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To: Stephen Caswell, Carollo (for Alpine Springs County Water District)

From: Sarah Henningsen, Ascent

Subject: Alpine Springs County Water District Water Tanks Replacement Project,
Environmental Information Supporting a Categorical Exemption

1 INTRODUCTION

Alpine Springs County Water District (ASCWD) proposes to replace three of its existing five water tanks that are located in Alpine Meadows in Placer County, California. The new water tanks would have the same capacity and would be a similar size as the existing tanks. The new tanks would be installed in the same general footprints as the existing tanks, though some of the new tanks may be installed adjacent to the existing tanks if site conditions allow. Additionally, the project may include improvements to the existing natural surface road that provides access to one of the tanks.

As detailed in Section 3, "Exemptions Under CEQA," ASCWD has determined that the project is exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15302 (Class 2) for replacement or reconstruction projects and, on a separate and independent basis, Section 15304 (Class 4) for minor alterations to land. The Class 2 categorical exemption (CE) applies to the in-kind replacement of the water tanks, and the Class 4 CE applies to the access road improvements.

2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 PROJECT LOCATION

ASCWD currently operates five water storage tanks as part of its drinking water distribution system, which is in Alpine Meadows in Placer County, California, about 4 miles west of Lake Tahoe (Figure 1). Tanks 2, 3, and 5 are proposed to be replaced (Figure 2). Representative photos of the existing water tanks are provided in Figure 3.

Tank 2 is located on private property, adjacent to Chalet Road. The access road from Chalet Road is also located on private property. ASCWD has an access agreement with the property owner that allows ASCWD staff to access the water tank for operation and maintenance. The site is located in a rural, residential area, surrounded by dense vegetation and trees. The surrounding area is comprised of scattered multi-family residential development and wide expanses of mixed-conifer forest and ruderal shrubs. The closest residences are located approximately 210 feet south of Tank 2.

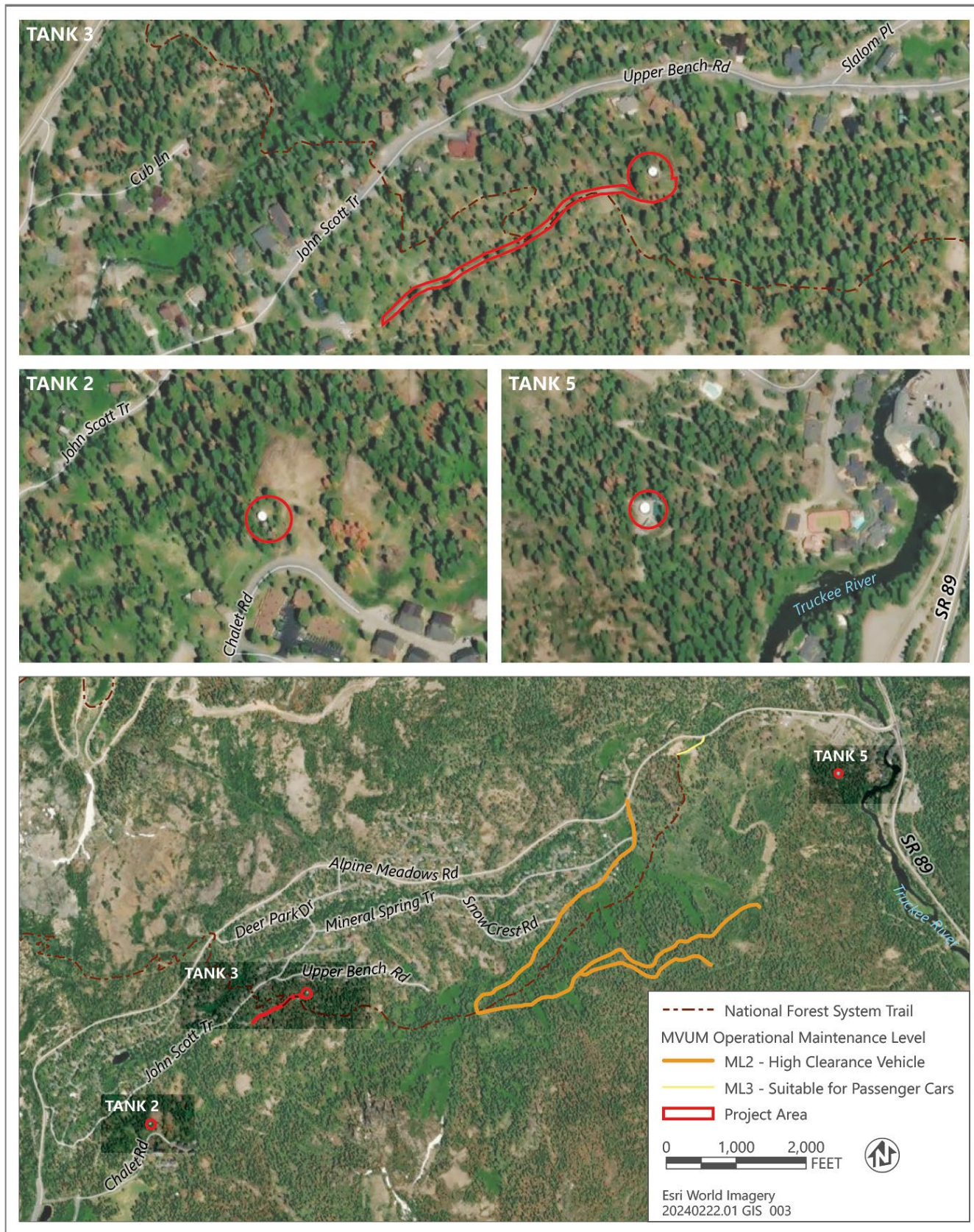
Tank 3 is located on District-owned property. The access road to Tank 3 extends through National Forest System (NFS) lands managed by the US Forest Service, Tahoe National Forest (USFS). The site is located in a rural, residential area, surrounded by dense vegetation and trees. The surrounding area is comprised of dense single-family residential development and wide expanses of mixed-conifer forest and ruderal shrubs. The closest residences are located approximately 190 feet north of Tank 3.





Source: Adapted by Ascent in 2025.

Figure 1 Project Location



Source: Provided by Carollo in 2025; adapted by Ascent in 2025.

Figure 2 Water Tanks 2, 3, and 5 Locations



Tank 2



Tank 3



Tank 5

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Source: Provided by Carollo in 2025; adapted by Ascent in 2025.

Figure 3 Representative Photos of the Existing Water Tanks to Be Replaced



Tank 5 is located on private property, adjacent to existing cell tower equipment. A steep access road provides access to the site from Alpine Circle Road via a gated entrance. ASCWD has an access agreement with the property owner that allows ASCWD staff to access the water tank for operation and maintenance. The site is located in a rural, suburban area, surrounded entirely by dense vegetation and trees. The surrounding area is comprised of scattered multi-family residential development, interspersed with commercial real estate, and wide expanses of mixed-conifer forest, ruderal shrubs, and the Truckee River, which flows approximately 0.1 miles east of the project site. The closest residences are located approximately 395 feet east of Tank 5.

There are no state-designated scenic highways in the vicinity of the three water tanks. The nearest eligible highway is State Route (SR) 89, located approximately 2.2 miles northeast of Tank 2, 1.6 miles northeast of Tank 3, and 930 feet east of Tank 5 (Caltrans 2025). SR 89 does not provide views to, nor is it visible from, the three water tank sites due to topography and intervening vegetation.

According to the Hazardous Waste and Substances Site List (Cortese), there are no identified sites of known contamination on or near the three water tank sites (SWRCB 2025; DTSC 2025).

2.2 EXISTING FACILITIES/NEED FOR PROJECT

ASCWD provides safe, reliable drinking water and fire flow services to the Alpine Meadows community, along with wastewater collection, solid waste management, and park and recreation services.

ASCWD currently relies on five water storage tanks as part of its drinking water distribution system. One tank was replaced with a welded steel tank after damage incurred in 2017. The remaining four tanks were constructed in the 1960s and show visible signs of degradation. The ASCWD contracted with Carollo Engineers to evaluate the condition of each of the remaining four tanks. Carollo found that the tanks should be either rehabilitated or replaced due to the age of the tanks as well as the heavy snow load and seismic activity of the area. As a result of this effort, ASCWD plans to replace three of the tanks with welded steel tanks.

The existing tanks are similar in appearance and size. Tanks 2 and 3 are both 31 feet in height by 28 feet in outer diameter. Similarly, Tank 5 is 21.75 feet in height and 32.5 feet in outer diameter.

2.3 PROJECT COMPONENTS

The project consists of demolition and replacement of three existing water tanks and proposed improvements to the existing access road to Tank 3. These components are described below.

Water Tanks

The three existing tanks would be demolished and three new tanks would be installed in the same general location. New foundations would be installed for each tank. The new water tanks would have the same capacity and would be a similar size as the existing tanks. The new tanks would be welded steel, while the existing tanks are concrete. It is assumed that the new tanks would be installed in the same general footprints as the existing tanks, though some of the new tanks may be installed adjacent to the existing tanks if site conditions allow.

During installation, the existing tanks would be taken offline temporarily until the new tanks can be installed. It is assumed that the existing water distribution system would be operated without interruption during installation of the new tanks. The system can fully operate with one tank offline at a time.

Roadway Improvements

The project may include improvements to the existing natural surface road that provides access to Tank 3. Proposed roadway improvements would include potentially widening the corners and some grading. The access road to Tank 3 extends through NFS managed lands. Based on review of the NFS motor vehicle use map (MVUM) and trails map, it appears that a portion of the access road to Tank 3 may overlap with a non-motorized trail (Bear Creek Trail/FS 16E06). The closest MVUM road appears to be FS 5001-002. Use of and any improvements to the portion of the access road on NFS lands would need to be coordinated with and authorized by USFS.

No improvements are proposed for the existing access roads to Tanks 2 or 5.

Maintenance

Maintenance would primarily involve physical inspections of all above ground facilities. During the summertime, tanks would be inspected monthly. During wintertime, tanks would be inspected periodically to shovel away accumulated snow. ASCWD operations and maintenance staff, or its representatives, would conduct maintenance activities.

2.4 PROJECT CONSTRUCTION

Construction at each tank location would take approximately 5–6 months. It is anticipated that ASCWD would replace one tank per year for 3 years, with Tank 2 to be replaced in summer 2026, Tank 3 to be replaced in summer 2027, and Tank 5 to be replaced in summer 2028; however, the order of replacement may change.

During construction, an average of 8–10 workers would be present at each construction site. Construction activity would typically be limited to those hours consistent with the Placer County Noise Ordinance (Article 9.36.060 of the Placer County Code). According to Article 9.36.030, "Exemptions," construction activities that are performed between 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, are exempt from the noise ordinance provided that all construction equipment is fitted with factory-installed muffler devices and maintained in good working order.

The type and quantity of equipment would fluctuate throughout construction, but would generally include earthmoving equipment (scrapers, dozers, excavators); concrete mix trucks and concrete pumps; semi-trucks and other trucks for deliveries; and a variety of crew trucks, excavators, boom lifts, scissor lifts, trenchers, generators, and personal autos.

As part of the proposed grading of the access road to Tank 3, up to approximately 100 cubic yards of soil material may be imported to the site.

No trees are currently proposed for removal. However, should the contractor decide to perform tree removal for easier tank installation for Tank 2, the contractor would need to apply for a Placer County tree permit.

During construction, the existing network of public and private roads and trails would primarily be used to access the tanks and staging areas. The staging area for Tank 2 would be located at the parking lot of the nearby condominium complex. The staging area for Tank 3 would be located at the existing cul-de-sac near 1880 John Scott Trail, or at the tank site, if road improvement occurs first. Finally, the staging area for Tank 5 would be located at the District headquarters at 270 Alpine Meadows Road.

2.5 ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS

ASCWD is committed to the protection of resources during construction. ASCWD and the construction contractor would implement the following measures during construction.

- ▶ **Aquatic Resources:** If project activities would result in substantial earth disturbance (trenching and grading) in areas that have potential to result in sediment and debris mobilizing into adjacent jurisdictional waters (the Truckee River and Bear Creek), ASCWD would be required to install and maintain standard best management practices (BMPs) during project construction. BMPs would minimize the potential for erosion, sedimentation, and pollutant discharge during construction, thereby avoiding adverse effects on downstream water quality. Implementation of construction BMPs to provide effective erosion, runoff, and sediment control would avoid indirect impacts on the Truckee River and its tributaries (including Bear Creek). These BMPs would be selected to achieve maximum sediment removal and represent the best available technology that is economically achievable. If the project disturbance footprint is over 1 acre, this would include compliance with the Construction General Permit and the preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan to minimize the potential for erosion.
- ▶ **Invasive Plants:** Standard BMPs would be implemented to avoid the introduction, establishment, and spread of invasive plants during project implementation. This includes ensuring that any clothing, footwear, and equipment as well as any fill material such as soil or gravel that is used during construction is free of seeds, vegetative matter or other debris, or seed-bearing material before entering the construction area.
- ▶ **Protected Trees:** ASCWD shall obtain any necessary tree removal permits required for removal of protected trees under Article 12.20 of the Placer County Code if trees are removed as part of the project.
- ▶ **Archaeological Resources:** If archaeological resources and/or historic properties (including buildings, structures, midden soils, stone tools, chipped stone, or concentrations of shell, bone, charcoal, glass, metal, or ceramics) are inadvertently discovered or affected during ground disturbing project activities, all work shall cease within 100 feet (30.5 meters) of the find, and contractors shall notify ASCWD, who then in turn shall notify USFS heritage management staff at the Forest Supervisor's office in Nevada City for discoveries on USFS lands. If approved by USFS, the services of a professional archaeologist who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards shall be retained by USFS to evaluate the significance of the resource per Section 106 and Region 5 Programmatic Agreement Stipulation 7.7. If a discovery occurs in non-federal lands, ASCWD shall retain the services of a professional archaeologist. If the find meets the significance requirements to be a historic property, contingency funding, and a time allotment sufficient to allow for implementation of avoidance measures and/or mitigation will be made available. Possible treatments for eligible resources could include resource avoidance and preservation in place through project redesign, development of a treatment plan, or mitigation through data recovery excavations. The ASCWD contractor, in consultation with ASCWD and USFS, shall implement treatment measures deemed necessary by the archeologist for the protection of the cultural resources. Work shall not resume in the area of the discovery until staff are directed to do so by management.
- ▶ **Human Remains:** If inadvertent effects to or unanticipated discoveries of human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and/or objects of cultural patrimony occur on or under the surface during construction activities, work within 100 feet (30.5 meters) of the discovery shall be stopped immediately. A reasonable effort to protect and secure the items in place shall be made without any removal or moving of any part of the discovery and the procedures outlined in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), 25 USC Section 3001 et seq., as specified in the implementing regulations at 43 CFR Section 10.2(d)(1-2) shall be employed. The ASCWD contractor shall immediately notify ASCWD and USFS heritage management staff at the Forest Supervisor's office in Nevada City. If the discovery includes human remains, the contractor shall also immediately notify the Placer County Coroner, in accordance with Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 5097.98 and Section 7050.5 of California's Health and Safety Code. If the remains are determined to be Native American or if Native American (Indian) cultural items are uncovered, the provisions of NAGPRA and its regulations at 43 CFR 10 and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) at 43 CFR 7 shall be followed. All remains and funerary objects, sacred objects, and/or items of cultural patrimony will be treated with dignity and respect. Work shall not resume in the area of the discovery until management in consultation with USFS directs staff to do so.

2.6 POTENTIAL PERMITS AND APPROVALS REQUIRED

The following approvals and/or permits may be required to implement the project:

- ▶ **Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board:** National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System construction stormwater permit (Notice of Intent to proceed under General Construction Permit) for disturbance of more than 1 acre.
- ▶ **Placer County:** Grading permit, building permit, and tree permit (if needed).

3 EXEMPTIONS UNDER CEQA

3.1 CLASS 2 CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION: REPLACEMENT OR RECONSTRUCTION

A Class 2 CE is defined as a project that consists of replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced, including but not limited to (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15302):

- (a) Replacement or reconstruction of existing schools and hospitals to provide earthquake resistant structures which do not increase capacity more than 50 percent.
- (b) Replacement of a commercial structure with a new structure of substantially the same size, purpose, and capacity.
- (c) Replacement or reconstruction of existing utility systems and/or facilities involving negligible or no expansion of capacity.
- (d) Conversion of overhead electric utility distribution system facilities to underground including connection to existing overhead electric utility distribution lines where the surface is restored to the condition existing prior to the undergrounding.

The project includes demolition and replacement of three existing water tanks of substantially the same size, purpose, and capacity pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15302. The new water tanks would be located on the same sites as the existing water tanks and would have the same purpose as the existing water tanks. The new water tanks would be similar in height/size as the existing tanks, which are approximately 22–31 feet tall and 28–32.5 feet in outer diameter, and would have the same capacity as the existing tanks. Thus, the new water tanks would be substantially the same size, purpose, and capacity of the existing water tanks.

3.2 CLASS 4 CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION: MINOR ALTERATIONS OF LAND

A Class 4 CE is defined as a project that consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation that do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes. Examples include, but are not limited to (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15304):

- (a) Grading on land with a slope of less than 10 percent, except that grading shall not be exempt in a waterway, in any wetland, in an officially designated (by federal, state, or local government action) scenic area, or in officially

mapped areas of severe geologic hazard such as an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone or within an official Seismic Hazard Zone, as delineated by the State Geologist.

- (b) New gardening or landscaping, including the replacement of existing conventional landscaping with water efficient or fire resistant landscaping.
- (c) Filling of earth into previously excavated land with material compatible with the natural features of the site.
- (d) Minor alterations in land, water, and vegetation on existing officially designated wildlife management areas or fish production facilities which result in improvement of habitat for fish and wildlife resources or greater fish production.
- (e) Minor temporary use of land having negligible or no permanent effects on the environment, including carnivals, sales of Christmas trees, etc.
- (f) Minor trenching and backfilling where the surface is restored.
- (g) Maintenance dredging where the spoil is deposited in a spoil area authorized by all applicable state and federal regulatory agencies.
- (h) The creation of bicycle lanes on existing rights-of-way.
- (i) Fuel management activities within 30 feet of structures to reduce the volume of flammable vegetation, provided that the activities will not result in the taking of endangered, rare, or threatened plant or animal species or significant erosion and sedimentation of surface waters. This exemption shall apply to fuel management activities within 100 feet of a structure if the public agency having fire protection responsibility for the area has determined that 100 feet of fuel clearance is required due to extra hazardous fire conditions.

The project may include proposed roadway improvements, including grading, on land with a slope of less than 10 percent pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15304(a). Thus, proposed roadway improvements would be conducted on land with a slope of less than 10 percent.

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15304(a) states that grading shall not be exempt in a waterway, in any wetland, in an officially designated scenic area, or in officially mapped areas of severe geologic hazard such as an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone or within an official Seismic Hazard Zone. The project is not located within a waterway or in a wetland. There are no state-designated scenic highways in the vicinity of the three water tanks. The nearest eligible highway is State Route (SR) 89, located approximately 2.2 miles northeast of Tank 2, 1.6 miles northeast of Tank 3, and 930 feet east of Tank 5 (Caltrans 2025). SR 89 does not provide views to, nor is it visible from, the three water tank sites due to topography and intervening vegetation. Further, the project site is not located in an officially mapped area of severe geologic hazard and the nearest Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone is located approximately 16 miles southeast of the project site (DOC 2025). Thus, grading associated with the proposed roadway improvements would be exempt.

3.3 EXCEPTIONS TO RELIANCE ON CATEGORICAL EXEMPTIONS

A lead agency must also consider whether a project may fall under a list of exceptions to all classes of exemptions, as detailed under Section 15300.2 of the State CEQA Guidelines:

- (a) Location. Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located – a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply in all instances, except where the project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.

The project is exempt under Class 2. Therefore, this exception does not apply. For the Class 4 exemption, the proposed roadway improvements include improvements to the existing natural surface road that provides access to Tank 3. Proposed roadway improvements would include potentially widening the corners and some grading. The existing access road to Tank 3 extends through NFS managed lands. Use of and any improvements to the portion of the existing access road on NFS lands would need to be coordinated with and authorized by USFS. The roadway improvements would not be located in a particularly sensitive environment, nor would they adversely affect an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies. As such, this exception does not apply to the Class 4 exemption.

- (b) Cumulative Impact. All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.

As described in Section 4, "Environmental Analysis," below, the project would not have a significant impact related to biological, cultural, or other resources. Further, there are no other planned activities/development located within 500 feet of the project that could (in conjunction with the project) result in a significant impact. This assessment takes into account the distance between the project and any related projects in the vicinity and the limited scope of project activities (during construction and operation). Therefore, no significant cumulative impacts would occur, and this exception does not apply.

- (c) Significant Effect. A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.

There are no unusual circumstances related to the project or the project site. The project involves demolition and replacement of three existing water tanks and proposed improvements to the existing access road to Tank 3. As described in Section 4, "Environmental Analysis," below, no sensitive habitat or unique cultural or biological resource is located at the site. Further, there is no reasonable possibility that the project would have a significant effect on the environment, as evidenced by the analysis provided below in Section 4. Therefore, this exception does not apply.

- (d) Scenic Highways. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.

There are no state-designated scenic highways in the vicinity of the three water tanks. The nearest eligible highway is SR 89, located approximately 2.2 miles northeast of Tank 2, 1.6 miles northeast of Tank 3, and 930 feet east of Tank 5 (Caltrans 2025). SR 89 does not provide views to, nor is it visible from, the three water tank sites due to topography and intervening vegetation. Therefore, this exception does not apply.

- (e) Hazardous Waste Sites. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.

According to the Hazardous Waste and Substances Site List (Cortese), there are no identified sites of known contamination on or near the three water tank sites (SWRCB 2025; DTSC 2025). Therefore, this exception does not apply.

- (f) Historical Resources. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

The ASCWD water system includes water storage tanks, wells, springs, water pumps and associated pipelines, and fire hydrants throughout the unincorporated community of Alpine Meadows, in Placer County, California. ASCWD

has five water storage tanks serving the drinking water system and providing fire flow storage across several pressure zones. Tank 4 was constructed in 2019. Tanks 1, 2, 3, and 5 were all constructed in the mid-1960s. Because some of the water tanks are considered to be of historic age (45 years or older), the ASCWD system was evaluated for historical significance and, as evidenced by the analysis provided below in Section 4, was recommended ineligible for both the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR). Therefore, the project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource, and this exception does not apply.

4 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

The project includes replacement of three existing water tanks and improvements to the existing natural surface road that provides access to one of the tanks. Construction at each tank location would take approximately 5–6 months. It is anticipated that ASCWD would replace one tank per year for 3 years, with Tank 2 to be replaced in summer 2026, Tank 3 to be replaced in summer 2027, and Tank 5 to be replaced in summer 2028. Land uses on the project site, consisting of water supply facilities in a rural, residential area, would remain the same after completion of the project. All federal, state, and local regulations would be followed during project-related activities.

Because land uses would remain the same after project implementation and no new structures would be developed (with the exception of the replacement water tanks), there would be no potential for significant effects on aesthetics, agriculture and forestry resources, geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation, utilities, or wildfire.

Construction would occur over a relatively short period of time (5–6 months at a given site) during daytime hours and would not require the use of a substantial amount of heavy equipment. Thus, there would not be a substantial level of energy used or emissions generated during project implementation. The project would also comply with the Placer County noise ordinance. Thus, there would be no significant impacts on air quality, energy, greenhouse gas emissions, or noise.

As discussed above, the project site is not located within or near a known hazardous waste site (SWRCB 2025; DTSC 2025). Construction activities would involve the use of hazardous materials, such as fuels and oil. However, existing regulations regarding the transportation, storage, and use of hazardous materials are specifically designed to protect the public health and the environment and must be adhered to during project construction and operation. Thus, compliance with applicable regulations would ensure there would be no significant hazards and hazardous materials impacts.

The following analysis provides a more detailed evaluation of the potential impacts of the project on the environment and serves as evidence in support of the use of a categorical exemption for the project. Note that the discussion includes only the environmental issue areas where the project could conceivably result in physical effects: biological resources and cultural resources.

4.1 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

A biological resources constraints analysis was prepared for the project site (see Attachment A). State and federally protected aquatic resources, sensitive natural communities and habitats, special-status plants and wildlife, critical habitat, invasive plant infestation, and protected trees known or with potential to occur at the project site are summarized in the analysis, and potential biological constraints to project implementation are identified. Using the questions from Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, a summary of potential biological resources impacts is provided below.

Would the project 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 the US Fish and Wildlife Service?

No occurrences of special-status plant or wildlife species were recorded on the project site, nor did it contain any suitable habitat for a special-status plant or wildlife species. Therefore, implementation of the project has no potential to result in adverse impacts on any special-status plant or wildlife species.

Tanks 2 and 3 are within the boundary of an area designated as critical habitat for the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog (*Rana sierrae*). However, the project site is located in and around existing residential development and does not provide any of the physical or biological features essential to the conservation of Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog: clean, permanent or connected water bodies (lakes, ponds, streams, tarns) for breeding/rearing; aquatic areas rich in algae/organic debris for tadpoles; and nearby terrestrial areas (riparian/upland) with cover (rocks, vegetation, rodent burrows) for foraging (insects) and shelter from predators/drying. In addition, implementation of the project would primarily occur within the footprint of existing development (i.e., the footprint of the existing tanks). Therefore, implementation of the project has no potential to damage or otherwise result in adverse impacts on critical habitat for special-status plants or wildlife.

Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the US Fish and Wildlife Service?

Based on the reconnaissance-level assessment, no sensitive natural communities or sensitive habitats (including riparian or oak woodland habitat) were identified within the project site. In addition, as currently designed, the project does not propose the removal of any vegetation or trees. Therefore, implementation of the project would not result in direct impacts on any sensitive natural community or sensitive habitat.

Would the project 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?

Based on US Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetlands Inventory and US Geological Survey National Hydrography Dataset mapping, a review of historical aerial imagery of the project site, and the reconnaissance-level survey, no potentially jurisdictional aquatic resources were identified on the project site. Therefore, the project would not result in direct impacts on potentially jurisdictional waters of the United States and/or state. Federally jurisdictional waters (the Truckee River and Bear Creek) are located approximately 0.1 miles from the project site and are subject to regulation under the Clean Water Act as well as state regulations. Indirect impacts, such as increased erosion and turbidity through soil disturbance and/or vegetation removal, could result from construction activities in close proximity to these aquatic features.

As described in Section 2.5, "Environmental Commitments," if project activities would result in substantial earth disturbance (trenching and grading) in areas that have potential to result in sediment and debris mobilizing into adjacent jurisdictional waters (the Truckee River and Bear Creek), ASCWD would be required to install and maintain standard BMPs during project construction. BMPs would minimize the potential for erosion, sedimentation, and pollutant discharge during construction, thereby avoiding adverse effects on downstream water quality. Implementation of construction BMPs to provide effective erosion, runoff, and sediment control would avoid indirect impacts on the Truckee River and its tributaries (including Bear Creek). These BMPs would be selected to achieve maximum sediment removal and represent the best available technology that is economically achievable. If the

project disturbance footprint is over 1 acre, this would include compliance with the Construction General Permit and the preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan to minimize the potential for erosion.

Implementation of construction BMPs (and, if required, compliance with the Construction General Permit and preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan) would provide an opportunity to minimize the potential for erosion, sedimentation, and pollutant discharge during construction, thereby avoiding adverse effects on downstream water quality. Thus, significant impacts would not occur.

Would the project 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?

The project would not substantially interfere with the movement of native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species, established wildlife corridors, or wildlife nursery sites. The project site is within a rural, residential area and does not contain stream channels, riparian habitat, or other landscape features that function as wildlife movement corridors or nursery sites. Although surrounded by dense vegetation and montane forest, these habitats would not be affected by project activities. The project would therefore not interfere with the movement of fish or wildlife species or migratory wildlife corridors. Therefore, significant impacts on these resources would not occur.

Would the project conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

No trees or vegetation is proposed for removal. Thus, no conflicts with applicable policies or ordinances protecting biological resources would occur.

As described in Section 2.5, "Environmental Commitments," ASCWD shall obtain any necessary tree removal permits required for removal of protected trees under Article 12.20 of the Placer County Code if trees are removed as part of the project.

Would the project conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?

The project site is not located within the boundaries of any adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan. No impact would occur.

4.2 CULTURAL RESOURCES

A cultural resources memorandum was prepared for the project site (see Attachment B). A records search of the California Historical Resources Information System at the North Central Information Center (NCIC), intensive pedestrian survey of the Area of Potential Effects (APE), and an assessment of potential impacts to cultural resources were conducted. Using the questions from Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, a summary is provided below.

Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

On October 16, 2025, a records search of the APE and a 0.25-mile radius was conducted at the NCIC, at California State University, Sacramento. Similarly, in October 2025, a records search was completed by the USFS Data Steward for the APE. The records searches did not reveal any previously recorded historical resources within the APE. Additional research included review of historic US Geological Survey topographic maps from 1956 to 2021 and

aerial images from 1953 to 2022. The aerial images and topographic maps revealed that the three tanks proposed for replacement were installed as early as 1969.

Because some of the water tanks are considered to be of historic age (45 years or older), the ASCWD system was evaluated for historical significance. The ASCWD water system includes water storage tanks, wells, springs, water pumps and associated pipelines, and fire hydrants throughout the unincorporated community of Alpine Meadows, in Placer County, California. ASCWD has five water storage tanks serving the drinking water system and providing fire flow storage across several pressure zones. Tank 4 was constructed in 2019. Tanks 1, 2, 3, and 5 were all constructed in the 1960s. Each of the tanks have undergone only minor repairs since original construction. As described in the attached cultural resources memorandum, the ASCWD system was recommended ineligible for both the NRHP and CRHR because the ASCWD system does not possess important historical associations or architectural merit (NRHP/CRHR Criterion A/1 and C/3), is not associated with any notable individuals (NRHP/CRHR Criterion B/2), and does not have the potential to yield any additional important information about our history (NRHP/CRHR Criterion D/4). Therefore, the ASCWD system is not considered a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA or a historical property for the purposes of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Because there are no historical resources on the project site, the project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource, and no impact would occur.

Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

The project site is located in a rural, residential area, surrounded by dense vegetation and alpine forest. As part of the project, three existing water tanks would be demolished and replaced. Additionally, the project includes improvements to the existing natural surface road that provides access to one of the tanks. As described in Section 2.5, "Environmental Commitments," if archaeological resources and/or historic properties (including buildings, structures, midden soils, stone tools, chipped stone, or concentrations of shell, bone, charcoal, glass, metal, or ceramics) are inadvertently discovered or affected during ground disturbing project activities, all work shall cease within 100 feet (30.5 meters) of the find, and contractors shall notify ASCWD, who then in turn shall notify USFS heritage management staff at the Forest Supervisor's office in Nevada City for discoveries on USFS lands. If approved by USFS, the services of a professional archaeologist who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards shall be retained by USFS to evaluate the significance of the resource per Section 106 and Region 5 Programmatic Agreement Stipulation 7.7. If a discovery occurs in non-federal lands, ASCWD shall retain the services of a professional archaeologist. If the find meets the significance requirements to be a historic property, contingency funding, and a time allotment sufficient to allow for implementation of avoidance measures and/or mitigation will be made available. Possible treatments for eligible resources could include resource avoidance and preservation in place through project redesign, development of a treatment plan, or mitigation through data recovery excavations. The ASCWD contractor, in consultation with ASCWD and USFS, shall implement treatment measures deemed necessary by the archeologist for the protection of the cultural resources. Work shall not resume in the area of the discovery until staff are directed to do so by management. Because professionally accepted and legally compliant procedures for the discovery and protection of previously undocumented significant archaeological resources would be performed, significant impacts would not occur.

Would the project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?

The project site is located in a rural, residential area, surrounded by dense vegetation and alpine forest. As part of the project, three existing water tanks would be demolished and replaced. Additionally, the project includes improvements to the existing natural surface road that provides access to one of the tanks. California law recognizes the need to protect Native American human burials, skeletal remains, and items associated with Native American burials from vandalism and inadvertent destruction. As described in Section 2.5, "Environmental Commitments," if inadvertent effects to or unanticipated discoveries of human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and/or objects of cultural patrimony occur on or under the surface during construction activities, work within 100 feet (30.5 meters) of the discovery shall be stopped immediately. A reasonable effort to protect and secure the items in place shall be made without any removal or moving of any part of the discovery and the procedures outlined in NAGPRA, 25 U.S.C. Section 3001 et seq., as specified in the implementing regulations at 43 CFR Section 10.2(d)(1–2) shall be employed. The ASCWD contractor shall immediately notify ASCWD and USFS heritage management staff at the Forest Supervisor's office in Nevada City. If the discovery includes human remains, the contractor shall also immediately notify the Placer County Coroner, in accordance with PRC Section 5097.98 and Section 7050.5 of California's Health and Safety Code. If the remains are determined to be Native American or if Native American (Indian) cultural items are uncovered, the provisions of NAGPRA and its regulations at 43 CFR 10 and ARPA at 43 CFR 7 shall be followed. All remains and funerary objects, sacred objects, and/or items of cultural patrimony will be treated with dignity and respect. Work shall not resume in the area of the discovery until management in consultation with USFS directs staff to do so. Compliance with PRC Section 5097.98, the California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, NAGPRA and its regulations at 43 CFR 10, and ARPA at 43 CFR 7 would provide an opportunity to avoid or minimize the disturbance of human remains, and to appropriately treat any remains that are discovered. Thus, significant impacts would not occur.

4.3 OVERALL CONCLUSION

As demonstrated in this documentation and its attachments, the project is exempt from the need to conduct further environmental review under CEQA. The project qualifies for a CE (Classes 2 and 4) and does not trigger any of the exceptions under Section 15300.2 of the State CEQA Guidelines for the use of a CE, as evidenced by this memorandum.

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