family residence. The surrounding parcels range from 5 to 50 acres in size most of which are developed with single-family dwellings. The Project site is not designated as a scenic vista by the County General Plan, nor does it contain any unique or distinguishing features that would qualify the site for designation as a scenic vista. The Project site is situated on a localized hill with a cluster of native oak trees surrounding it. Due to this, the proposed tower has been designed to appear as an oak tree to blend into the surrounding environment (See **Figure 7**). By disguising the tower as an oak tree and thus blend in more with surrounding vegetation, the proposed project will have a less than significant impact on scenic resources.

Furthermore, submitted photo simulations (**Figures 8-10**) indicate that the proposed tower appears to blend in with the existing landscape. As depicted on the simulation photos, there will be a less than significant impact to the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings.

- b) **No Impact** – The Project site is not located within view of a state scenic highway. The nearest officially designated State Scenic Highway is the portion of State Route 4 (SR 4) known as Ebbetts Pass National Scenic Byway, located approximately 27 miles East of the Project site (Caltrans, 2022). As the Project site is not visible from SR 4, or any other state scenic highways, no impact would occur to scenic resources within a State Scenic Highway.

- d) **No Impact** – Pursuant to Title 47 Section 17.7 and 17.21 of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) code of regulations, telecommunication towers that are less than 200 feet in height above the ground do not require FAA notification and therefore no lighting nor painting is required. The proposed tower is 130 feet high, with antennas to be attached at 127 ft. All new lighting will adhere to Calaveras County Code 17.36.060(C) which states that exterior lighting shall be shielded and directed in such a manner that it does not shine directly into adjoining residences. With the adherence to outdoor lighting regulations at the time of development, the proposed project would not create new sources of substantial lighting or glare that would generate a significant impact.

II. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

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

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
Would the project:				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

(as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?

- | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 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? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

a-e) **No Impact** – According to the County’s General Plan, the Project site is not located on land classified as high capability agriculture, and there are no agricultural activities occurring within the Project site. No prime farmland will be converted as a result of the proposed project. The Project site is not restricted by a Williamson Act contract. The County’s General Plan and Zoning Ordinance does not consider the Project site to be high capability timberland or a timber production zone, therefore, the proposed project would not result in loss or conversion of forest land to a non-forest use.

The California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program has published map data for Calaveras as of 2022. The California Important Farmland Finder tool was used to identify land surrounding the Project site. This Project site is categorized as “Other Land”, defined as “Land not included in any other mapping category. Common examples include low density rural developments; brush, timber, wetland, and riparian areas not suitable for livestock grazing; confined livestock, poultry or aquaculture facilities; strip mines, borrow pits; and water bodies smaller than forty acres. Vacant and nonagricultural land surrounded on all sides by urban development and greater than 40 acres is mapped as Other Land.”. The surrounding area, including the Project site, is not a prime farmland, unique farmland, or farmland of Statewide importance.

The proposed project does not involve the removal of any trees and will be constructed on private property not considered forest land. The proposed project will not result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. No impacts regarding Agriculture and Forestry Resources shall occur with implementation of the proposed project.

III. AIR QUALITY

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations.

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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?

a) **No Impact** – Calaveras County is part of the Mountain Counties Air Basin (MCAB). Air quality within the County is under the jurisdiction of the Calaveras County Air Pollution Control District (CCAPCD). CCAPCD manages the County’s air quality through education and enforcement of CCAPCD rules and California Air Resources Board (CARB) measures and regulations. The subject parcel is approximately 20 acres in size and is surrounded by similarly sized properties. Emissions that could be created by the proposed project would result not from the operation of the telecommunications tower but from temporary impacts during construction of the cell tower. These temporary construction activities would not generate significant volumes of air quality emissions and would be required to comply with all applicable CCAPCD requirements. Therefore, the proposed project will not conflict with or obstruct applicable air quality plans.

b) **Less Than Significant Impact** – The County has been classified as a non-attainment area for the State and Federal ozone standards (1-hour and 8-hour) and Particulate Matter standards (PM2.5 and PM10). An area is designated in attainment for the Federal standards if concentration for the specified pollutant is not exceeded on average more than once per year. The primary source of secondary particulate matter (i.e., ROG and NOx) is mobile sources, including cars, trucks, buses, construction equipment, and agricultural equipment. Common sources of particulate matter pollution in the County include residential development and land management related activities such as woodstoves, windblown dust and/or diesel from construction activities, and forestry management vegetation burning. Temporary on-site construction activities would occur within the boundaries of the existing site. Construction would include grading for the concrete pad in the lease area, building of the tower, and trenching needed for underground fiber cable. The proposed project would be subject to the applicable CCAPCD rules and regulations in addition to the General Plan policies, State, Federal Particulate Matter standards, and actions that aim to improve air quality and minimize pollutant concentrations. Therefore, the proposed project would have a less than significant impact on 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) **Less Than Significant Impact** – Sensitive receptors include those individuals within the population that have an increased sensitivity to air pollution or environmental contaminants. They include children, the elderly, and those with pre-existing serious health problems affected by air quality, and sensitive receptor locations include schools, parks and playgrounds, day care centers, nursing homes, hospitals, and residences. The closest sensitive receptor to the Project site is the single-family residence located across the western side property boundary, approximately 250’ from the Project site. As stated above, the proposed project would generate temporary construction emissions that would be subject to CCAPCD requirements and a less than significant impact is expected.

Furthermore, the expected estimate of maintenance trips for operation of the proposed tower is once per month. A single-family residence can generate up to an average of 10 vehicle trips per day before it is considered significant. The maintenance of the tower should not be greater than the number of trips a residence would generate. Therefore, the proposed project will have a less than significant impact on sensitive receptors.

- d) **No Impact** – No emissions that create odors are expected to be emitted from the unmanned telecommunications facility and no impact is expected.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or US Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- a) **Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation** – A Biological Resources Assessment prepared by Synthesis Planning was conducted for the proposed project (See **Appendix A**). A pedestrian site survey was conducted on November 23 and 29 2024. According to this study, there are multiple candidate, sensitive, or special status species that are known to be on or near the Project site. The tricolored blackbird, Swainson’s Hawk, California Tiger Salamander, and Wester Pond Turtle were all identified as having habitat present and could be potentially affected by the proposed project. Additionally, the study states the Project site is not within an area of critical habitat listed on the California Natural Diversity Database. The Project site species include common native and non-native grasses and ruderal species. Proposed development will be contained within previously disturbed areas associated with the rural residential development. This disturbance area includes grazing, excavation, backfilling, and compaction activities resulting from previous construction and maintenance activities. Evidence of surface disturbance on and in the immediate vicinity of the Project site has greatly reduced the potential for sensitive plant and wildlife species to occupy the area. While portions of the proposed development footprint may potentially contain the important habitat suitability elements for any of the above-listed sensitive wildlife species; none are likely to occur within the proposed development footprint itself. Mitigation measures and further studies were recommended to ensure the project’s potential impacts to less than significant.

Mitigation Measure BR-1 (Biological Best Management Practices)

Implementation of the following general project avoidance/minimization measures is recommended to avoid or reduce potential impacts to special-status wildlife and plant species:

- Worker Environmental Awareness Training shall be presented to all personnel working in the field on the proposed project area. Training shall consist of a brief presentation in which biologists knowledgeable of endangered species biology and legislative protection shall explain endangered species concerns. Training shall include a discussion of special-status plants and sensitive wildlife species. Species biology, habitat needs, status under the Endangered Species Acts, and measures being incorporated for the protection of these species and their habitats shall also be discussed.
- As close to the beginning of project activities as possible, but not more than 14 days prior, a qualified biologist shall conduct a final pre-construction survey of the proposed project area and buffer to verify that no special-status wildlife species have become established in the project area or buffer. A qualified biologist shall be present immediately prior to project activities that have potential to impact sensitive species to identify and protect potentially sensitive resources.
- Project area boundaries shall be clearly delineated by stakes and /or flagging to minimize inadvertent degradation or loss of adjacent habitat during project operations. Staff and/or its contractors shall post signs and/or place fence around the project area to restrict access of vehicles and equipment unrelated to project-related operations.

- A project representative shall establish restrictions on project-related traffic to approved project areas, storage areas, staging and parking areas via signage. Off-road traffic outside of designated project area shall be prohibited.
- Project-related traffic shall observe a 10-mph speed limit in the project area except on County roads and State and federal highways to avoid impacts to special-status and common wildlife species.
- Hazardous materials, fuels, lubricants, and solvents that spill accidentally during project related activities shall be cleaned up and removed from the project as soon as possible according to applicable federal, state and local regulations.
- All equipment storage and parking during site development and operation shall be confined to the proposed project area or other offsite previously disturbed areas.
- All excavated steep-walled holes or trenches in excess of three (3) feet in depth shall be provided with one or more escape ramps constructed of earth fill to prevent entrapment of endangered species or other animals. Ramps shall not be less than 45-degree angles. Trenches shall be inspected for entrapped wildlife each morning prior to onset of project activities and immediately prior to the end of each working day. Before such holes or trenches are filled, they shall be inspected thoroughly for entrapped animals. Any animals discovered shall be allowed to escape voluntarily without harassment before project activities related to the trench resume or removed from the trench or hole by a qualified biologist and allowed to escape unimpeded.
- All food-related trash items such as wrappers, cans, bottles, or food scraps generated during project activities shall be disposed of only in closed containers and regularly removed from the proposed project area. Food items may attract wildlife species onto the proposed project area, consequently exposing such animals to increased risk of injury or mortality. No deliberate feeding of wildlife shall be allowed.
- To prevent harassment or mortality of wildlife species via predation, or destruction of their dens or nests, no domestic pets shall be permitted on-site.
- To avoid debris contamination into drainages and other sensitive wildlife habitats, silt fence or other sediment control devices will be place around construction sites to contain spoils from construction excavation activities.

Mitigation Measure BR-2 (Staging Areas)

- The use or storage of petroleum-powered equipment shall be accomplished in a manner to prevent the potential release of petroleum materials into adjacent habitat areas, including waters of the State and U.S.,

- Areas for fuel storage, refueling and servicing of construction equipment must be located in an upland location,
- Wash sites must be located in upland locations to ensure wash water does not flow into stream channels or wetlands.
- All construction equipment must be in good working condition, showing no signs of fuel or oil leaks. All questionable motor oil, coolant, transmission fluid, and hydraulic fluid hoses, fittings and seals shall be replaced. The mechanical equipment shall be inspected on a daily basis to ensure no leaks. All leaks shall be repaired in the equipment staging area or other suitable location prior to resumption of construction activity.
- Oil absorbent and spill containment materials shall be located on site when mechanical equipment is in operation within 100 feet of a waterway. If a spill occurs, no additional work shall occur until, 1) the mechanical equipment is inspected by the contractor and the leak has been repaired, 2) the spill has been contained, and 3) CDFW and Calaveras County are contacted and have evaluated the impacts of the spill.

Mitigation Measure BR-3 (Swainson’s Hawk)

Pre-construction surveys for nesting Swainson’s hawks within 0.5 miles of the work areas will be conducted for construction activities between March 1 and September 15. The surveys shall incorporate methodologies from CDFW’s 1994 *Staff Report Regarding Mitigation for Impacts to Swainson’s Hawks in the Central Valley of California* and the Swainson’s Hawk Technical Advisory Committee (SHTAC) survey guidelines. If active nests are found, a qualified biologist should determine the need (if any) for temporal restrictions on construction.

Mitigation Measure BR-4 (California Tiger Salamander)

- A qualified biologist shall conduct pre-activity surveys to determine if CTS are absent or present in the proposed project site. If any individual CTS are discovered, consultation with the USFWS and CDFW will be required. A USFWS approved biologist with appropriate handling permit to move individual salamanders will be retained should they be present within the proposed project site during project activities.
- Any individuals found during clearance surveys or otherwise removed from work areas will be placed in nearby suitable, undisturbed habitat. The authorized biologist will determine the best location for their release, based on the condition of the vegetation, soil, and other habitat features and the proximity to human activities.
- Clearance surveys shall occur on a daily basis in the work area.
- The authorized biologist will have the authority to stop all activities until appropriate corrective measures have been completed.

- Project activities shall be limited to daylight hours, except during an emergency in order to avoid nighttime activities when frogs may be present.
- Traffic speed should be maintained at 10 miles per hour or less in the work area

Mitigation Measure BR-5 (Western Pond Turtle)

If an individual western pond turtle is observed during pre-construction surveys or during implementation of any phase of the proposed project, a qualified biologist will move the individual turtle out of the project work area to an area where the turtle will be safe from harm from project construction activities. If feasible, the project proponent will install exclusion fencing around the disturbance area to prevent turtles from reentering the area.

Mitigation Measure BR-6 (Special Status Plant Species)

A qualified botanist will conduct pre-construction botanical surveys to identify any populations of the remaining two (2) special-status plant species within the proposed project site that could be disturbed during project activities. These surveys shall be conducted prior to the initiation of any construction activities and coincide with the appropriate flowering period of the special-status plant species with the potential to occur in the project area. If any special-status plant species populations are identified within or adjacent to the proposed disturbance areas, the project proponent shall implement the following measures to avoid impacts to these species:

- If any population(s) of special-status plant species is identified directly adjacent to the proposed project site, a qualified biologist retained by project proponent will clearly delineate the location of the plant population and install protective fencing between the disturbance zone and the plant population to ensure that the plant population is adequately protected.
- If a special-status plant population is identified within the proposed disturbance zone, the project proponent will consult with CDFW to determine the appropriate measures to avoid or mitigate for impacts to the species or population. The project proponent will adjust the boundaries of the disturbance zone, where feasible, to avoid impacts to the plant species/population. Where avoidance is not feasible, the project proponent will implement one or more of the following measures: (1) transplant potentially affected plants to areas not planned for disturbance. If a plant is transplanted, two more plants shall be planted. Plantings shall be managed and monitored by the applicant and shall survive to 5 years after planting; (2) seed or purchase plants and place them in an area adjacent to the disturbance zone; (3) purchase credits at an approved mitigation bank at a ratio approved by CDFW and the project proponent.

b) **Less Than Significant Impact** – Riparian habitat was identified outside the area of development located in the onsite freshwater pond and stream. While it is a potential breeding site for California Tiger Salamander presence of predator species significantly reduces the potential of onsite breeding and would be more suitable to adult CTS dispersion. The Biological Analysis stated that the previously disturbed upland refugia did not provide suitable habitat for dispersing adult CTS. The nearest watercourse is a delineated stream and pond which passes through the Southernmost portion of the

parcel. The Project development area is proposed to be approximately 780' to the North of the Pond and associated stream, and therefore, implementation of the proposed project would result in a less than significant impact to this resource.

- c) **Less Than Significant Impact** – A delineation of wetlands and watercourses within the project study area was conducted by a Synthesis Planning wetland ecologist during which aquatic habitat (stream channel within wetland vegetation and ponded water) was identified crossing under the existing access road to the proposed tower site. Synthesis Planning identified aquatic habitat of a stream channel with wetland vegetation and ponded water. The stream channel passes under the existing access road to the Project site. It is important to note that installation of the fiber optic cable from the proposed tower site and Southworth Road will be conducted via boring and not trenching as to avoid physical impacts to the on-site stream channel. Furthermore, after consultation with the local fire district Chief, no improvements are required to the culvert for fire access, and no project improvements will impact the stream directly. Implementation of Mitigation Measures BR-1 and BR-2 above would ensure that direct and indirect impacts to jurisdictional water resources would be less than significant.
- d) **Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation** – The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) protects all common wild birds in the United States except a select few species. California Fish and Game Code 3503 makes it illegal to destroy any bird nests or eggs protected under the MBTA. The Biological Resources Assessment determined that no avian nests or activity was observed during the site survey. However, the trees in the nearby vicinity provide suitable nesting habitat for several avian species. Therefore, pursuant to the codes stated above, installation of the proposed tower is recommended to be outside the nesting season generally extending from early February through September including yearly variability due to weather conditions. However, if construction activities are proposed during the nesting season Mitigation Measure BR-7 below will ensure a less than significant impact to migratory bird species:

Mitigation Measure BR-7 (Migratory Birds)

If ground disturbing activities occur during the breeding season of these avian species (February through mid-September), surveys for active nests will be conducted by a qualified biologist no more than 10 days prior to start of activities. Pre-construction nesting surveys shall be conducted for nesting migratory avian and raptor species in the project site and buffer area. Pre-construction biological surveys shall occur prior to the proposed project implementation, and during the appropriate survey periods for nesting activities for individual avian species. Surveys will follow required CDFW and USFWS protocols, where applicable. A qualified biologist will survey suitable habitat for the presence of these species. If a migratory avian or raptor species is observed and suspected to be nesting, a buffer area will be established to avoid impacts to the active nest site. Identified nests should be continuously surveyed for the first 24 hours prior to any construction-related activities to establish a behavioral baseline. If no nesting avian species are found, project activities may proceed and no further Standard Construction Conditions measures will be required. If active nesting sites are found, the following exclusion buffers will be established, and no project activities will occur within these buffer zones until young birds have fledged and are no longer reliant upon the nest or parental care for survival.

- Minimum no disturbance of 250 feet around active nest of non-listed bird species and 250 foot no disturbance buffer around migratory birds;
- Minimum no disturbance of 500 feet around active nest of non-listed raptor species;
- and 0.5-mile no disturbance buffer from listed species and fully protected species until breeding season has ended or until a qualified biologist has determined that the birds have fledged and are no longer reliant upon the nest or parental care for survival.
- Once work commences, all nests should be continuously monitored to detect any behavioral changes as a result of project activities. If behavioral changes are observed, the work causing that change should cease and the appropriate regulatory agencies (i.e. CDFW, USFWS, etc.) shall be consulted for additional avoidance and minimization measures.
- A variance from these no disturbance buffers may be implemented when there is compelling biological or ecological reason to do so, such as when the project area would be concealed from a nest site by topography. Any variance from these buffers is advised to be supported by a qualified wildlife biologist and is recommended that CDFW and USFWS be notified in advance of implementation of a no disturbance buffer variance.

e-f) **No Impact** – The Project site is not located within the boundaries of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or State habitat conservation plan. Therefore, the proposed project will not conflict with any local policies, ordinances or plans protecting biological resources.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to § 15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

a-b) **No Impact** – A Cultural Resources Assessment was conducted by EBI Consulting on October 25, 2023. The investigation found no significant cultural or historic resources within the Direct Area of Potential Effects (APE), meaning the area where the telecommunications facility would be built. The Indirect Area of Potential Effects, the area within a ½ mile radius of the proposed facility, was also researched. There are four cultural resources recorded in this radius; however, these will not be affected by the

construction of the proposed project. The results of the investigation that encompassed the Project area and vicinity were negative. EBI Consulting recommended that no further investigations were necessary.

- c) **No Impact** – Development is not expected to have an impact on cultural resources within the Project site, and no further studies were recommended. Local tribes were contacted as part of the study, and no responses received with concerns within the project area. In the event of accidental discovery of human remains, the procedures pursuant to Title 14 section 15064.5 of CA Code of Regulations should be followed. There was no evidence of cultural resources in the project area and there will be no impact to any archaeological or historical resources.

VI. ENERGY

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- a-b) **No Impact** – The proposed telecommunications facility will use electric power directly from the grid. Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) was notified of the proposed project and responded that the proposed project did not appear to directly interfere with existing PG&E facilities. The applicant chose this location because of existing, adequate access and power for the Project site. The proposed project would provide wireless service to an under-served area, and therefore, the operation of the telecommunication facility would not represent a wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources. Calaveras County has not adopted a local renewable energy or energy efficient plan. The proposed telecommunications facility will be built to all applicable energy codes, to prevent energy waste and unnecessary consumption. Calculations will be required to be certified by a licensed engineer in compliance with applicable State and Federal energy standards. Per these regulations, the project will not have an impact on renewable energy nor energy efficiency.

VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
Would the project:				
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				

i. Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iv. Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

a) **No Impact** – Calaveras County lies within the Sierra Block, an area of historically low seismicity. Though ground shaking from earthquakes with epicenters located elsewhere have been felt, no major earthquakes have been recorded within the County. The closest known source of large earthquakes is the Sierra Frontal Fault System along the eastern margin of the Sierra Nevada, which includes the Carson Valley Fault. This fault is located east of the County and has been evaluated as capable of generating earthquakes of up to magnitude 7.0. However, the risk of surface rupture is not considered sufficient to restrict the development found in the County. The Project site and surrounding area were checked for faults using the “EQ Zapp: California Earthquake Hazards Zone Application” online map. No local faults are noted on the map. The Project site is an unevaluated area from the California Geological Survey for liquefaction or seismic landslide hazards due to “the area is not anticipated to experience levels of earthquake shaking high enough to generate these hazards”. Sites in Calaveras County with liquefaction potential would be those on alluvial deposits having groundwater and sand or silt layers of uniform grain sizes within about 30 feet of the surface. Such conditions are not found on the Project site and no impact is expected.

b-c) **Less Than Significant Impact** – The areas of landslide concern are those that include high elevations with steep ravines and gulches associated with river and stream channels. Located below 3,000 feet,

the Project site has no ravines or gulches associated with larger rivers or stream channels. According to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service soils maps, the Project site contains soils classified as “Pentz sandy loam, 15-50 percent slopes”, “Amador sandy loam, 2-15 percent slopes.”, “Pardee cobbly loam, 2-15 percent slopes.”, “Pardee-Amador complex, 15-40 percent slopes.”. If erosion of soils were to occur, the risk of loss, injury or death is low because the development potential is limited. Utilization of best management practices to reduce the risk of erosion is a requirement of all grading and building in the County. Based on the stable soil types and shallow bedrock in this soil type, proposed project will have a less than significant impact to soil erosion, topsoil, and instability.

- d) **Less Than Significant Impact** – According to the USDA National Cooperative Soil Survey, the soil complexes “well-drained soils” with “bedrock 10-20 inches in depth”. Therefore, these soils are not considered expansive soils and the proposed project will have a less than significant impact.
- e) **No Impact** – A well and on-site septic system currently exist on the subject parcel. Installation of an unmanned telecommunications facility will not create an increased need or use of this infrastructure.
- f) **No Impact** – There are no known unique paleontological resources or sites or unique geologic features on or near the subject parcel.

VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Would the project:	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

a-b) **Less Than Significant Impact** – Construction emissions would be limited to construction employees travelling to the site, creation, construction, and installation proposed improvements. These emissions associated with implementation of the project are minimal and result in a less than significant impact. The proposed project does not involve a site modification or operational usage that meets criteria for emission generating uses. Although the telecommunications facility would generate periodic vehicular trips for management and maintenance, the proposed project would fall below the CCAPCD thresholds, and the impact is considered less than significant. Future construction would be required to comply with the updated Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations established by the Energy Commission. The County has not adopted a plan or program to reduce GHG’s so the proposed project would not be in conflict with any such plan or program.

IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>a) Less Than Significant Impact – The Environmental Health Department requires a Hazardous Materials Business Plan to be put in place if hazardous materials are stored or handled in quantities that equal or exceed 55 gallons for liquid, 500 pounds for solids, or 200 cubic feet for gases. All applicable Federal, State, and County regulations will apply to all hazardous materials that may be used or stored on the subject parcel. The proposed project will not involve the transport of hazardous materials and a less than significant impact is expected.</p> <p>b) Less Than Significant Impact – Hazardous materials such as diesel, maintenance fluids, and paints would be used onsite during construction and not during operation. Should they be stored onsite, these materials would be stored in secure locations to reduce the potential for upset or accident conditions and a less than significant impact is expected.</p>				

- c) **No Impact** - The nearest school to the Project site is Jenny Lind Elementary School located approximately 4.6 miles to the southeast of the Project site. However, as stated in Section VIII (b) above, the operational use of the project would not include hazardous materials or substances.
- d) **No Impact** - Based on a search of the California Department of Toxic Substances Control database, the Project site does not contain any known EPA National Priority List sites, State response sites, voluntary cleanup sites, or any school cleanup sites. No impact would occur as the Project site is not on any known list of hazardous materials sites.
- e) **No Impact** – The Project site is not located in an airport land use plan or within 2 miles of a public use airport.
- f) **No Impact** – There is no adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan specifically involving the Project site in question. The proposed project does not impede any traffic or alter any roads. The existing access road would continue to serve the Project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not obstruct emergency vehicle access.
- g) **Less Than Significant Impact** – The proposed project would not increase exposure of people and/or structures to a significant loss, injury or death involving wild land fires. The project would comply with current California Department of Forestry and California Building Code requirements for fire safety.

X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(i) result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| (ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site; | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (iii) create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (iv) impede or redirect flood flows? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

- a) **No Impact** – The proposed telecommunications facility will not cause any additional waste discharge or similar effluent that would cause a degradation of ground water quality. All construction and operation of uses on the Project site are subject to all applicable codes, policies, and regulations regarding waste discharge and water quality and no impact will occur.
- b) **No Impact** – The project is not within a Utility District service area and does not propose to use any groundwater nor require water service for operation of the telecommunications facilities. For this reason, the proposed project would not use any groundwater resources or lower the local groundwater table. The proposed project would minimally increase the amount of impervious area on the project site. Therefore, the project would have no impact on groundwater recharge.
- c) **Less Than Significant Impact** – The proposed project would not substantially alter the existing drainage patterns of the site or vicinity. As the proposed project involves a minor physical change to the site, it would not result in an impact to or substantially alter the drainage pattern on site or cause a significant increase in erosion or siltation on or off the Project site. Compliance with applicable codes, policies, and regulations regarding waste discharge and water quality would ensure that project operations would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality. The proposed project would be required to be in compliance with the County Road Ordinance (Chapter 12.02), Encroachment Ordinance (Ch 12.08), Storm Water Quality Ordinance (13.01), and the Grading & Draining Ordinance (15.05), in order to prevent substantial impacts to erosion and pollution of water due to construction. These requirements are utilized and enforced by not only the Public Works department during grading activities, but also the Building Department during construction through inspections. Compliance with these regulations and the small-scale of this proposed project ensures there will not be substantial erosion, siltation or runoff that would impact the site or area off-site.
- d) **No Impact** – The Project site is not located in an area that is subject to flood hazards, tsunamis, or seiches, and would not be at risk of releasing pollutants due to inundation. No impacts would occur.

- e) **No Impact** – The proposed project does not include development that will impede or redirect flood flows and will not obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or substantial groundwater management plan. No impacts would occur.

XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a-b) Less Than Significant Impact - The proposed project would not occur within an established community, nor would it result in the division of an established community. The proposed project complies with the Calaveras County Code and all other applicable regulations. The proposed project complies with the Calaveras County General Plan, the County Zoning Ordinance, applicable County Code sections, and all other applicable regulations. There are no habitat conservation plans or natural community conservation plans applicable to the property. Therefore, there would be less than significant land use impacts.				

XII. MINERAL RESOURCES

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
a-b) No Impact – The Project site is not located within the County’s Mineral Resource Overlay zone. The Project site is designated as Rural Transition B, a land use designation not used for areas within the County with the potential to contain mineral resources, there are no known mineral resources on or in the vicinity of the Project site. The Project site is also not within or adjacent to any active mining operations. Thus, the proposed project would not result in the loss of availability of any known mineral resources of value to the region or result in the loss of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan. No impacts would occur.				

XIII. NOISE

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
Would the project result in:				
a) Generation of a substantial, temporary, or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

a-b) **Less Than Significant Impact**– The proposed project would result in a temporary increase in noise levels as there would be site grading and construction activities to develop the Project site. The proposed project must comply with the County Noise Ordinance (Chapter 9.02). As such, the proposed project would not result in long-term significant construction noise impacts. Conditions of approval identified below would require construction activities to be limited to be between 7:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. in order to comply with the County Noise Ordinance and County General Plan.

An acoustical analysis was conducted on December 13, 2024, by MD Acoustics and EBI Consulting to determine if operations of the proposed facility will comply with the noise ordinance (See **Appendix B**). During proposed tower operation, equipment that was analyzed for noise includes: three equipment cabinets, one of which will contain a battery backup for any electrical power outages. The study included sound barriers such as fencing and topographic features. The analysis found that the anticipated noise level of all the equipment would produce 43 dBA during the worst conditions at the nearest property line to the west. This is within and compliant with Calaveras County Code⁸ 9.02.040 B which requires measurements taken at the nearest property line, indicating a less than significant impact.

c) **No Impact** – The subject parcel is not located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport or public use airport.

XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
Would the project:				

- a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?
- b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

a-b) **No Impact** – The project would be visited by one or two employees approximately once a month to monitor and provide maintenance to the wireless telecommunications facility. As this is a minimal amount of employees, it would not substantially increase the number of jobs in the area and it is considered to be relatively small compared to the overall area and nearby communities. Therefore, this increase in jobs will not contribute to a cumulatively considerable increase in the demand for housing units within Calaveras County and the general vicinity and impact to population and housing would occur. The project would not result in the displacement of any housing units or people.

XV. PUBLIC SERVICES

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

a) **No Impact** – Public services are currently provided to the project area and the additional demand placed on existing services as a result of the proposed project would be minimal. The Calaveras Consolidated Fire Protection District has reviewed the application and recommend approval, as conditioned. The proposed project would have minimal impact on public parks as no residences are proposed. No impacts to public services will occur.

XVI. RECREATION

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
a-b) No Impact – The proposed Project would not increase the use of any existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities in the vicinity. Development of recreational facilities is not proposed as part of the Project. No impact would occur.				

XVII. TRANSPORTATION

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
Would the project:				
a) Conflict with a program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines §15064.3, subdivision (b)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a) No Impact – The proposed addition of a telecommunications facility would utilize the existing infrastructure, taking access off of Southworth Road and an existing dirt access road. The existing private access road for the cell tower facility will be improved for use by the leaseholder. This project does not require a traffic study, or access to transit, bicycle or pedestrian facilities. This project will comply with fire and road standards and will therefore not conflict with any plans, ordinances, or policies pertaining to transportation.				
b) No Impact – The proposed cell tower is an allowable use with approval of an Administrative Use Permit in the RA zone. There are no high-volume transit stops in this rural residential area. The proposed cellular tower will not be open to the public and should not generate additional traffic in				

this regard. As discussed in Section VIII, Greenhouse Gasses, the vehicle trips for maintenance are estimated to be one (1) per month. This will not exceed that of a single-family residence with allowed trips of 10 per day, comprising a less than significant impact.

- c) **No Impact** – The existing encroachment and access road will be improved to provide adequate access from Southworth Road to the cellular tower location and will not increase hazards or design features that are incompatible. The area consists of rural subdivision with little traffic and parcels adjacent to the site, and there are no known hazardous design features. Therefore, the project will have no impact.
- d) **Less Than Significant Impact** – From conditions received from Calaveras Consolidated Fire Protection District, the access road on site will be improved to allow access to the cell tower. Local and State emergency services, including the fire district, have been notified of the project. Calaveras Consolidated Fire Protection District has reviewed the plans for the access road and required a condition for a hammerhead turnaround to provide adequate emergency access. Permitting procedures from the land use departments will ensure adequate emergency access, ensuring a less than significant impact.

XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
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a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or

	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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b) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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a-b) **No Impact** – As discussed in Section 5, Cultural Resources, there are no known cultural or archaeological resources or dedicated cemeteries on the Project site. Therefore, no impact to tribal cultural resources would occur.

As part of the processing of the project application, County staff-initiated consultation with tribes that have requested formal notification of proposed projects within their geographic area of traditional and cultural affiliation per AB 52 Notification Request, Public Resources Code Section 21080.3(b). The Calaveras Band of Miwuk Indians, the California Valley Miwok Tribe, and the Lone Band of Miwok Indians Buena Vista Rancheria, and Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California have been notified of this project. No responses were received from the tribes.

XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
Would the project:				
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment, stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>a-e) No Impact – The proposed project will not require the construction of additional infrastructure beyond the telecommunications facility itself. There is adequate power near the site and sufficient drainage, being on a hilltop with well-draining soils. No new natural gas, water, or wastewater utilities are proposed nor will be needed on site as it is an unmanned facility. Permitting procedures from the land use departments will ensure proper installation of the facilities per local and State standards. Operation of the proposed Project would not generate demand for utilities requiring the relocation or construction of new or expanded facilities. The Project application was circulated to utility agencies for an opportunity to comment on the project. The County has not received any letters concerning impacts to their services. The operation of the proposed cell tower facility does not generate solid waste. No impact would occur in this regard.</p>				

XX. WILDFIRE

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines, or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a) No Impact – The Project does not propose activities that would substantially impair the Calaveras County Emergency Operations Plan. All roads in the area would remain open. The Project site is located on private property with adequate access to county roads. The proposed project will not interfere with adjacent roadways that may be used for emergency response or evacuation. The proposed project will not prohibit subsequent plans from being established or prevent the goals and objectives of existing plans from being carried out.				
b) No Impact – The tower facility does not propose significant changes to the existing landscape and no project occupants will be stationed at the cell tower facility and so will have no impact on exposure of pollutants to occupants.				
c) Less Than Significant Impact – The proposed project was routed to all applicable fire departments and agencies. Calaveras Consolidated Fire Protection provided additional conditions to ensure adequate emergency access. The proposed telecommunications facility will have a road that meets fire access requirements and hammerhead turnaround, allowing for emergency vehicles at the site. A less than significant impact is expected.				
d) Less Than Significant Impact – The proposed telecommunications facility will utilize an existing encroachment. The proposed project only requires improvement of the access road, hammerhead turnaround and 900 square foot lease area entirely within the subject parcel allowing access for maintenance vehicles, or emergency access. The proposed project will not alter any existing roads or impede traffic. The installation of a telecommunications facility will not significantly alter drainage				

patterns, cause slope instability, or expose people or structures to risks associated with these impacts including post-fire events.

XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>a) Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation – Based on the information and analysis provided throughout this Initial Study, implementation of the proposed project would not substantially degrade the quality of the environment and would not substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of rare or endangered plants or animals, or eliminate important examples of California history or prehistory. Per the biological study discussed in Section IV, Biological Resources, according to this study, there are multiple candidate, sensitive, or special status species are known to be on or near the Project site. However, proposed mitigation measures would reduce the potential impact to candidate, sensitive, or special status species to a less than significant impact. The site of the proposed telecommunications facility will be built on existing paths created by previous development, and as such will have a minimal impact on the surrounding environment.</p>				
<p>b) No Impact – The proposed telecommunications facility would not create a cumulative impact to any of the items discussed above. The proposed use is permitted in the Rural Residential zone with approval of an administrative use permit; therefore, the proposed project is consistent with the General Plan and Zoning Code. The impacts discussed above are either minor in nature or can be</p>				

addressed through imposed mitigation measures or compliance with County and State Development Standards. The proposed project would not increase traffic compared to existing conditions; therefore, the proposed project would not significantly contribute to cumulative impacts to vehicle miles traveled. The proposed project would not result in a significant contribution to cumulatively considerable impacts.

- c) **Less Than Significant Impact** – Federal law preempts local decisions about telecommunication towers such as this one from direct or indirect environmental effects of radio frequency (RF) emissions, assuming that the provider is in compliance with the Federal Communication Commission’s RF guidelines. An RF study prepared by Waterford Consultants dated November 1, 2023, was submitted to examine potential impacts to public health and the environment as part of this application. The telecommunications tower uses Radio Frequency Emissions determined to be safe within the guidelines of the 1996 Telecommunications Act and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Because of FCC-determined frequencies, antennas require line-of-sight connections, and so are developed to be at a considerable height, pointed towards the horizon, with little energy wasted towards the ground or sky. A recent study, (2019) provides standards developed by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) and sets standards at 0 hertz (Hz) to 300 gigahertz (GHz), which bears similar limits to the FCC regulations. Relevant components of the proposed tower reach 600 megahertz (MHz) and 700 MHz, which are well within the limits described by the IEEE. All proposed tower equipment using the maximum predicted power density level resulting from all operations is 8.0341% of the FCC General Population limits.

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