Nevada County Regional Law Enforcement Indoor Shooting Range Project

Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration

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Prepared for:

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CDFW CNDDB, USFWS IPaC, and CNPS Search Results

Executive Summary

Project Site and Surrounding Land Uses

The Nevada County Regional Law Enforcement Indoor Shooting Range Project (Project) is located on two parcels at 434 Kahele Court, Nevada City, California 95959 and is associated with Assessor's Parcel Number 005-050-015 and 005-050-032. The Project site is located within the jurisdiction of the City of Nevada City (Nevada City), which zones the parcel as Public, consistent with the current use of the Sheriff's Office Regional Dispatch and Training Facility (SORDTF) onsite. The Project site is owned by the County of Nevada (County) and is bordered to the west by additional County-owned open space. The Project site is bordered to the north by State Route 49, to the east by the Nevada City Elks Lodge, and to the south by residential parcels along American Hill Road.

Project Description

The County proposes to design and construct a new Regional Law Enforcement Indoor Shooting Range on County-owned property at the existing SORDTF. The facility would provide a new, secure indoor firearms range to support the Nevada County Sheriff's Office (NCSO) and other law enforcement agencies in meeting required firearms training and certification standards. The proposed Project includes construction of an approximately 14,200-square-foot, 1-story building. The building would contain a 12-lane, 50-yard indoor firing range, with variable lighting, moveable target systems, an armory, ammunition and equipment storage, office space for instructors, and restrooms. Refer to ES Figure 1, Site Plan.

Summary of Impacts and Proposed Mitigation Measures

Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

All of the following environmental factors have been considered. Those environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is "Less Than Significant with Mitigation" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

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

Impacts and Recommended Mitigation Measures

Based on the analysis included in the attached Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, the Project has the potential to cause adverse environmental impacts. However, with implementation of the mitigation measures identified below, the impacts associated with the proposed Project would remain less than significant.

Mitigation Measure BIO-1: Pre-Construction Worker Environmental Awareness Training

Prior to construction, a qualified biologist shall conduct a Worker Environmental Awareness Training (WEAT) for construction personnel. The WEAT shall brief construction personnel on how to recognize special status plant and wildlife species and sensitive habitats, as well as the appropriate avoidance measures for those species and habitats. This includes special status plant and wildlife identification, nesting bird identification and habitat, relevant best management practices, mitigation, and applicable environmental regulations. WEAT reference pamphlets shall also be provided to keep onsite for use by an environmentally trained foreman for training new Project personnel in the absence of a biologist. If special status species are encountered in the work area, construction shall cease and the NCSO and a qualified biologist shall be notified for guidance before any construction activities are resumed. Depending on the listing of the observed species and its persistence in the area, the NCSO shall notify the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and/or United States Fish and Wildlife Service for guidance.

Mitigation Measure BIO-2: Conduct Pre-construction Surveys and Avoidance Measures for Western Bumble Bee

The following measures are recommended to minimize potential impacts to the western bumble bee:

- If the western bumble bee is no longer a candidate for listing or formally listed species under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) at the time ground-disturbing activities occur, then no additional protection measures are proposed for the species.
- Because western bumble bee nest locations are chosen on an annual basis and the site provides nesting habitat, a CDFW-approved biologist trained in the identification of western bumble bee shall conduct three weekly pre-construction nesting surveys with focus on detecting active nesting colonies. The third and final survey shall be conducted within 24 hours prior to ground disturbing activities, if ground-disturbing activities are scheduled to occur during the flight season (February through November). Surveys shall be completed at a minimum of 1 person-hour of searching per 3 acres of suitable habitat during suitable weather conditions (sustained winds less than 8 miles per hour, mostly sunny to full sun, temperatures between 65 and 90°F) at an appropriate time of day for detection (at least an hour after sunrise and at least 2 hours before sunset, though ideally between 9:00 AM and 1:00 PM).
    - If no nests are found but the species is present, a full-time qualified biological monitor shall be present during initial vegetation or ground disturbing activities that are scheduled to occur during the queen flight period (February through March), colony active period (April through September), and/or gyne flight period (October through November). The western bumble bee biologist shall immediately notify CDFW of the detection as further coordination may be required to avoid or mitigate certain impacts.
    - If an active western bumble bee nest is detected, an appropriate no disturbance buffer zone (including foraging resources and flight corridors essential for supporting the colony) shall be established around the nest to reduce the risk of disturbance or accidental take and the designated biologist shall coordinate with CDFW to determine if an Incidental Take Permit under Section 2081 of the CESA will be required. Nest avoidance buffers may be removed at the completion of the flight season and/or once the qualified western bumble bee biologist deems the nesting colony is no longer active and CDFW agrees with the determination.
- If initial grading is phased or delayed for any reason, the 24-hour pre-construction nesting survey will be repeated prior to ground-disturbing activities that are scheduled to occur during the same flight season (February through November). Three pre-construction western bumble bee nesting surveys shall be required in subsequent years of construction whenever vegetation and ground disturbing activities are scheduled to occur during the flight season (February through November) if nesting habitat is still present or has re-established and will be affected.

Mitigation Measure BIO-3: Avoid Disturbance to Nesting Raptors and Other Nesting Migratory Birds

To the extent feasible, ground disturbance and vegetation thinning and/or removal activities shall be conducted during the local non-nesting season (approximately September 1 to January 31). If construction, such as tree removal, grading, excavation, etc., that have the potential to disturb nesting birds occur during the nesting season, a qualified biologist shall conduct a pre-construction

nesting bird survey prior to vegetation removal or ground disturbing activities within the proposed Project site with the following criteria:

- Surveys shall be conducted within the proposed Project site and all potential bird nesting habitat for passerine species within 150 feet.
- Surveys shall be conducted within the proposed Project site and all potential raptor nesting habitat within 500 feet.
- The surveys should be conducted within 1 week before initiation of construction if construction is scheduled to occur between February 1 and August 31.
    - If no active nests are detected, then no additional mitigation is required.
    - If surveys indicate the presence of nesting birds, the biologist shall establish an appropriate avoidance buffer around the nest in which no work would be allowed until the young have successfully fledged or the nest has been abandoned. The size of the avoidance buffer shall be determined by a qualified biologist and shall depend on the status of the species present, the level of noise or construction disturbance, line of sight between the nest and the disturbance, ambient levels of noise and other disturbances, other topographical or artificial barriers, and the sensitivity of the nesting bird to the disturbance. Typically, avoidance buffers are up to 500 feet for raptors and up to 150 feet for waterfowl and passerines. Generally, these distances are sufficient (depending on the species and project activities) to prevent substantial disturbance to nesting birds which would cause direct mortality. However, these buffers may be increased or decreased at the discretion of the biologist, as appropriate.
    - If nesting birds are documented to have established themselves in a given location within the proposed Project site during pre-existing construction activities, then it shall be assumed that the nesting birds are habituated to the construction activities. Under this scenario, the active nest shall be monitored by a qualified biologist periodically until the young have successfully fledged, or the nest has been abandoned, as described above.

If active nests are identified on or immediately adjacent to the proposed Project site, then all non-essential construction activities (e.g., equipment storage and meetings) should be avoided in the immediate vicinity of the nest site, but the remainder of construction activities may proceed.

Mitigation Measure BIO-4: Comply with the Nevada City Tree Ordinance

Prior to tree removal, the NCSO shall obtain a Tree Removal permit, and implement any additional mitigation the City requires pursuant to Chapter 18.01 of the City Municipal Code.

Mitigation Measure CUL-1: Conduct Cultural Resource Worker Awareness Training

Prior to the beginning of project construction, a qualified archaeologist (i.e., an archaeologist that meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Professional Qualifications in

Archaeology) shall prepare and conduct pre-construction cultural resources awareness training. All construction personnel shall be required to attend the awareness training. The training will inform construction staff of the possibility of encountering precontact or historic-period cultural resources and/or human remains within the Proposed Project site and the protocol(s) to be followed if cultural resources or human remains are encountered during project implementation.

To facilitate compliance, all grading and construction plans shall include a note indicating all equipment operators and employees involved in any form of ground disturbance shall be trained to recognize potential cultural resources and advised of the possibility of encountering subsurface cultural resources during grading activities.

Mitigation Measure CUL-2: Cultural Resources Inadvertent Discovery Plan and Implementation, including Halt Work Provisions

An inadvertent discovery plan for cultural resources and human remains shall be prepared prior to and implemented during project construction. The inadvertent discovery plan shall be prepared by a qualified archaeologist (i.e., an archaeologist that meets the Secretary of the Interiors Standards and Guidelines for Professional Qualifications in Archaeology). The inadvertent discovery plan shall address, at a minimum, protocols to be implemented in case of an inadvertent discovery of cultural resources and/or human remains, and/or the treatment of any inadvertently discovered cultural resources and/or human remains.

More specifically, all equipment operators shall be advised of the possibility of encountering cultural resources (MM CUL-1). If such resources are encountered or suspected, work shall be halted immediately within 100 ft of the suspected resource and NCSO shall be contacted. A professional archaeologist shall be retained by NCSO, consulted with, and provided access to any discoveries and develop appropriate management recommendations for archaeological resource treatment. If skeletal remains are encountered and appear to be human, Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Coder requires that the Nevada County Coroner and the Native American Heritage Commission be contacted and, if Native American resources are involved, Native American organizations and individuals recognized by the County shall be notified and consulted about any plans for treatment.

Mitigation Measure GEO-1: Clearing and Grubbing

On-site soil (less debris and organic materials) are considered suitable as fill material. The site should be cleared and grubbed of vegetation and other deleterious materials as described below.

- Strip and remove the top 2 to 3 inches of soil containing shallow vegetation, roots and other deleterious materials. This highly organic topsoil can be stockpiled onsite and used in landscape areas, but is not suitable for use as fill. The project geotechnical engineer should approve any proposed use of the spoil generated from stripping prior to placement.
- Special care should be taken to remove the entire tree root system and backfill voids to 90% relative compaction per ASTM D1557.

- Overexcavate any relatively loose debris and soil that is encountered in exploratory trenches or any other onsite excavations to underlying, competent material. Possible excavations include exploratory trenches made by others, mantles or soil test pits, tree stump holes, and mining relics.
- Existing fill on the eastern and western edges of the building area should be overexcavated to competent, native soil. Debris encountered in the fill (e.g., wood, metal, tires) shall be removed from the fill if the fill is to be used as structural fill. Material proposed for use as structural fill must be approved by the contractor. Unsuitable materials shall be removed from the site.
- Remove all rocks greater than 6 inches in greatest dimension (oversized rock) from the top 12 inches of soil, if encountered. Oversized rock may be used in landscape areas, rock landscape walls, or removed from the site. Oversized rock can be stockpiled onsite and used to construct fills, but must be placed at or near the bottom of deep fills and must be placed in windrows to avoid nesting. The project geotechnical engineer must approve the use of oversized rock materials prior to constructing fill.
- Fine grained, potentially expansive soil, as determined by a representative of the contractor, that is encountered during grading within proposed building locations and paved parking areas should be mixed with granular soil or overexcavated and stockpiled for removal from the Project site or for later use in landscape areas. A typical mixing ratio for granular to expansive soil is 4:1. The actual mixing ratio should be determined by the contractor.
- Vegetation, other deleterious materials, and oversized rocks not used in landscape areas or rock walls should be removed from the site.
    - Inspection by project geotechnical engineer is required during clearing and grubbing operations.

Mitigation Measure GEO-2: Native Soil Preparation for Fill Placement

Undocumented fill along the slope face should be removed to native soil as part of the benching during grading of fill slope. After site clearing and grubbing, the exposed native soil should be prepared for placement of compacted fill as described below.

- The native grade should be scarified to a depth of 12 inches, moisture conditioned to within 0 to 4% optimum moisture and compacted to 90% relative compaction per ASTM D1557, to prepare for structural fill.
- The native soil should then be compacted to achieve a minimum relative compaction of 90% of the ASTM D1557 maximum dry density. The moisture content, density and relative percent compaction should be verified by the construction quality assurance (CQA) monitor. The earthwork contractor should assist the CQA monitor by excavating test pads with onsite earth moving equipment.

  - The upper 6 inches of pavement subgrade and aggregate base rock should be compacted to a minimum of 95% relative compaction per ASTM D1557.

- Construction quality assurance tests should be performed using the following minimum testing frequencies:

Table ES-1. Minimum Testing Frequencies for Native Soil Preparation

ASTM No.5	Description	Test Frequency
D1557	Modified Proctor Curve	1 per 100,000 sf or material change[1]
D2922	Nuclear Moisture	1 per 10,000 sf
D3017	Nuclear Density	1 per 10,000 sf

Note:
Higher testing frequency shall govern
Key:
sf = square foot

Mitigation Measure GEO-3: Fill Placement

Fill placement should incorporate the following recommendations:

- Soil used for fill construction should consist of uncontaminated, predominantly granular, non-expansive native soil or approved import soil. If encountered, rock used in fill should be broken into pieces no larger than 6 inches in diameter. Rocks larger than 6 inches are considered oversized material and should be stockpiled for offhaul or later use in landscape areas or rock walls.

- Existing fill on the eastern and western edges of the building area must be approved by the contractor prior to use as structural fill. Debris encountered in the fill (e.g. wood, metal, tires) shall be removed from the fill prior to placement.

- Proposed import soil should be predominantly granular, non-expansive and free of deleterious material. Import material that is proposed for use onsite should be submitted to the contractor for approval and possible laboratory testing at least 72 hours prior to transport to the site.

- Cohesive, predominantly fine grained, or potentially expansive soil encountered during grading should be stockpiled for removal, mixed as directed by the contractor, or used in landscape areas.

- Soil used to construct fills should be uniformly moisture conditioned to within approximately 2 percentage points of the ASTM D1557 optimum moisture content. Wet soil may need to be air dried or mixed with drier material to facilitate placement and compaction, particularly during or following the wet season.

- Fill should be constructed by placing uniformly moisture conditioned soil in maximum 8-inch-thick loose lifts (layers) prior to compacting.

- All fill should be compacted to a minimum relative compaction of 90% of the ASTM D1557 maximum dry density. The upper 8 inches of fill in building footprints and paved areas should be compacted to a minimum of 95% relative compaction.
- Construction quality assurance tests should be performed using the following minimum testing frequencies:

Table ES-2. Minimum Testin Frequencies for Fill Placement

ASTM No.5	Description	Test Frequency
D1557	Modified Proctor Curve	1 per 100,000 cy or material change[1]
D2922	Nuclear Moisture	1 per 500 cy
D3017	Nuclear Density	1 per 500 cy[2]

Notes:
[1] Higher testing frequencies shall govern
[2] For small fill, a minimum of 1 test should be take per every 18 inches of elevation change as fill is placed. Irregular fills or fills of inconsistent quality may require more frequent testing.
Key:
cy= cubic yard

The moisture content, density and relative percent compaction of all fills should be verified by the CQA monitor during construction. The earthwork contractor should assist the CQA monitor by excavating test pads with the onsite earth moving equipment.

Mitigation Measure GEO-4: Differential Fill Depth

The recommendations presented in this section are intended to reduce the magnitude of differential settlement-induced structural distress associated with variable fill depth beneath structures:

- Site grading should be performed so that cut-fill transition lines do not occur directly beneath any structures. The cut portion of the cut-fill building pads, if proposed, should be scarified to a minimum depth of 8 inches, as described in Section 5.1.2 of the 1999 Geotechnical Engineering and Geologic Hazards Report (Holdrege & Kull 1999), and recompacted to 95% relative compaction.
- Differential fill depths beneath structures should not exceed 5 feet. For example, if the maximum fill depth was 8 feet across a building pad, the minimum fill depth beneath that pad could not be less than 3 feet. If a cut-fill building pad was used in this example, the cut portion would need to be overexcavated 3 feet and rebuilt with compacted fill.

Mitigation Measure GEO-5: Fill Slope Grading

Fill slopes should be graded as described below.

- Fill slopes, if proposed, should be no steeper than 2:1, H:V. If fill slopes are to be steeper than 2:1, and/or have a vertical height greater than 10 feet, the slope stability analysis should be reviewed and possibly redone, if necessary.

- Fill should be placed in horizontal lifts to the grades shown on the project plans. Fill slopes should be constructed by overbuilding the slope face and then cutting it back to the design slope gradient. Fill slopes should not be constructed or extended horizontally by placing soil on an existing slope face and/or compacted by track walking.
- A keyway should be constructed at the toe of the fill slope and at least 2 feet deep on the downhill side of the key. The keyway should be a minimum of 8 feet wide and sloped back into the slope at a minimum 5% slope. In order to remove loose soil/rock, excavate benches into competent material after engineered fill has been placed in the keyway per our recommendations. Benches should be cut into the existing slope as filling proceeds every 2 to 4 feet vertically and 4 to 6 feet wide into the slope, to remove loose soil/rock. Once finished pad grade has been achieved, any cut portion of the building pad should be ripped, moisture conditioned and recompacted.
- Steepened fill slopes can be a maximum of 1.5:1 (horizontal to vertical) if recommendations are followed. The fill slope should have Miragrid 5XT, 2 foot vertical spacing, and 12 foot wide with the strong direction perpendicular to the slope.
- Steepened cut slopes can be a maximum of 1.75:1 (horizontal to vertical). The acceptability of the steepened cut slopes will be based on evaluation at the time of grading by a representative of Gularte and Associates.

Mitigation Measure GEO-6: Erosion Controls

Graded portions of the site should be seeded as soon as possible following grading to allow vegetation to become established prior to the rainy season. The following erosion controls should be installed on all cut and fill slopes to minimize erosion:

- All slopes should be hydroseeded or hand seeded/strawed with an appropriate seed mixture compatible with the soil and climate conditions of the site as recommended by the local Resource Conservation District.
- Following seeding, jute netting should be placed and secured over the slopes to keep seeds and straw from being washed or blown away. Tackifiers or binding agents may be used in lieu of jute netting.
- Surface water drainage ditches should be established at the top of all slopes to intercept and redirect surface water away from the slope face. Under no circumstances should surface water be allowed to run over slope faces. The intercepted water should be discharged into natural drainage courses or into other collection and disposal structures.
- A v-ditch should also be constructed at the top of the cut slope to direct water away from the slope face.

Mitigation Measure GEO-7: Slope Setbacks

Buildings have a minimum setback of 5 feet from ascending slopes and 10 feet from descending slopes, or as outlined in section 1808A.7 of the 2025 California Building Code, whichever is greater. The setback is measured from the outermost footing line closest to the toe/hinge point of slope.

Mitigation Measure GEO-8: Underground Utility Trenches

The contractor is responsible for conducting all trenching and shoring in accordance with CALOSHA requirements. Underground utility trenches should be excavated and backfilled as described below.

- It is anticipated that the contractor will be able to excavate underground utility trenches to 6 to 8 feet below ground surface (bgs) with a CAT 416B backhoe or equivalent. Resistant, slightly to moderately weathered rock may be encountered at depths greater than exploratory trenches. In addition, previous experience in the area has shown that isolated areas of moderately or slightly weathered rock that is difficult to trench with conventional trenching equipment may be encountered in utility trenches. Approximate locations of observed rock outcrop are shown on the 1999 Geotechnical Engineering and Geologic Hazards Report (Holdrege & Kull 1999) site map, Sheet 1. Pre-ripping of the trench alignment, blasting, or splitting may be required in these isolated areas.
- Fill should be placed in loose lifts not exceeding 12 inches for backhoes and 18 inches for large excavators.
- The California OSHA requires all utility trenches deeper than 4 feet bgs to be shored with bracing equipment prior to being entered by any individuals, whether or not they are associated with the project.
- It is anticipated that shallow subsurface seepage may be encountered, particularly if utility trenches are excavated during the winter, spring, or early summer. The earthwork contractor may need to employ dewatering methods as discussed on page 6 in Section 5.1.8 of the 1999 Geotechnical Engineering and Geologic Hazards Report (Holdrege & Kull 1999) in order to excavate, place and compact the trench backfill materials.
- Soil used as trench backfill should be non-expansive and have a maximum particle size of 2 inches.
- Soil used to backfill trenches should be uniformly moisture conditioned to within 0 to 4% of the ASTM D1557 optimum moisture content.
- Trench backfill should be constructed by placing uniformly moisture conditioned soil in maximum 8-inch-thick loose lifts (layers) prior to compacting.
- Trench backfill placed beneath the utilities (bedding) should be compacted to achieve a minimum relative compaction of 90% of the ASTM D1557 maximum dry density.

- Trench backfill soil should be compacted to a minimum relative compaction of 90% of the ASTM D1557 maximum dry density.
- Trench backfill soil placed within 1 foot of the finished subgrade in road and parking lot areas should be compacted to a minimum relative compaction of 95% of the ASTM D1557 maximum dry density.
- The loose lift thickness, moisture, density and relative compaction of the trench backfill soil should be verified by the CQA Monitor. The earthwork contractor should assist the CQA monitor during construction by excavating test pits in the compacted trench backfill material.
- Jetting of trench backfill is not acceptable except in joint utility trenches where damage to conduits makes mechanical compaction methods impractical.
- Construction quality assurance tests should be performed using the following minimum testing frequencies:

Table ES-3. Minimum Testing Frequencies for Fill Placement

ASTM No.5	Description	Test Frequency
D1557	Modified Proctor Curve	1 per 100,000 cy or material change[1]
D2922	Nuclear Moisture	1 per 500 cy
D3017	Nuclear Density	1 per 500 cy[2]

Notes:
[1] Higher testing frequencies shall govern
[2] For small fill, a minimum of 1 test should be take per every 18 inches of elevation change as fill is placed. Irregular fills or fills of inconsistent quality may require more frequent testing.
Key:
cy= cubic yard

Mitigation Measure GEO-9: Construction Dewatering

The earthwork contractor should be prepared to dewater utility trench excavations and any other excavations if seepage is encountered during grading. Seepage may be encountered if grading is performed during and immediately after the rainy season. The following recommendations are preliminary and are not based on groundwater flow analysis.

- It is anticipated that dewatering of utility trenches can be performed by gravity or by constructing sumps to depths below the trench bottom and removing the water with sump pumps. Additional sump excavations and pumps should be added as necessary to keep the base of excavations free of standing water when placing and compacting the trench backfill.
- If seepage is encountered during trench excavation, it may be necessary to remove underlying saturated soil and replace it with free draining, granular drain rock enveloped in geotextile fabric. Native backfill soil can again be used after placing the granular rock to an elevation that is higher than the encountered groundwater.

Mitigation Measure GEO-10: Subsurface Drainage

If groundwater or saturated soil conditions are encountered during grading, professional engineers should be allowed to observe the conditions and provide site specific subsurface drainage recommendations. Generally, if moist or saturated soil conditions are encountered which prevent or restrict fill placement, subdrains may be necessary, particularly if grading is performed during or immediately following the wet season. Typically, a subdrain should consist of 1 inch, washed, crushed rock or pea gravel enveloped in non-woven geotextile “filter” fabric. A 4-inch-diameter perforated polyvinyl chloride (PVC) pipe should be placed 2 to 3 inches above the base of the subdrain with the perforations placed down. The base of the subdrain installation should be sloped at a minimum 1% gradient to the desired daylight location.

Mitigation Measure GEO-11: Surface Water Drainage

The following measures are recommended to help mitigate surface water drainage problems:

- Slope concrete pavement areas at least 0.5% and asphalt concrete pavements at least 0.5 and preferably 1% to extend pavement life.
- If soil surrounds the building, discharge roof down spouts to storm drain system. Where soil surrounds the building, provide a 5% slope away from building exteriors for a distance of at least 3 feet.
- Compact and slope all soil placed adjacent to building foundations such that water is not allowed to pond or infiltrate. Backfill should be free of deleterious material.
- Direct downspouts to a closed collector pipe which discharges flow to positive drainage.
- Construct V-ditches at the top of all slopes to reduce surface water flow over slope faces. Typically, V-ditches should be 3 feet wide and at least 6 inches deep. Surface water collected in V-ditches should be directed away and downslope from proposed building pads and driveways into a drainage channel.
- Direct sprinklers away from buildings. Use drip irrigation near the structure and pavements. Excess watering increases to risk of premature pavement failure and shrink/swell underneath the structure.

Mitigation Measure GEO-12: Foundations

Following are the foundation recommendations:

- All footings are to be designed by the project structural engineer. Unless otherwise directed by the project structural engineer, footings should be a minimum of 12 inches wide and trenched through any loose surface material and a minimum of 18 inches into competent native soil or compacted fill (not including crushed rock or pavement). If clay is encountered at the base of footings, the footing should be deepened through the clay lens into underlying granular material or weathered rock.

- Footing trenches should be cleaned of all loose soil and construction debris prior to placing concrete. A representative from the contractor should observe the footing excavations prior to concrete placement.
- All footing reinforcement is to be designed by the project structural engineer. Unless otherwise directed by the project structural engineer, footings should be designed with a minimum of 2 No. 4 rebar reinforcement, one near the top of the footing and one near the bottom. A minimum of 3 inches of concrete coverage should surround the bars.
- Strip footings may be sized for an allowable bearing capacity of 2,400 pounds per square foot (psf) for dead plus live loads. This value can be increased by 400 psf for each additional foot of embedment, up to a limiting value of 3,600 psf. Allowable bearing values may be increased by 33% for additional transient loading such as wind or seismic. Spread footings may be sized for an allowable bearing capacity of 2,800 psf.
- Footing excavations should be saturated prior to placing concrete to reduce the risk of problems caused by wicking of moisture from curing concrete.
- No attempt should be made to smooth rock in the base of the footings founded in rock. If the required footing depth cannot be achieved, rebar dowels can be used to resist sliding. The depth, spacing, and sizing of dowels should be made on a case-by-case basis. Contractor should review doweling details.
- Total settlement beneath the footings should be no more than 1-inch, with an estimated maximum differential settlement of ½-inch over a distance of 20 feet.
- Utility excavations parallel to footing lines should be clear of a 1:1 (horizontal:vertical) plane projected downward from the base of footings. Where utility lines cross footings, they should be sleeved and footings deepened as appropriate.

Mitigation Measure GEO-13: Slab-on-Grade Floor Systems

A concrete slab-on-grade floor may be used in conjunction with the perimeter concrete foundation. The following are recommended regarding the slab-on-grade:

- All slabs-on-grade are to be designed by the project structural engineer.
- Slabs-on-grade should be 1-inch of 3/8-inch pea gravel or clean sand directly under the slab, underlain with. However, it may be omitted if the slab is poured directly on 10-mil polyethylene “plastic” sheeting. If this option is used proper measures should be taken by the contractor to promote even curing and prevent slab curling.
- Unless otherwise directed by the project structural engineer, slabs-on-grade should be a minimum of 4 inches thick. As a minimum, No. 3 rebar on 24-inch centers or flat sheets of 6 x 6, #10 x #10 welded wire mesh (WWM) should be used as slab reinforcement.

- It is not recommended to use rolls of WWM because vertically centered placement of rolled mesh within the slab is difficult to achieve. All rebar and sheets of WWM should be placed in the center of the slab and supported on concrete "dobies". "Hooking and pulling" of steel during concrete placement is not recommended.
- There should be 4 inches of clean crushed rock on the building pad. Crushed rock should have 100% passing the ¾-inch sieve and less than 5% passing the No. 4 Sieve.
- The vapor barrier and sand may be omitted in areas that do not have moisture sensitive floor coverings (i.e., garage slabs and parking areas).
- Vapor barrier membrane should consist of 10-mil polyethylene “plastic” sheeting, properly sealed at penetrations and edges, underlain with. Regardless of the type of vapor barrier used, moisture can wick up through a concrete slab. Slabs can be tested for water transmissivity in areas that are moisture sensitive.
- Expansion joints should be provided between the slab and perimeter footings and bisect the length and width of the slab at intervals specified by the American Concrete Institute or Portland Concrete Association.
- Exterior slabs-on-grade such as sidewalks may be placed directly on compacted fill without the use of a baserock section. For exterior slabs, the native soil should be ripped, moisture conditioned and recompacted to an 8-inch depth.
- Soil should be moisture conditioned prior to placing concrete. If the soil is not moisture conditioned prior to placing concrete, moisture will be wicked out of the concrete, possibly causing shrinkage cracks.
- All deleterious material must be removed prior to placing concrete.
- Concrete should be a minimum thickness of 5 inches and have a concrete water-cement ratio of 0.48 or less. Concrete should be a higher strength concrete, with a minimum 3,000 psi compressive strength at 28 days.
- Exposed concrete slabs should be moisture cured for at least 7 days after placement.
- Concrete slabs subjected to heavy traffic loads should be reinforced as determined by a structural engineer.
- Concrete slabs impart a relatively small load on the subgrade (approximately 50 psf). Therefore, some vertical movement should be anticipated from possible expansion or differential loading.
- Slabs should be reinforced with No. 3 reinforcing bar at 18 inches on center or No. 4 reinforcing bars placed on 24-inch centers each way. Place dobies per ACI with a maximum dobie spacing of 6’ on center, each way.

Mitigation Measure GEO-14: Retaining Wall Design Criteria

Recommendations for design and construction of retaining walls are listed below:

- Provided that adequate drainage is included, walls subjected to active soil pressure should be designed to resist an equivalent fluid pressure of 38 pounds per cubic foot (pcf). At-rest conditions should have an at-rest fluid pressure of 55 pcf with level backfill conditions. Retaining wall backfill should be native or predominantly granular, non-expansive import backfill. A minimum lateral projection of 5 feet be maintained from the base of the footing to daylight on the slope.

- Drainage of the retaining walls may be accomplished by using aggregate drainage blanket or a pre-manufactured wall drainage system. Drainage blanket materials, if selected for use, should consist of Class 2 permeable material per Section 68 of the Caltrans Standard Specifications. The drainage blanket should be at least 12 inches thick and placed to within 12 inches of the top of the wall. If drain rock is used, a clean, ¾-inch crushed rock, should be enveloped in a Mirafi 140N filter fabric. Water collected at the bottom of the drain system should be transmitted away from the wall by a perforated pipe or weep holes. The pipe should be at least 4 inches in diameter with the perforations placed down. The pipe should daylight to a lower grade or drain. If adequate drainage is not provided, an additional equivalent fluid pressure of 40 pcf should be added to the values recommended above. Damp-proofing of the walls should be included in areas where wall moisture would be problematic (e.g. stucco walls); we commonly recommend a waterproofing membrane such as Mirafi 860/861.

- If a tiered retaining wall configuration is to be used then a setback of 1.5xH (H = height of bottom wall) or 10 feet, whichever is greater, should be used. The setback is measured from face of wall to face of wall. The minimum offset from face of retaining wall to a structure should be 5 feet for a wall above and 10 feet for a wall below the structure.

Mitigation Measure GEO-15: Pavement Design

The table provides recommended pavement sections based on an R-value of 30 and Procedure 608 of the Caltrans Highway Design Manual.

Table ES-4. Asphalt Equivalent Pavement Sections

	Traffic Index			
	4	**5**	**6**	**7**
Asphalt Concrete (inches)	2.0	2.5	3.0	4.0
Aggregate Base (inches)	6	7	9	10

Mitigation Measure HAZ-1: Preparation of a Soil Management Plan

Preparation of a Soil Management Plan is to be prepared by the construction contractor and submitted to the Nevada County Planning Department for review and approval prior to initiating construction and grading activities. Contaminated soil encountered during construction activities shall be handled, removed, and disposed in accordance with regulatory requirements.

Mitigation Measure TCR-1: Cultural Resource Worker Awareness Training

The applicant/contractor shall provide a tribal cultural awareness and sensitivity training program (Worker Environmental Awareness Program) for all personnel involved in project construction, including field consultants and construction workers, at their own expense. The Worker Environmental Awareness Program training shall be conducted by either a qualified archaeologist for cultural resources or a tribal representative for Tribal Cultural Resources (TCRs). The Worker Environmental Awareness Program shall be developed in coordination with interested Native American Tribes. The Worker Environmental Awareness Program shall be conducted before any project-related construction activities begin at the project site. The Worker Environmental Awareness Program will include relevant information regarding sensitive cultural resources and TCRs, including applicable regulations, protocols for avoidance, and consequences of violating State laws and regulations. The Worker Environmental Awareness Program will also describe appropriate avoidance and impact minimization measures for cultural resources and TCRs that could be located at the project site and will outline what to do and who to contact if any potential cultural resources or TCRs are encountered. The Worker Environmental Awareness Program will emphasize the requirement for confidentiality and culturally appropriate treatment of any discovery of significance to Native Americans and will discuss appropriate behaviors and responsive actions, consistent with Native American tribal values. The training may be done in coordination with the project archaeologist. All ground-disturbing equipment operators shall be required to receive the training and sign a form that acknowledges receipt of the training.

Mitigation Measure TCR-2: Establish an Environmentally Sensitive Area for Avoidance of White Rocks

Prior to the beginning of Project construction, NCSO will work with a Washoe Tribe Certified Tribal Monitor or Representative to designate an ESA of avoidance around TCR White Rocks. The ESA will be depicted on Project plans. Prior to construction, the approved monitor or representative will go to the resource and physically delineate the ESA. The delineation will use temporary barrier fencing, extending 30 ft from the TCR. The fencing indicates an area where project activities are strictly forbidden.

Mitigation Measure TCR-3: Tribal Monitoring

The project proponent shall contact the United Auburn Indian Community (UAIC) Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) (thpo@auburnrancheria.com) at least two weeks prior to project ground-disturbing activities to retain the services of a UAIC Certified Tribal Monitor or Representative. The Tribal Monitor or Representative will inspect the project site, which may include soil piles, trenches, or other disturbed areas, within the first five days of groundbreaking activity, or as appropriate for the type and size of project.

The project proponent shall contact the Washoe Tribe THPO (William.Enos@washoetribe.us) as well as Sarina Shaw (Sarina.Shaw@washoetribe.us) and Kappa Enos (koppaenos@yahoo.com) at least two weeks prior to project ground-disturbing activities (including vegetation removal that will result in ground disturbance) to retain the services of a Washoe Tribe Certified Tribal Monitor or Representative.

In the event the Tribal Monitor does not report to the job site at the scheduled time after receiving 24-hour business day notice, construction activities may proceed without tribal monitoring. At no time, regardless of the presence or absence of a Tribal Monitor, shall suspected TCRs be mishandled or disrespected. The Nevada County Planning Department shall assist with resolution of disagreements between the project proponent/contractor and the Tribe if such occurs on the project. The Tribal Monitor(s) shall wear the appropriate safety equipment while on the construction site at all times.

If there are culturally significant finds, Tribes may require additional Tribal Monitoring. Tribal Monitors or Tribal Representatives shall have the authority to direct that work be temporarily paused, diverted, or slowed within 100 feet of the immediate impact area if sites, cultural soils, or objects of potential significance are identified. The temporary pause/diversion shall be of an adequate duration for the Tribal Representative to examine the resource.

To track the implementation of this measure, the Tribal Monitor(s) shall document field monitoring activities on a Tribal Monitor log and provide the log to their THPO.

Mitigation Measure TCR-4: Unanticipated Discoveries of Tribal Cultural Resources

Appropriate treatment of TCRs or other cultural finds may include but not be limited to the Tribe consulting with the lead agency to: (1) identify the boundaries of the new TCR; (2) if feasible, identify appropriate preservation in place and avoidance measures, including redesign or adjustments to the existing construction process, and long-term management; or 3) if avoidance is infeasible, a reburial location in proximity of the find where no future disturbance is anticipated. Permanent curation of TCRs will not take place unless approved in writing by the culturally affiliated Tribe.

If any potential TCRs or resources of cultural significance, including but not limited to features, anthropogenic/cultural soils, cultural belongings or objects (artifacts), shell, bone, shaped stones or bone, or ash/charcoal deposits are discovered by any person during construction activities including ground disturbing activities, all work shall pause immediately within 100 feet of the find, or an agreed upon distance based on the Project site and nature of the find. Work shall cease in and within the immediate vicinity of the find regardless of whether the construction is being actively monitored by a Tribal Monitor, cultural resources specialist, or professional archaeologist. A Tribal Representative and the Nevada County Planning Department shall be immediately notified, and the Tribal Representative in coordination with the Planning Department shall determine if the find is a TCR (PRC §21074) and the Tribal Representative shall make recommendations for further evaluation and treatment as necessary.

The culturally affiliated Tribe shall consult with the Nevada County Planning Department to (1) identify the boundaries of the new TCR and (2) if feasible, identify appropriate preservation in place and avoidance measures, including redesign or adjustments to the existing construction process, and long-term management, or 3) if avoidance is infeasible, a reburial location in proximity of the find where no future disturbance is anticipated. Permanent curation of TC Rs will not take place unless approved in writing by the culturally affiliated Tribe. The construction contractor(s) shall

provide secure, on-site storage for culturally sensitive soils or objects that are components of TCRs that are found or recovered during construction. Only Tribal Representatives shall have access to the storage. Storage size shall be determined by the nature of the TCR and can range from a small lock box to a conex box (shipping container). A secure (locked), fenced area can also provide adequate on-site storage if larger amounts of material must be stored. The construction contractor(s) and the Nevada County Planning Department shall facilitate the respectful reburial of the culturally sensitive soils or objects. This includes providing a reburial location that is consistent with the Tribe's preferences, excavation of the reburial location, and assisting with the reburial, upon request. Any discoveries shall be documented on a Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) 523 form within two weeks of the discovery and submitted to the appropriate California Historic Resources Information System center. Work at the TCR discovery location shall not resume until authorization is granted by the Nevada County Planning Department in coordination with the culturally affiliated Tribe. If articulated or disarticulated human remains, or human remains in any state of decomposition or skeletal completeness are discovered during construction activities, the County Coroner and the culturally affiliated Tribe shall be contacted immediately. Upon determination by the County Coroner that the find is Native American in origin, the Native American Heritage Commission will assign the Most Likely Descendent who will work with the project proponent to define appropriate treatment and disposition of the burials.

Abbreviations

°F	degrees Fahrenheit
AAQS	ambient air quality standards
AB	Assembly Bill
AB 939	California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989
ADT	average daily trip
AHERA	Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act
APN	Assessor's Parcel Number
ATCM	Airborne Toxic Control Measure for Construction, Grading, Quarrying and Surface Mining Operations
BAAQMD	Bay Area Air Quality Management District
Basin Plan	Sacramento and San Joaquin River Basins
bgs	below ground surface
BMP	best management practice
BMP	best management practices
BP	before present
CAA	Clean Air Act
CAAQS	California Ambient Air Quality Standards
CalEEMod	California Emissions Estimator Model
Cal FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
CALGreen	California Green Building Code
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CCAA	California Clean Air Act
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEC	California Energy Commission
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act

CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
CERS	California Environmental Reporting System
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CFC	California Fire Code
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CGP	Construction General Permit
CHRIS	California Historic Resources Information System
CH_4	methane
CNDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CO	carbon monoxide
CO_2	carbon dioxide
CO_2e	carbon dioxide equivalent
County	County of Nevada
CQA	construction quality assurance
CRHR	California Register of Historic Places
CUPA	Certified Unified Program Agency
CWA	Clean Water Act
CWPP	Community Wildfire Protection Plan
dB	decibel
dBA	A-weighted decibel
dBC	C-weighted decibel
DCH	designated critical habitat
DOC	California Department of Conservation
DPM	diesel particulate matter
DTSC	Department of Toxic Substances Control
EAP	Energy Action Plan
EISA	Energy Independence and Security Act

FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FESA	Federal Endangered Species Act
FGC	Fish and Game Code
FHSZ	Fire Hazard Severity Zone
FMMP	Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program
GHG	greenhouse gas
GWh	gigawatt-hour
HEPA	high efficiency particulate air
HFC	hydrofluorocarbon
HMBP	Hazardous Materials Business Plan
HVAC	heating, ventilation, and air conditioning
IS/MND	Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration
kWh	kilowatt hour
LBP	lead-based paint
LCI	Land Use and Climate Innovation
LHMP	Local Hazard Mitigation Plan
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MCAB	Mountain Counties Air Basin
MCV	Manual of California Vegetation
mph	miles per hour
MRZ	Mineral Resource Zone
msl	mean sea level
N_2O	nitrous oxide
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NCMC	Nevada City Municipal Code
NCP	National Contingency Plan
NCSO	Nevada County Sheriff’s Office

NCIC	North Central Information Center
NCTC	Nevada County Transportation Commission
NESHAP	National Emissions Standard for Hazardous Air Pollutants
Nevada City	City of Nevada City
NFPA	National Fire Prevention Association
NID	Nevada Irrigation District
NIOSH	National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
NO_2	nitrogen dioxide
NOx	oxides of nitrogen
NPDES	National Pollution Discharge Elimination System
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service
NSAQMD	Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District
O_3 AQAP	Ozone Attainment Plan for Western Nevada County
O_3	ozone
OPR	Office of Planning and Research
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
P	public
Pb	lead
PFC	perfluorocarbon
PG&E	Pacific Gas and Electric Company
PM_{10}	fugitive dust, particulate matter 10 microns or smaller in diameter
$PM_{2.5}$	fine particulate matter 2.5 microns or smaller in diameter
Porter-Cologne	Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act
ppm	parts per million
PRC	Public Resources Code
Project	Nevada County Regional Law Enforcement Indoor Shooting Range Project
proposed Project	Nevada County Regional Law Enforcement Indoor Shooting Range

psf	pounds per square foot
PVC	polyvinyl chloride
Quad	quadrangle
RFS	renewable fuel standards
ROG	reactive organic gas
RPS	Renewables Portfolio Standard
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SB	Senate Bill
SC	Scenic Corridor
SCAQMD	South Coast Air Quality Management District
SF_6	sulfur hexafluoride
SO_2	sulfur dioxide
SORDTF	Sheriff's Office Regional Dispatch and Training Facility
SR	State Route
SSC	Species of Special Concern
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TCR	Tribal Cultural Resource
THPO	Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
THRIS	Tribal Historic Information System
UIAC	United Auburn Indian Community
U.S.	United States
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USEPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey

VMT	vehicle miles traveled
VOC	volatile organic compounds
Washoe Tribe	Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California
WEAT	Worker Environmental Awareness Training
WQC	Water Quality Certification
WTF	Water Treatment Facility
WWM	welded wire mesh

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Project Overview

Lead Agency (name/address)
County of Nevada
Department of Information and General Services
950 Maidu Avenue
Nevada City, CA 95959

The County of Nevada (County) is responsible for certifying the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) document and approving the proposed Project.

Project Title
Nevada County Regional Law Enforcement Indoor Shooting Range

Contact Person (name/phone number)
Desiree Belding, CPPO, CPPB
Nevada County Purchasing Division
(530) 265-1557
Email: desiree.belding@nevadacountyca.gov

1.2 Intended Uses and Purpose of Initial Study

Prior to approving the proposed Nevada County Regional Law Enforcement Indoor Shooting Range Project, the County must evaluate the project's potential environmental impacts as required by CEQA. The County, as the lead agency under CEQA, will consider the proposed Project's environmental impacts when considering whether to approve project implementation. This Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) is an informational document to be used in the local planning and decision-making process; it does not recommend approval or denial of the proposed Project. This IS/MND will be available for public review for 30 days. The County will take into consideration comments received during the public review period and will factor these comments into their assessment of the environmental impacts associated with the proposed Project prior to making their decision related to Project approval.

1.3 Project Site & Surrounding Land Uses

Project Location
434 Kahele Court, Nevada City, California 95959
Assessor's Parcel Number (APN): 005-050-015 and 005-050-032

Project Sponsor (name/address)
Nevada County Sheriff's Office (NCSO)
950 Maidu Avenue
Nevada City, CA 95959

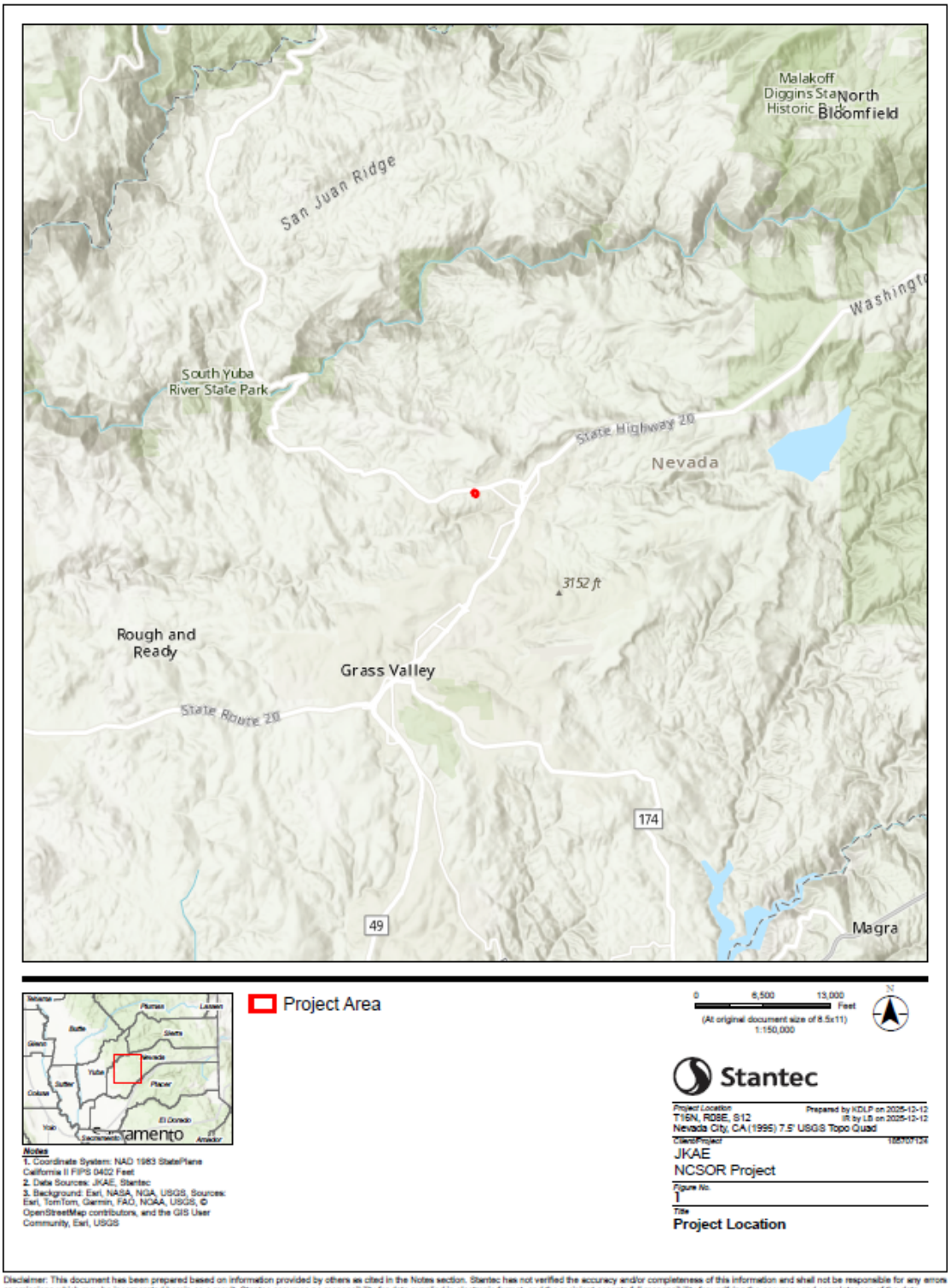
General Plan Designation
The property's City of Nevada City (Nevada City) General Plan designation is Planned Development (PD) and within the Incorporated Area of Nevada City.

Zoning
The property' Nevada City Zoning is Public, PD Combining District, and Scenic Corridor (SC) Combining District. The Public zoning allows for municipal law enforcement, training, and public service facilities. The Sheriff's Office Regional Dispatch and Training Facility (SORDTF) is consistent with zoning.

Surrounding Land Uses and Setting
The Project site is located within an existing public service complex off Kahele Court in Nevada City (Figure 1, Project Location). It is bordered to the west by County-owned open space, to the north by State Route (SR) 49, to the east by the Nevada City Elks Lodge, and to the south by residential parcels along American Hill Road. The site's topography and existing vegetation provide natural visual and sound screening from surrounding properties. The design of the indoor range and its supporting infrastructure emphasizes minimizing disturbance and noise both during construction and ongoing operations.

Assembly Bill 52 Tribal Consultation
Under Assembly Bill 52, Nevada County must engage in a formal tribal consultation process as part of CEQA before approving the Project or allowing construction to begin. Once Nevada County deems the Project application complete, it must notify all traditionally and culturally affiliated California Native American tribes that have requested prior notice within 14 days; those tribes then have 30 days to request consultation. If a tribe requests it, Nevada County must begin meaningful consultation within another 30 days, and this consultation must occur before releasing the IS/MND. Nevada County has undergone Assembly Bill 52 tribal consultation as part of this IS/MND.

Figure 1. Project Location



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2.0 Project Description

2.1 Project Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the proposed Project is to provide a dedicated indoor firearms training facility for NCSO and partner agencies. NCSO currently relies on external facilities approximately 45 minutes away, which limits availability and increases logistical challenges. The Project seeks to enhance officer training efficiency and safety, reduce travel time and costs, and provide an indoor, controlled environment that meets California's Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training requirements. The facility will also support interagency coordination by centralizing law enforcement training within the County.

2.2 Project Background

Stretching from the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountains to the State of Nevada border and an hour north from Sacramento, the County is a thriving region with just over 100,000 residents from three incorporated areas and numerous rural communities. NCSO provides general law enforcement services to almost 70,000 people and Coroner, Administrative, Correctional, Courts and other services to all residents of the County. NCSO currently has 179 positions allocated, many of which are required to train with their service weapons on a regular basis. NCSO has never had its own firearms range and has relied on other law enforcement agencies and a private business to fulfill training requirements. The outdoor range utilized by the NCSO is outside of the County, approximately 45 minutes away from NCSO operations and has no radio or cellular connectivity. This range also serves other law enforcement agencies, resulting in a limited number of training days. Therefore, NCSO seeks to create an indoor firearms range for the employees of the NCSO at the existing SORDTF. This facility will be available for outside agencies to also train in conjunction with, and separately from, NCSO.

2.3 Existing Operations

The existing SORDTF is on a 10.09-acre parcel (APN 005-050-015). The SORDTF was originally constructed in 2003 to be the Nevada County Juvenile Hall (Figure 2, Project Site). The SORDTF has buildings, paved parking, maintained open space, and ornamental landscaping. Although initially designed and utilized as a detention facility, the building no longer is used in that capacity. Since 2021, the current use is the Sherriff's Regional Dispatch Center and allied supporting activities, including K-9 training. There is existing paved access via Kahele Court. Utilities, drainage, and stormwater infrastructure are already established.

2.4 Proposed Project Characteristics

The proposed Project includes a variety of changes including the following:

- Expansion of existing utilities

- Landscape and stormwater detention areas
- Indoor Shooting Range
- Surface parking for visitors and employees
- Accommodation for future NCSO Search and Rescue Vehicle Storage and Training Room
- Enhance existing K9 training facility

2.4.1 PROPOSED UTILITIES/INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

All expanded onsite utilities will tie into existing SORDTF infrastructure: Nevada Irrigation District (water), Nevada City Sewer District (wastewater), Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E; electric), AT&T (fiber-optic communications), and propane for auxiliary energy. At least one onsite detention basin and vegetated drainage swale will be installed, consistent with County Low-Impact-Development standards. Exterior improvements will include secure parking, Americans with Disabilities Act-accessible walkways, and site lighting.

2.4.2 PROPOSED BUILDINGS

The proposed Nevada County Regional Law Enforcement Indoor Shooting Range is to be an approximately 14,200-square-foot, freestanding, single-story building located mostly within the existing Project parcel (Figure 3, Site Plan). The facility will be located west of the existing SORDTF buildings, within an area of the property currently used for parking and open space. The facility will contain a 12-lane, 50-yard indoor firing range, an armory, ammunition and equipment storage, instructor offices, restrooms, and a 30-seat classroom.

The building will be constructed of reinforced-masonry block walls on a polished and sealed concrete floor with an overall aesthetic consistent with the existing SORDTF. The facility will be a one-story structure with any necessary mechanical equipment contained on the roof or inside the building. The interior of firearms range shall be capable of handling up to .308 caliber projectiles. The interior of the firearms range will also include suspended clouds, roof system, and ballistic wall panels designed and installed to incorporate sound absorption. The classroom, office, and lobby of the building will include sound absorptive metal decking or suspended acoustical ceiling tile with minimum noise reduction coefficient of 0.75 to incorporate sound absorption. There will be a minimum of 2 feet on the outside of lanes 1 and 12 to allow for storage of range supplies. The firearms range will have variable lighting, rotating targets, and a single “running man” or moveable target along with a door capable of allowing a vehicle to drive into the range floor. The firearms range shall have sufficient air filtration, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) equipment and noise mitigation to comply with all pertinent standards and minimize impact to the surrounding properties or the SORDTF.

In addition to the shooting range, the facility will also contain:

- Storage for targets, ammunition and range supplies

- Armory
- Individual private bathrooms
- Office for range staff
- Storage area for information systems equipment
- Interior firearms cleaning area
- Specialized range baffles
- Acoustic insulation
- Ventilation and lead filtration systems
- Electrical, Fire Protection, and Custodial spaces

The facility's ventilation and lead filtration system will maintain negative air pressure within the shooting range and utilize high-efficiency particulate air filtration to capture lead and other airborne particulates.

2.4.3 PROPOSED LANDSCAPE

Exterior improvements will also include landscaping cohesive with existing landscaping as well as consistent with County defensible-space standards and stormwater planters. Three detention ponds will be installed in the southeastern corner of the SORDTF.

2.4.4 SITE ACCESS

Access to the proposed Project is currently provided via a single roadway connection to Kahele Court from SR-49. Emergency ingress and egress is also available through the unpaved portion of southbound Kahele Court connecting to American Hill Road. The proposed Project will include a fire vehicle capable one-way loop to improve emergency response access the Site.

2.4.5 PROJECT CONSTRUCTION AND STAGING

All construction activity and material storage can occur within the existing SORDTF parcel and avoid offsite disturbance and allow uninterrupted dispatch and training operations.

The Project is estimated to have an overall 613-day construction schedule beginning with Notice to Proceed (anticipated July 2026) and concluding with Certificate of Occupancy in October 2027.

Scheduled key milestones include building-pad certification (December 2026), slab completion (February 2027), structure completion (March 2027), and interior build-out (September 2027). Typical construction hours will be 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday, with no

weekend or holiday work unless specifically approved. Peak workforce is anticipated to be approximately 25 to 35 persons during the structural and mechanical/electrical/ plumbing phases. Environmental and worker-safety controls will include dust suppression, noise abatement, and hazardous-material containment during construction activities such as concrete polishing, bullet-trap installation, and ventilation-system assembly.

2.4.6 FACILITIES OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Following construction, the facility will operate year-round for NCSO and other authorized agencies. Typical hours of operation will be weekdays 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM, with occasional evening or low-light sessions extending until approximately 9:00 PM Daily occupancy is expected to average about 30 users, with short-term peaks of 4 to 45 participants during multi-agency training events. Operations will be overseen by NCSO training officers and Sheriff's Office staff, supported by administrative personnel. The building will not be permanently staffed; instead, Sheriff's Office personnel will be onsite intermittently during scheduled training sessions. Based on operational assumptions used in the transportation analysis, facility use is anticipated to generate approximately 75 average daily vehicle trips, with 23 AM peak-hour trips and 23 PM peak-hour trips.

Routine building maintenance and range cleaning will be conducted by NCSO staff or qualified contractors under established NCSO procedures. Spent ammunition and lead waste will be collected and recycled through licensed hazardous-materials vendors, which have not been designated at this time. All waste will be securely stored in sealed containers within the armory or designated maintenance area until transported for disposal or recycling. Maintenance of the ventilation and lead filtration system will include periodic filter replacement and system calibration to ensure proper airflow and containment.

2.4.7 PROJECT APPROVALS

Several agencies will be involved in permitting and review. The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board will review and approve the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Construction Permit. The Nevada County Environmental Health Department will review waste management and stormwater compliance. If applicable, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will oversee potential biological impacts, and the California Office of the State Fire Marshal and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) will review fire safety and building code compliance. The Project's installation of a new building has the potential to increase the intensity of the use and create impacts on environmental resources. Therefore, the Project requires building and grading permits from Nevada County Planning Department.

Figure 2. Project Site

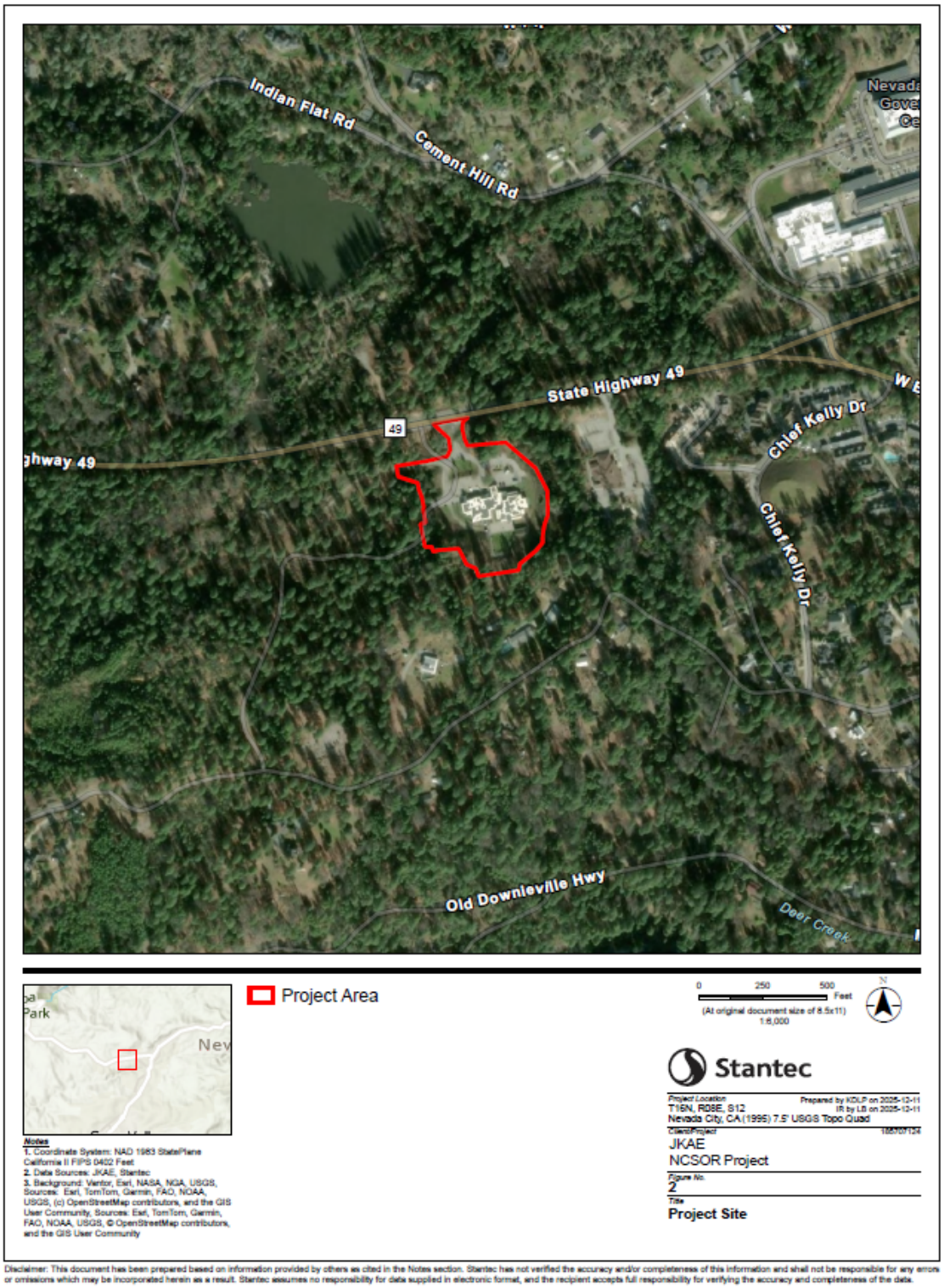
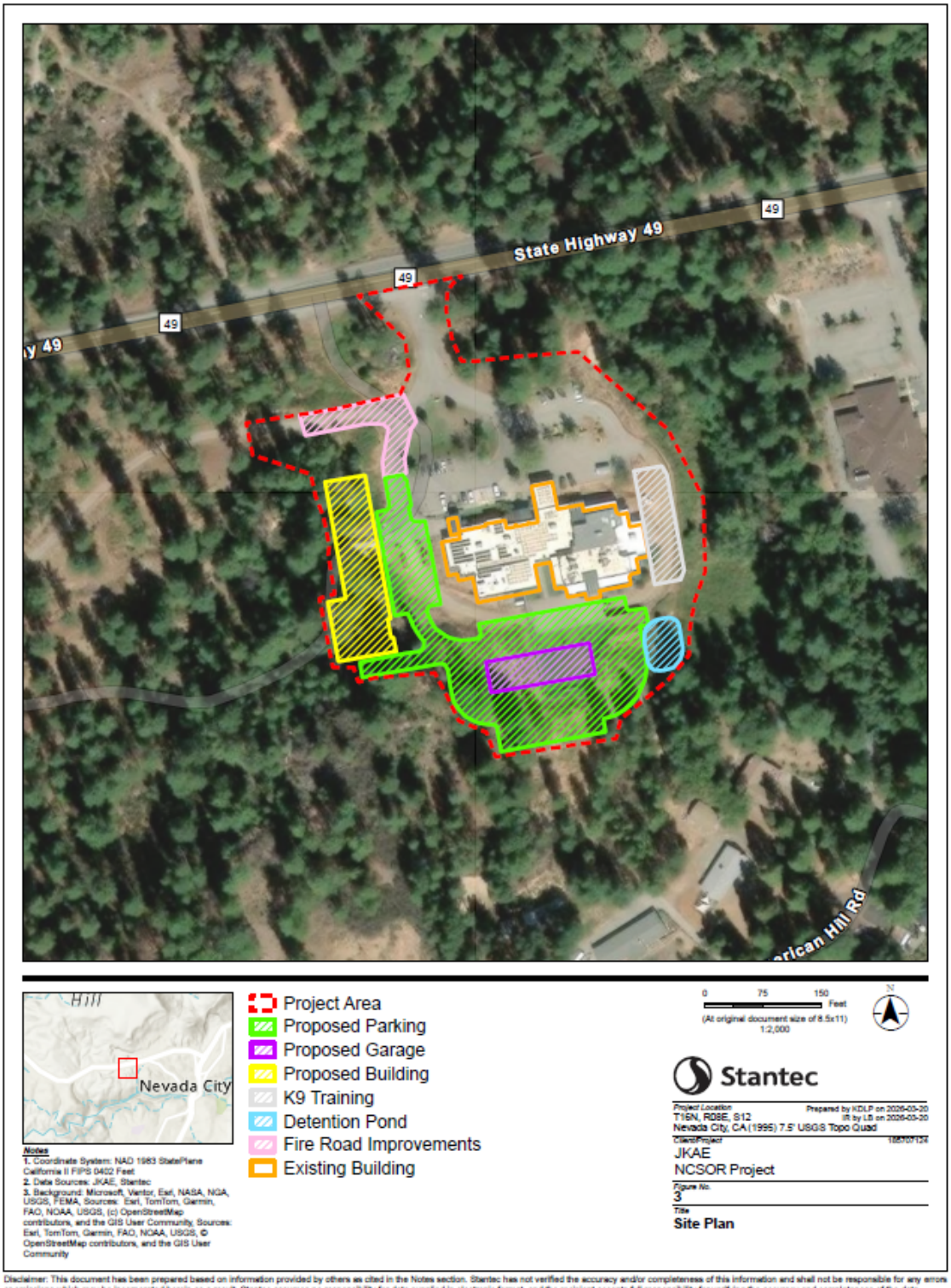


Figure 3. Site Plan



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3.0 Initial Study and Checklist

This checklist is to be completed for all projects that are not exempt from environmental review under CEQA. CEQA requires a brief explanation for answers to the Appendix G: Environmental Checklist except "No Impact" responses that are adequately supported by noted information sources. 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. The environmental factors checked below would potentially be significantly affected by the proposed Project, as indicated by the resource checklists in this IS/MND. However, as described in the following subsections, would be reduced to less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

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

This IS/MND uses the following terms to describe the level of significance of adverse impacts. These terms are defined as follows.

- **No Impact.** An impact that would result in no adverse changes to the environment.
- **Less than Significant Impact**. An impact that is potentially adverse but does not exceed the thresholds of significance as identified in the impact discussions. Less than significant impacts do not require mitigation.
- **Less than Significant with Mitigation.** An environmental effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the environment without mitigation, but which is reduced to a level that is less than significant with mitigation identified in the Initial Study.
- **Potentially Significant Impact.** An environmental effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the environment; either additional information is needed regarding the extent of the impact to make the significance determination, or the impact would or could cause a substantial adverse change in the environment. A finding of a potentially significant impact would result in the determination to prepare an Environmental Impact Report.

3.1 Aesthetics

AESTHETICS Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 20199:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) In non-urbanized areas, would the project 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 a publicly accessible vantage point). If the Project is in an urbanized area, the potential of the project to conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.1.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The Project site is bordered to the west by County-owned open space, to the north by SR-49, to the east by the Nevada City Elks Lodge, and to the south by residential parcels along American Hill Road. The Project site is located within an existing public service complex off Kahele Court in Nevada City. The SORDTF is primarily an already developed site with existing buildings, paved parking, maintained open space, and ornamental landscaping. The existing facility is a one-story, north-facing structure with a main entrance featuring a dark green A-frame. The building is an orange-brown color and has medium-sized windows with dark green frames; other exterior doors are also painted dark green. Aerial imagery shows the roof to be a light grey color, and HVAC equipment can be seen on the roof of the building. Topography of the site includes rolling hills with existing paved access via Kahele Court, which provide natural visual and sound screening from surrounding properties. Views of the existing Project site are limited by conifer forests and trees surrounding the site. Glimpses of the property can be seen, in passing, by roadway travelers on SR-49. Kahele Court is the only access road, and nearby residents must use it to reach their homes, passing by the SORDTF property. Although the Project site itself is not visible from their residences, residents will pass the area when traveling on Kahele Court

Mature trees are considered a scenic resource, as mentioned in the Nevada City General Plan (Nevada City 1986), and exist along the entire perimeter of the Project site, and the site's existing vegetation provide natural visual and sound screening from surrounding properties. The Nevada City General Plan recognizes the importance of retaining mature trees and has a tree preservation ordinance (Chapter 18.01) to protect mature trees.

The Project site is zoned Public, PD Combining District, and Scenic Corridor (SC) Combining District. The purpose of the PD Combining District is to provide for greater flexibility in the design of integrated development in context with the general character of Nevada City which would not be otherwise possible through strict interpretation or application of district regulations (Nevada City 1986). The purpose of the SC Combining district is to protect the existing essential character of Nevada City within land areas which are adjacent to roads and highways which are indicated on the General Plan with the symbol for scenic corridors. Given SR-49 serves as a key gateway into Nevada City, the SC Combing District helps preserve the town's historic, small-town character by keeping new development hidden from highway views, maintaining existing tree cover, and ensuring visually appealing corridors through thoughtful design controls.

3.1.2 REGULATORY SETTING

3.1.2.1 Federal

There are no federal plans, policies, regulations, or ordinances related to aesthetics that apply to the Project.

3.1.2.2 State

3.1.2.2.1 Scenic Highways

According to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) "California Scenic Highway Mapping System," there are no officially designated State Scenic Highways located adjacent to, or within view of, the Project site. However, SR-49, which is located immediately north of the Project site, is "eligible" for listing as a scenic highway (Caltrans 2024).

3.1.2.3 Local

3.1.2.3.1 Nevada County

Nevada County establishes design standards for Western Nevada County that guide project development to protect scenic resources and preserve the County's rural character (Nevada County 2002). The following goals apply to aesthetics:

- Protect and preserve the scenic resources of the County
- Maintain the rural, small-town character of the County
- Maintain community identity

- Complement the rich historic fabric of the County

Additionally, the County General Plan outlines goals and policies related to aesthetics to preserve regional scenic resources (Nevada County 1995a). The following goals apply to aesthetics:

- Promote and provide for aesthetic design in new development which reflects existing character
- Protect and preserve important scenic resources

Nevada City General Plan

The Nevada City General Plan outlines objectives to preserve the scenic impression of the historic town and the important natural features within Nevada City, such as Sugarloaf Mountain, ridges, creeks, the Gold Run, hills, and terrain. The General Plan also identifies scenic highways as an important aesthetic resource. Although the General Plan does not designate SR-49 as a local scenic route, it encourages the designation of SR-49 as an Official State Scenic Highway, includes policies to protect and enhance the visual importance of areas along SR-49, and references the Scenic Corridor (SC) combining district established for the highway to ensure that development standards in this zone are met (Nevada City 1986). The following policies apply to scenic highways:

- Encouragement of “PD” or similar planned development along SR-49

Nevada City Design Guidelines

The Nevada City Design Guidelines provide a long-term comprehensive framework for guiding development within Nevada City. It emphasizes the importance of preserving and enhancing the historic character of Nevada City. The Design Guidelines state, "these guidelines are intended to provide guidance in determining suitability and architectural compatibility of proposed Projects with preservation and promotion of the historic character of Nevada City" (Nevada City 2015). For non-residential uses adjacent to residential areas, the design should minimize impacts on existing or future residences. Design aspects, which would not normally be expected in a residential neighborhood, should not be visible from residences. For example, parking areas should not be visible from residences, and site, signage, and interior lighting should not illuminate existing or future residences beyond existing levels. Architecture must reflect high quality design, which is compatible with Nevada City's Mother Lode architecture which was prevalent in the region between 1849 and 1900. This style incorporates traditional materials, building lines, architectural features, and landscaping that reflect Nevada City’s heritage (Nevada City 2015).

Nevada City Tree Preservation

Chapter 18.01 of the Nevada City Municipal Code includes requirements for trees to be preserved through development review processes and requires permits for the cutting or

removal of, or other significant impacts to, such protected trees within Nevada City limits on public or private property (Nevada City 2007). A protected tree is defined as trees of certain species and size (diameter breast height), as defined below in Table 1 (Section 18.01.030 of the Nevada City Municipal Code):

Table 1. Protected Trees Definitions

Protected Trees	Cumulative Diameter Breast Height
Broadleaf maple	6 inches
Cedar	6 inches
Fir	6 inches
Madrone	4 inches
Manzanita	4 inches
Oak	4 inches
Pine (Ponderosa, Gray)	6 inches
Pine (Sugar Pine)	All protected
Sequoia giganteum	6 inches
All other trees not specified	6 inches

The County, as the CEQA Lead Agency and property owner, is not subject to local land use regulations within the city limits of Nevada City. However, the County considers county and/or city policies and guidelines, as appropriate, to determine whether a project would be consistent. Although the County is not subject to the Nevada City Municipal Code (NCMC), proposed Project design would take these protected trees into consideration and would be consistent with the NCMC.

Nevada City Municipal Code

The Nevada City Municipal Code includes development regulations aimed at preserving Nevada City's visual environment. These standards apply to new developments to address elements such as the scale of new buildings, building materials, setbacks from roadways, fencing, building heights and other features that influence the visual character of a site or area.

Section 17.60.050 - Development standards for the Public Zone

In the Public zone, area, lot width, and yard requirements are as approved through the use permit process.

Section 17.68.210 – Scenic Corridor Development Regulations

A. The SC combining district is applied to SR-49 within Nevada City. The SC district is designed to protect the existing essential character of Nevada City as a small historical town surrounded by green, wooded hills. This is achieved by hiding development from

highway views, preserving existing tree cover to the greatest extent, and assuring visually pleasing corridors through thoughtful design control. Development standards for the SC district include:

B. A review by the planning commission for compliance with the SC General Plan policies in any district abutting or within 300 feet of an SC highway right-of-way and/or as indicated with the "SC" combining district.

C. A possible request from the planning commission for revision of the proposed site plan, tentative map, building permit site plan, or conditional use permit, or the incorporation of special conditions of approval or design features, prior to approval. The planning commission may consider:

   i. The height, bulk, and area of buildings or improvements;

   ii. Setbacks from the property lines. The commission may consider increasing the setback requirements of the district, if needed to protect the SC;

   iii. The colors, textures, and materials of the exterior walls and roofs, and the roof pitches;

   iv. The parking lot location and distribution and effectiveness of landscaping and natural areas, and the location of any type of any proposed signs;

   v. The relationship to other building or existing or proposed uses in the area;

   vi. The extent and visual impact of proposed cuts, fills, and/or retaining walls;

   vii. The shape of land forms and existing vegetation.

D. The planning commission must make the following findings before approving an application in the SC district:

   i. That the project, as conditioned, is consistent with the General Plan;

   ii. That the project, as conditioned, contains sufficient design and/or landscaping features to protect and enhance the aesthetics of the SC;

E. The clearing of natural vegetation within 50 feet of the right-of-way line of any SC highway is prohibited, unless approved with the review of the development plan.

Section 17.80.215 – Outdoor Lighting Standards

New outdoor lighting regulations aim to minimize light pollution and preserve nighttime visual quality. New outdoor lighting on private property, other than from a single-family dwelling or duplex, must comply with the following requirements. Lighting must be limited to the minimum necessary for safety and security. Key requirements for outdoor lighting include:

A. An outdoor light fixture must be a maximum height of 14 feet or the height of the nearest building, whichever is less, except adjacent to or within a residential area where the height is reduced to 8 feet. If a fixture is proposed to be greater than 14 feet in height, it may be approved by the Planning Commission if it is determined that the additional height will provide lighting that complies with all other outdoor lighting requirements.

B. Outdoor lighting shall utilize energy efficient fixture/lamps.

C. Lighting fixtures must be shielded or recessed to minimize light spill to adjoining properties by:

    i. Ensuring that the light source is directed downward and shielded with no more than a 30-degree horizontal deflection from the light source.

    ii. Confining glare and reflections within the boundaries of the area to the maximum extent possible.

D. Each light fixture must be directed downward and away from adjoining properties and public rights-of-way, and on-site light sources shall not directly illuminate an area off the site.

E. Lighting on private property shall not exceed an illumination level greater than 1 foot candle on any property within a residential zone, except on the site of the light source.

F. Permanently lighting that blinks, flashes, or is of unusually high intensity or brightness is not permitted.

Chapter 18.01 – Tree Preservation

Described above.

Chapter 15.04 – Building Standards

This section outlines standards that include the scale of new buildings, building materials, setbacks from roadways, fencing, building heights and other elements that would affect the visual character of a site or area.

3.1.3 IMPACT ANALYSIS

Based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, a project could have a significant impact related to aesthetic resources if the project would:

a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;

b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway;

c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. (Public Views are those that are experienced from a publicly accessible vantage point). If the Project is in an urbanized area, the potential of the project to conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality; or

d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

Construction and Operation

A scenic vista is defined as a viewpoint with an expansive view of a highly valued landscape which benefits the general public. The property is zoned as Public, PD Combining District, and SC Combining District. The P zoning allows for County law enforcement, training, and public service facilities. The proposed Project would design and construct a new Regional Law Enforcement Indoor Shooting Range on County-owned property at the existing SORDTF, aligning with the existing P zoning. As identified above, there are no scenic vistas available from the Project site. Views of the existing Project site are limited, and glimpses of the property can be seen, in passing, by roadway travelers on SR-49 and Kahele Court. Additionally, the facility would be aesthetically consistent with the existing SORDTF. Potential impacts to scenic vistas are considered less than significant.

Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway?

Construction and Operation

SR-49 is an eligible State Scenic Highway, and Nevada City has established an SC combining district to help maintain the visual quality of the corridor to be able to achieve the future designation of SR-49 as an Official State Scenic Highway. However, there are no officially designated federal, state, or local scenic routes associated with the Project site. Tree removal would be limited to areas within the Project site footprint. While removal of trees may increase visibility of the Project from American Hill Road, views from SR-49 would remain largely unaffected due to the setback distance and remaining vegetation. Once built and in operation, only immediate views of the one-story building would be impacted. Therefore, construction and operation of the Project would not damage scenic resources, such as trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings along a scenic highway. Potential impacts to the scenic resources are considered less than significant.

In non-urbanized areas, would the project 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 a publicly accessible vantage point). If the Project

is in an urbanized area, the potential of the project to conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

Construction and Operation

The proposed Project would be located within a non-urbanized area and outside of Nevada City's downtown urban-core limits. Therefore, the proposed Project would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality in an urbanized area. Additionally, as the Project is located away from the Nevada City downtown area, where concentrations of public views are greater, potential impacts to aesthetics and visual character would be minimal.

Construction activities may temporarily affect views from surrounding areas due to activities that may create temporary dust clouds, and the movement of vehicles and equipment in the work areas that draw viewers' attention toward the Project site. However, the Project site is largely visually screened by trees along SR-49 and much of Kahele Court, with visibility primarily limited to the single roadway entrance. Construction staging would occur within the existing SORDTF and avoid offsite disturbance. In addition, construction impacts are expected to be minimal and short-term. Exterior lighting would be installed as part of the Project, with occasional evening or low-light sessions. Lighting would be designed and installed consistent with applicable Nevada City standards to minimize glare and light spillover onto adjacent properties and roadways. Tree removal would be limited to areas within the Project site footprint. While removal of trees may increase visibility of the Project from American Hill Road, views from SR-49 would remain largely unaffected due to the setback distance and remaining vegetation. Once built and in operation, only immediate views of the one-story building would be impacted. Therefore, potential impacts to the existing character are considered less than significant.

Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

Construction

Construction activities may involve temporary lighting and increased glare from vehicles and equipment operating on-site. Construction would typically be limited to between the hours of 7:00 AM and 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday, with no weekend or holiday work unless specifically approved by NCSO and/or Nevada City. Once construction is complete, these temporary sources of light and glare would cease, and the Project would not introduce substantial new lighting or glare during construction. Therefore, construction impacts are anticipated to be less than significant.

Operation

The proposed Project will create a new source of outdoor lighting associated with the property. The lighting will be when the lights are on from neighboring and public views. Typical hours of operation of the existing facilities are weekdays 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM, with occasional evening or

low-light sessions extending until approximately 9:00 PM. The Project's hours of operation are not expected to deviate from these hours. A standard condition of approval would require the lighting be installed in compliance with Nevada City Code (Section 17.80.215) and Nevada County Code (Section 12.04.108). With the application of a standard condition of approval requiring compliance with City and County lighting standards, the Project is not anticipated to result in substantial light or glare. In addition, the Project does require the removal of trees, but there is still a substantial number of trees to provide screening of the Project so that it is not visible from SR-49. Therefore, impacts to daytime or nighttime views due to lighting are anticipated to be less than significant.

3.1.4 MITIGATION MEASURES

No mitigation measures required.

3.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY RESOURCES Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.2.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

3.2.1.1 Farmland Classifications

The Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP), under the California Department of Conservation (DOC), uses soil productivity data from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to map farmland types (DOC 2025a). Established in 1982, FMMP continues the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Important Farmland mapping efforts that began in 1975. The DOC adapted these criteria for greater detail, incorporating factors like water supply, soil temperature, groundwater depth, flooding risk, and rooting depth. The DOC classifies land into seven categories:

1. **Prime Farmland.** Farmland with the best combination of physical and chemical features able to sustain long term agricultural production. This land has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the 4 years prior to the mapping date.

2. **Farmland of Statewide Importance.** Farmland similar to Prime Farmland but with minor shortcomings, such as greater slopes or less ability to store soil moisture. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the 4 years prior to the mapping date.

3. **Unique Farmland.** Farmland of lesser quality soils used for the production of the state's leading agricultural crops. This land is usually irrigated, but may include non-irrigated orchards or vineyards as found in some climatic zones in California.

4. **Farmland of Local Importance.** Land of importance to the local agricultural economy as determined by each county's board of supervisors and a local advisory committee. In some counties, Confined Animal Agriculture facilities are part of Farmland of Local Importance, but they are shown separately.

5. **Grazing Land.** Land on which the existing vegetation is suited to the grazing of livestock. This category was developed in cooperation with the California Cattlemen's Association, University of California Cooperative Extension, and other groups interested in the extent of grazing activities.

6. **Urban and Built-Up Land.** Land occupied by structures with a building density of at least one unit to 1.5 acres, or approximately six structures to a 10-acre parcel. This land is used for residential, industrial, commercial, construction, institutional, public administration, railroad and other transportation yards, cemeteries, airports, golf courses, sanitary landfills, sewage treatment, water control structures, and other developed purposes.

7. **Other Land.** 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.

Based on a review of the 2020 Important Farmland Map for Nevada County, the Project site is classified as Urban and Built-Up Land (DOC 2020). There is no Farmland at the Project site, as shown in Figure 4, Farmland and Forestry.

Williamson Act Contracts

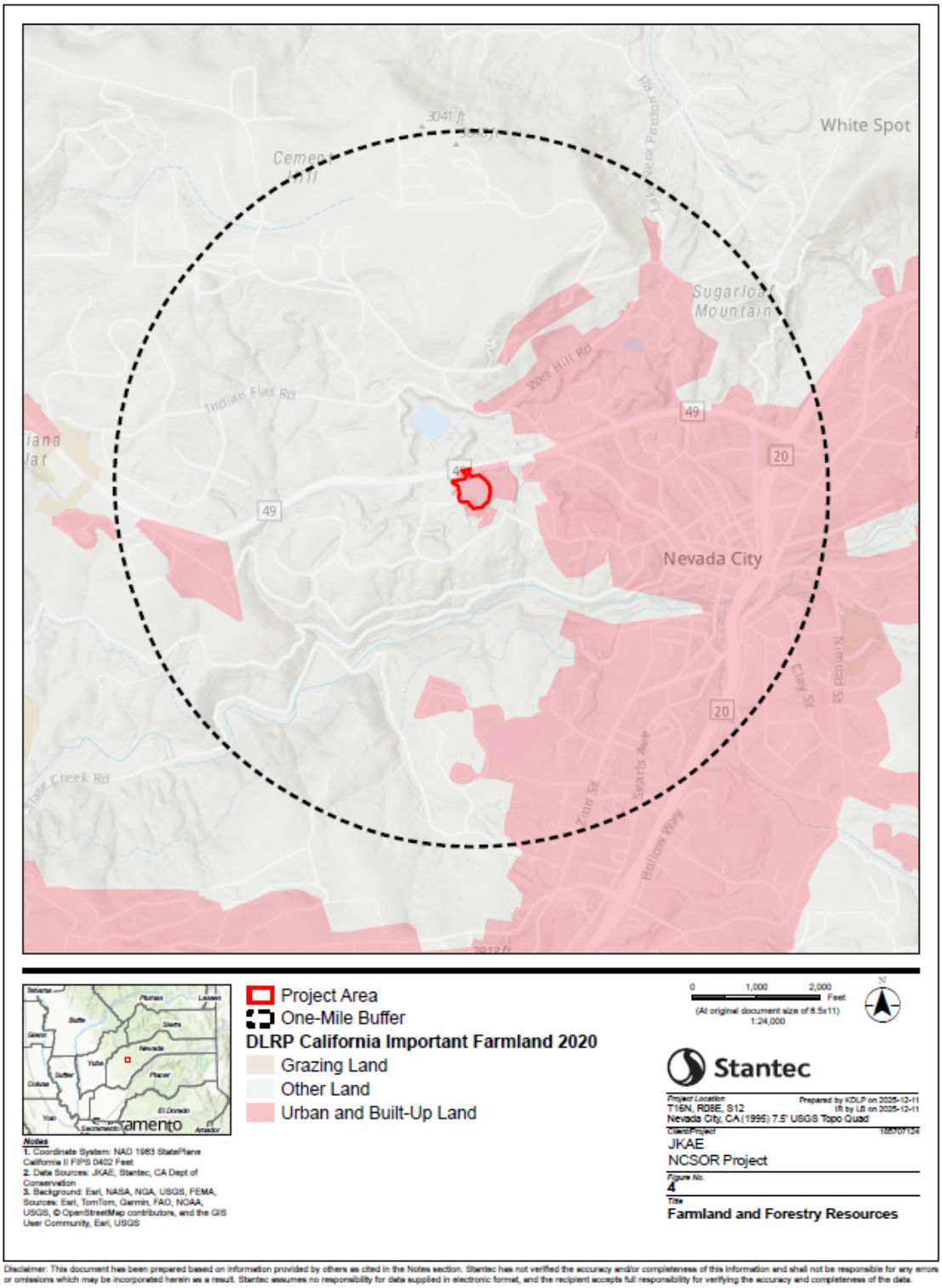
There are no Williamson Act contracts for the Project site (DOC 2023).

Forest Resources

Forest Resources Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 12220(g) defines “forest land” as land that can support 10% native tree cover of any species, including hardwoods, under natural conditions and that allows for management of one or more forest resources, including timber, aesthetics, fish and wildlife, biodiversity, water quality, recreation, and other public benefits. According to PRC Section 4526, “timberland” is defined as land, other than land owned by the federal government and land designated by the board as experimental forest land, which is available for, and capable of, growing a crop of trees of any commercial species used to produce lumber and other forest products, including Christmas trees. Approximately 32.2% of California’s total land area is forestland, of which 51.8% is considered timberlands (CDFW 2025).

The proposed Project site is within a conifer forest dominated by ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) with a mix of other coniferous trees like Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) and white fir (*Abies concolor*), manzanita shrubs, and grasses in the understory (Nevada City 2025a). The ponderosa pines at the Project site are within the home range for these species (USDA Forest Service 2025). However, the proposed Project site is not within forestland (as defined in PRC Section 12220[g]) or timberland (as defined by PRC Section 4526). The proposed Project site itself is developed and is not zoned for forest land or timberland uses. The surrounding parcels include conifer forest but are zoned for residential uses such as Residential Agricultural and Single Family Residential.

Figure 4. Farmland and Forestry



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3.2.2 REGULATORY SETTING

3.2.2.1 Federal

There are no federal plans, policies, regulations, or ordinances related to agriculture and/or forestry that apply to the Project.

3.2.2.2 State

3.2.2.2.1 Assembly Bill 2881 – Right to Farm Disclosure

Assembly Bill 2881, now California Civil Code Section 3482.5, was passed by the State Legislature in 2008 and became effective January 1, 2009. AB 2881 requires that as a part of real estate transactions, land sellers and agents must disclose whether the property is located within one mile of farmland as designated on the most recent Important Farmland Map. Any of the five agricultural categories (Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Local Importance, and Grazing Land) on the map qualifies for disclosure purposes.

3.2.2.2.2 Williamson Act

The Williamson Act, officially known as the California Land Conservation Act of 1965, is a voluntary program that allows private landowners to enter into contracts with local governments to restrict their land to agricultural or open space use. In exchange, landowners receive significant property tax reductions, as their land is assessed based on its agricultural value rather than market value. These contracts typically last 10 years and automatically renew each year unless a non-renewal notice is filed. The program aims to preserve farmland, discourage urban sprawl, and support the long-term viability of California's agricultural industry (DOC 2025b).

3.2.2.2.3 Timber Harvest Productivity Act

The California Timberland Productivity Act, now California Code of Regulations (CCR) Tit. 14, § 933.10, was enacted by the California State Legislature in 1982 and designed to preserve the state's forest resources and promote the long-term viability of the timber industry. The California Timberland Productivity Act required counties to identify and zone qualifying lands as Timberland Production Zones, which are specifically designated for the growing and harvesting of timber. Specific criteria for determining timberland capability includes the ability to grow at least 15 cubic feet of wood fiber per acre annually.

3.2.2.2.4 Forest Practice Rules

The Forest Practice Rules are the regulatory framework that implements the provisions of the Z'berg-Nejedly Forest Practice Act of 1973, ensuring that timber harvesting in California is conducted in a manner that protects public trust resources such as soil, water, wildlife, and

forest ecosystems. These rules are enforced by CAL FIRE and are applicable to all commercial timber operations on privately owned lands, with limited exemptions (CAL FIRE 2024a).

3.2.2.3 Local

3.2.2.3.1 Nevada County General Plan

The Nevada County General Plan Chapter 15: Forest describes the County's extensive timber resources, the majority of which is under the jurisdiction of the Tahoe National Forest (Nevada County 1995b) Chapter 15 includes the following policies applicable to the Project:

- **Policy 15.1.** Maintain a low density of allowable development in the Forest land use designation as shown on the General Plan Land Use maps, in order to protect the major areas of potential timber resources in the County from conversion to other more intensive uses.
- **Policy 15.2.** Limit the provision of public facilities and services in important timber areas, except where necessary to address public health or safety problems.
- **Policy 15.3.** Encourage the clustering of development in timberland areas within the Rural and Forest land use designation as shown on the General Plan Land Use Maps, to preserve timber resources for productive use.

The Nevada County General Plan Chapter 16: Agriculture describes the agricultural resources present within the western end of Nevada County (Nevada County 1995c). Chapter 16 includes the following policies applicable to the Project:

- **Policy 16.1.** Agriculture is strongly encouraged in Rural Regions and allowed in Community Regions. Agricultural land shall include all those land areas of Nevada County now used for agricultural operations, or upon which agricultural operations may be established in the future in conformance with applicable zoning regulations.
- **Policy 16.13.** Continue participation in the Williamson Act program. Parcels eligible for Williamson Act contract shall be 5 or more acres in size.

3.2.2.3.2 Nevada City General Plan

The Nevada City General Plan Section 2 – Land Use and Economic Development describes low density rural residential land as the most striking feature concerning land use in Nevada City's Sphere of Influence (Nevada City 1986). The Land Use and Economic Development Plan Concept includes the following principal goal applicable to agriculture and/or forestry:

- Preserve the sense of wooded enclosure [i.e., forest] by protecting views from the highways and by maintaining rural density surrounding a tight urban cluster.

3.2.3 IMPACT ANALYSIS

Based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, a project could have a significant impact related to agriculture and forestry resources if the project would:

a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use;

b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract;

c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g));

d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use; or

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.

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?

Construction and Operation

The proposed Project site is a developed 10.09-acre site and contains the existing SORDTF, originally constructed in 2003 as Nevada County Juvenile Hall. Since 2021, a portion of the building has been converted for use as the Sheriff's Regional Dispatch Center with a government office building, an ancillary outbuilding, paved areas for parking and circulation, and disturbed pine habitat as landscaping, which includes a mixture of sparse grasses and trees. Based on a review of the 2020 Important Farmland Map for Nevada County, produced by the DOC under the FMMP, the proposed Project site is classified as Urban and Built-Up Land (DOC 2020). There is no Farmland at the proposed Project site; thus, the Project would not result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use, and there would be no impact.

Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?

Construction and Operation

The proposed Project site is zoned by Nevada City as P, which provides zoning for areas occupied by federal, state, county and city government uses, along with recreation areas and parks, cemeteries. Furthermore, because the proposed Project site is part of the NCSO's existing SORDTF, there are no Williamson Act contracts at the Project site. Therefore, the

Project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract, and there would be no impact.

Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?

Construction and Operation

As described above, the proposed Project site is part of the NCSO's existing SORDTF and is zoned P, which provides zoning for areas occupied by federal, state, county and city government uses, along with recreation areas and parks, cemeteries. Therefore, the proposed Project site is not zoned as forest land, timberland, or a Timberland Production Zone, and there would be no impact.

Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

Construction and Operation

The proposed Project site is part of the NCSO's existing SORDTF and is zoned P, which provides zoning for areas occupied by federal, state, county and city government uses, along with recreation areas and parks, cemeteries. As part of a county office, there are no agricultural or forest land uses or active timber operations within the proposed Project site, which consists of previously disturbed urban land and sparse clusters of conifer trees. The Project would include construction activities that may require removal of some trees and other vegetation that may be growing in the proposed Project site that could interfere with construction of the new facilities. However, the trees do not contribute to the proposed Project site's zoning or land use. Thus, the Project would not result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to a non-forest use, and there would be no impact.

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.

Construction and Operation

The proposed Project site is part of the NCSO's existing SORDTF and is zoned P, which provides zoning for areas occupied by federal, state, county and city government uses, along with recreation areas and parks, cemeteries. Thus, there is no Farmland either within or adjacent to the proposed Project site. Therefore, the proposed development at the proposed Project site would not result in off-site conversion of Farmland or forest land to other uses, and there would be no impact.

3.2.4 MITIGATION MEASURES

No mitigation measures required.

3.3 Air Quality

AIR QUALITY Would the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.3.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The Project site is located within the Mountain Counties Air Basin (MCAB) and within the jurisdiction of the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD). The MCAB encompasses all of Plumas, Sierra, Nevada, Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, and Mariposa Counties, as well as the middle portion of Placer County and the western portion of El Dorado County. Air quality in this area is determined by natural factors including topography, meteorology, and climate, in addition to the presence of existing air pollution sources and ambient conditions. The general climate of the MCAB varies considerably with elevation and proximity to the Sierra Ridge.

From an air quality perspective, the topography and meteorology of the MCAB combine such that local conditions predominate in determining the effect of emissions in the basin. Regional airflows are affected by the mountains and hills, which direct surface air flows, cause shallow vertical mixing, and create areas of high pollutant concentrations by hindering dispersion. Inversion layers, where warm air overlays cooler air, frequently occur and trap pollutants close to the ground. In the winter, these conditions can lead to carbon monoxide (CO) “hotspots” along heavily traveled roads and at busy intersections. During summer’s longer daylight hours, stagnant air, high temperatures, and plentiful sunshine provide the conditions and energy for the photochemical reaction between reactive organic gases (ROG) and oxides of nitrogen (NOx) that results in the formation of ozone (O_3). Because of its long formation time, ozone is a regional pollutant rather than a local hotspot problem. In the summer, the strong upwind valley

air flowing into the MCAB from the Central Valley to the west is an effective transport medium for ozone precursors and ozone generated in the Bay Area and the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys. These transported pollutants predominate as the cause of O_3 in the MCAB and are largely responsible for the exceedances of the state and federal ozone ambient air quality standards (AAQS) in the MCAB (EDCAPCD 2002).

NSAQMD has jurisdiction over the control of air pollution from all sources within the County, excluding mobile sources. Criteria air pollutants are defined as pollutants for which the federal and state governments have established ambient air quality standards for outdoor concentrations. The National AAQS (NAAQS) and California AAQS (CAAQS) have been set at levels above which concentrations could be harmful to human health and welfare. These standards are designed to protect the most sensitive persons such as children, pregnant women, and the elderly, from illness or discomfort. Criteria air pollutants include O_3, nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), CO, sulfur dioxide (SO_2), particulate matter 2.5 microns or less in diameter ($PM_{2.5}$), particulate matter ten microns or less in diameter (PM_{10}), and lead (Pb). O_3 is not directly emitted but is a secondary pollutant formed from a chemical reaction between NOx and volatile organic compounds (VOC). Pursuant to the federal Clean Air Act (CAA), the NSAQMD is responsible for reducing emissions of criteria air pollutants for which the area is considered in non-attainment. The NSAQMD is designated as non-attainment for state and federal 8-hour O_3, state one-hour O_3, and state PM_{10} (NASQMD 2025).

3.3.2 REGULATORY SETTING

3.3.2.1 Federal

3.3.2.1.1 United States Environmental Protection Agency

At the federal level, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has been charged with implementing national air quality programs. The USEPA's air quality mandates are drawn primarily from the CAA, which was signed into law in 1970. Congress substantially amended the CAA in 1977 and again in 1990.

3.3.2.1.2 Clean Air Act

The CAA of 1970 and the CAA Amendments of 1971 required the USEPA to establish NAAQS, with requires retaining the option to adopt more stringent standards or to include other specific pollutants. On April 2, 2007, the Supreme Court found that carbon dioxide is an air pollutant covered by the CAA; however, no NAAQS have been established for carbon dioxide.

These standards are the levels of air quality considered safe, with an adequate margin of safety, to protect the public health and welfare. They are designed to protect those "sensitive receptors" most susceptible to further respiratory distress such as asthmatics, the elderly, very young children, people already weakened by other disease or illness, and persons engaged in strenuous work or exercise. Healthy adults can tolerate occasional exposure to air pollutant

concentrations considerably above these minimum standards before adverse effects are observed.

3.3.2.2 State

3.3.2.2.1 California Air Resources Board

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) is the agency responsible for coordination and oversight of state and local air pollution control programs in California and for implementing the California Clean Air Act (CCAA) of 1988. Other CARB duties include monitoring air quality (in conjunction with air monitoring networks maintained by air pollution control districts and air quality management districts), establishing CAAQS, which in many cases are more stringent than the NAAQS, and setting emissions standards for new motor vehicles. The emission standards established for motor vehicles differ depending on various factors including the model year, and the type of vehicle, fuel and engine used.

3.3.2.2.2 California Clean Air Act

The CCAA requires that all air districts in the state endeavor to achieve and maintain CAAQS for O_3, CO, SO_2, and NO_2 by the earliest practical date. The CCAA specifies that districts focus attention on reducing the emissions from transportation and area-wide emission sources, and the act provides districts with authority to regulate indirect sources. Each district plan is required to either (1) achieve a 5% annual reduction, averaged over consecutive 3-year periods, in district-wide emissions of each non-attainment pollutant or its precursors, or (2) to provide for implementation of all feasible measures to reduce emissions. Any planning effort for air quality attainment would thus need to consider both state and federal planning requirements.

3.3.2.3 Local

3.3.2.3.1 Ozone Attainment Plan for Western Nevada County

The NSAQMD adopted the Ozone Attainment Plan for Western Nevada County (O_3 AQAP) in February 2023 that includes control strategies to reduce ozone precursors (ROG and NOx) (NSAQMD 2023). NSAQMD anticipate to demonstrate attainment with the 2015 8-hour O_3 NAAQS no later than August 3, 2027. As the region is NOx limited, the O_3 AQAP focuses on potential NO_X reductions and found that current control measures implemented in the nonattainment area should lead the region to attain the 8-hour ozone standard of 0.070 parts per million (ppm) by the serious attainment deadline.

3.3.2.3.2 NSAQMD Rules and Regulations

NSAQMD rules and regulations that may apply to the proposed Project include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Rule 202–Visible Emissions.** The purpose of this rule is to limit the discharge into the atmosphere from any single source of emission whatsoever any air contaminant for a period or periods aggregating more than 3 minutes in any 1 hour which is:
    - As dark or darker in shade as that designated as No. 1 on the Ringlemann Chart, as published by the United States Bureau of Mines, or
    - Of such opacity as to obscure an observer's view to a degree equal to or greater than does smoke described in subsection (A) of this section.
- **Rule 205–Nuisance.** The purpose of this rule is to limit the discharge from any source whatsoever such quantities of air contaminants or other material which cause injury, detriment, nuisance or annoyance to any considerable number of persons, or to the public, or which endanger the comfort, repose, health or safety of any such persons, or the public, or which cause to have a natural tendency to cause injury or damage to business or property.
- **Rule 207–Particulate Matter.** The purpose of this rule is limit the release or discharge into the atmosphere from any source or single processing unit, exclusive of sources emitting combustion contaminants only, particulate matter emissions in excess of 0.1 grains per cubic foot of dry exhaust gas at standard conditions.
- **Rule 210–Specific Contaminants.** The purpose of this rule is to limit emissions of sulfur compounds and combustion contaminants by limiting concentrations in exhaust gas.
- **Rule 226–Dust Control.** The purpose of this rule is to reduce and control fugitive dust emissions to the atmosphere by requiring a Dust Control Plan for most developments. Standard Dust Control Plan conditions include:
    - Provide name and contact details for the person responsible for ensuring that all dust control measures are implemented in a timely and effective manner.
    - All material excavated, stockpiled, or graded shall be sufficiently watered, treated, or covered to prevent fugitive dust from leaving the property boundaries and/or causing a public nuisance. Watering during summer months should occur at least twice daily, with complete coverage of disturbed areas.
    - All areas with vehicle traffic shall be watered or have dust palliative applied as necessary to minimize dust emissions.
    - All on-site vehicle traffic shall be limited to a speed of 15 miles per hour (mph) on unpaved roads.
    - All land clearing, grading, earth moving, or excavation activities on a project shall be suspended as necessary to prevent excessive windblown dust when winds are expected to exceed 20 mph.

- All inactive portions of the development site shall be covered, seeded, or watered or otherwise stabilized until a suitable cover is established.
- All material transported off-site shall be either sufficiently watered or securely covered to prevent it being entrained in the air, and there must be a minimum of 6 inches of freeboard in the bed of the transport vehicle.
- Paved streets adjacent to the project shall be swept or washed at the end of each day, or more frequently, if necessary, to remove excessive accumulations or visibly raised areas of soil which may have resulted from activities at the Project site.
- Prior to final occupancy, the applicant shall re-establish ground cover on the site through seeding and watering.

- **Rule 227–Cutback and Emulsified Asphalt Paving Materials.** The purpose of this rule is to limit emissions of VOCs caused by the use of asphalt.
- **Rule 230–Architectural Coatings.** The purpose of this rule is to limit VOC emissions from architectural coatings. Emissions are reduced by limits on VOC content and providing requirements on coatings storage, cleanup, and labeling.

3.3.3 IMPACT ANALYSIS

This analysis is based on the Air Quality, Greenhouse, and Energy Memorandum for the Nevada County Regional Law Enforcement Indoor Shooting Range Project, included as Appendix A. Based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, a project could have a significant impact related to air quality if the project would:

a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan;

b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in non-attainment under an applicable Federal or State ambient air quality standard;

c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations; or

d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affect a substantial number of people.

Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

Construction and Operation

Air districts are required to prepare air quality plans to identify strategies to bring regional emissions into compliance with federal and state air quality standards. Air districts establish emissions thresholds for individual projects to demonstrate the point at which a project would be

considered to increase air quality violations. A project would conflict with the applicable air quality plan if it exceeded any emissions thresholds for which the region is in nonattainment.

As noted previously, the NSAQMD region is designated as nonattainment for federal and state ozone and state PM_{10}. Accordingly, the NSAQMD has prepared air quality plans, including the O_3 AQAP, to achieve attainment of the applicable O_3. The NSAQMD's adopted thresholds of significance indicate the levels of emissions that projects may emit while the region moves towards attainment of the CAAQS and NAAQS. Projects that exceed NSAQMD's thresholds of significance conflict with the O_3 AQAP. As described under Impact AIR-b, the Project would not exceed the thresholds established by the NSAQMD. Therefore, the proposed Project impacts would be less than significant.

Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in non-attainment under an applicable Federal or State ambient air quality standard?

The project would generate emissions from construction and operation. Emissions were calculated with the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod).

Construction would begin in June 2026 and end in September 2027, lasting 14 months. Construction would require approximately 6,000 cubic yards of soil export. Construction equipment required during grading and building construction was provided, and are included in Attachment A. All other phases utilized CalEEMod default construction equipment. Approximately 20 haul trips per day or 10 trucks per day during grading and a maximum number of employees trips of 80 per day or 40 total employees split between grading and building construction due to phase overlap is anticipated. All other phases utilized CalEEMod default worker trips. Additional vendor trips were added to site preparation, grading, and building construction to account for delivery of fuel and water during construction.

Emissions from consumer products, area and water heating, landscape maintenance activities, and mobile-source emissions were estimated using the applicable modules in CalEEMod. CalEEMod defaults were utilized for all inputs except for energy use. The indoor shooting range (general light industry) is expected to use approximately 20,000 kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity and 2,000 therms propane annually. The propane was added to CalEEMod as natural gas. The parking lot utilized default energy inputs. Operational emissions from all sources were estimated at full buildout of the proposed Project. Construction is anticipated to end September 2027, therefore operation could occur as early as September 2027. Therefore, to provide a conservative analysis, all operational emissions were assumed to occur within the year 2027.

3.3.3.1 Construction Emissions

The proposed Project's construction emissions are provided in Table 2. As shown below, construction of the proposed Project would not result in emissions that exceed NSAQMD Level A thresholds.

Table 2. Estimated Criteria Pollutant Emissions from Construction

Year	Criteria Pollutant Emissions (lbs/day)					
	ROG	NOx	CO	SOx	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$
2026	2.49	21.12	22.35	0.06	4.47	2.16
2027	7.34	20.23	23.35	0.06	4.44	2.24
NSAQMD Level A Thresholds	**<24**	**<24**	**None**	**None**	**<79**	**None**
Exceed NSAQMD Level A Thresholds?	**No**	**No**	**N/A**	**N/A**	**No**	**N/A**

Source: Appendix A, Attachment A.
Key:
CO = carbon monoxide
lbs = pounds
N/A = not applicable
NOx = oxides of nitrogen
NSAQMD = Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District
PM_{10} = fugitive dust, particulate matter 10 microns or smaller in diameter
$PM_{2.5}$ = fine particulate matter 2.5 microns or smaller in diameter
ROG = reactive organic gas
SOx = sulfur oxide

According to the NSAQMD, all projects should implement the following construction NSAQMD measures as applicable:

- Alternatives to open burning of vegetative material will be used unless otherwise deemed infeasible by the District. Among suitable alternatives are chipping, mulching, or conversion to biomass fuel.
- Grid power shall be used (as opposed to diesel generators) for job site power needs where feasible during construction.

Additionally, construction would further reduce emissions through NSAQMD Rule 226, Rule 227, and Rule 230. Therefore, the proposed Project impacts would be less than significant.

3.3.3.1.1 Operational Emissions

The proposed Project's operation emissions are provided in Table 3. As shown below, operation of the proposed Project would not result in emissions that exceed NSAQMD Level A thresholds.

Table 3. Estimated Criteria Pollutant Emissions from Operation

Source	Criteria Pollutant Emissions (lbs/day)					
	ROG	NOx	CO	SOx	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$
Mobile	0.41	0.39	2.39	<0.01	0.37	0.10
Area	0.49	0.01	0.60	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
Energy	0.003	0.05	0.05	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
Total	0.90	0.45	3.03	<0.01	0.37	0.10

Source	Criteria Pollutant Emissions (lbs/day)					
	ROG	NOx	CO	SOx	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$
NSAQMD Level A Thresholds	**<24**	**<24**	**None**	**None**	**<79**	**None**
Exceed NSAQMD Level A Thresholds?	**No**	**No**	**N/A**	**N/A**	**No**	**N/A**

Source: Appendix A, Attachment A.
Key:
CO = carbon monoxide
lbs = pounds
N/A = not applicable
NOx = oxides of nitrogen
NSAQMD = Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District
PM_{10} = fugitive dust, particulate matter 10 microns or smaller in diameter
$PM_{2.5}$ = fine particulate matter 2.5 microns or smaller in diameter
ROG = reactive organic gas
SOx = sulfur oxide

According to the NSAQMD, projects that meet the Level A thresholds are required to apply basic mitigation measures. The suggested basic mitigation measures are designing streets to increase pedestrian access to transit stops. The proposed Project does not propose changes to local streets; therefore, the basic mitigation measures would not be applicable and the proposed Project impacts would be less than significant.

Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Qualitative Health Risk Analysis

This discussion addresses whether the proposed Project would expose sensitive receptors to construction-generated fugitive dust (PM_{10}) or diesel particulate matter (DPM) and Pb during operations.

Construction

The potential for localized PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ health impacts is a concern for sensitive receptors. The closest sensitive receptor is located approximately 200 feet south of the Project site. Most of this fugitive dust would remain localized and would deposited near the Project site. However, the potential for impacts from fugitive dust exists unless control measures are implemented to reduce the emissions from the Project site. The proposed Project would comply with NSAQMD's Rule 226 requiring a dust control plan. With implementation of Rule 226, potential impacts to sensitive receptors resulting from fugitive dust would be less than significant.

Exposure to DPM from diesel vehicles and off-road construction equipment has the potential to result in health risks to nearby sensitive receptors. While construction of the proposed Project would involve the use of diesel fueled vehicles and off-road equipment, construction would be temporary. Furthermore, project emissions were determined not to exceed the NSAQMD thresholds for criteria pollutant emissions, which includes particulate matter. Last, according to

CARB, DPM emissions have also been shown to be highly dispersive in the atmosphere with the DPM concentration decreasing with distance from the source (CARB 2005). The nearest residential land uses are located approximately 200 feet south of the Project site. Therefore, the concentration of DPM at the nearest receptors would be substantially reduced, and construction of the proposed Project would not result in adverse health risks from DPM.

Operation

Shooting ranges have the potential to expose employees and visitors to Pb and can result in emissions into the surrounding environment. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires that employers implement engineering and work practice controls to reduce exposure to or below the permissible exposure limit of 50 microgram per cubic meter. The proposed Project would implement OSHA's recommended exposure controls for firing ranges including a separate ventilation system designed to move lead emissions downrange from the source (firearm) toward the filtered exhaust near the bullet trap limiting exposure to employees and visitors. The system would utilize high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters, as recommended by National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), capable of removing 99.97% of particles 0.3-mircons or larger (NIOSH 2007). Therefore, the concentration of Pb at the nearest receptors would be substantially reduced, and operation of the proposed Project would not result in adverse health risks from Pb.

Carbon Monoxide Hot-Spot Consideration

Construction and Operation

CO emissions are a function of vehicle idling time, meteorological conditions, and traffic flow. Under certain extreme meteorological conditions, CO concentrations near congested roadways or intersections may reach unhealthful levels (i.e., adversely affecting residents, school children, hospital patients, the elderly, etc.). CO concentrations at congested intersections that experience high levels of traffic and elevated background concentrations may reach unhealthy CO levels that affect nearby sensitive receptors. The air basin is in attainment for State and federal CO standards.

The proposed Project would result in 75 average daily trips (ADT) per day and would fall below CO thresholds established by NSAQMD (Stantec 2025a). Other air districts, such as the Bay Area Air Quality Management District have established screening thresholds to determine if a project's increased vehicle trips could result in a CO hotspot. According to the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), a project would have to increase traffic volumes by 44,000 vehicles per day or 24,000 vehicles per hour in order to generate a significant CO impact) (BAAQMD 2023). The proposed Project would not exceed this screening level.

Finally, the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) conducted an analysis within the 1992 Federal Attainment Plan for Carbon Monoxide in Los Angeles County to evaluate the amount of traffic that would be required to create a CO hotspot. This analysis was prepared as part of SCAQMD's 2003 Air Quality Management Plan and can be used to

demonstrate the potential for CO exceedances. SCAQMD's CO study looked at four intersections across the County during AM peak and PM peak hour traffic. The study concluded that at the busiest intersection in Los Angeles County, Wilshire Boulevard and Veteran Avenue, which has a traffic volume of approximately 100,000 vehicles per day, there was no violation of CO standards (SCAQMD 2003). Therefore, the proposed Project would not generate a CO hotspot and the impact is less than significant.

Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?

Construction

Construction activities associated with the proposed Project could result in short-term odorous emissions from diesel exhaust associated with diesel-fueled equipment. However, these emissions would be intermittent and would dissipate rapidly from the source. In addition, this diesel-powered equipment would only be present on-site temporarily during construction activities. In general, construction activities would not create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people, and the impact would be less than significant.

Operation

Land uses typically considered as associated with the production of odors during operations include wastewater treatment facilities, waste disposal facilities, and agricultural operations. The proposed Project does not include any land uses that are typically associated with emitting objectionable odors. However, the proposed Project would be subject to NSAQMD Rule 205 Nuisance. Thus, although not anticipated, if odor complaints are made after the proposed Project is developed, the NSAQMD would ensure that such odors are addressed, and any potential odor effects are minimized or eliminated. Additionally, the proposed Project would install HEPA filters, as recommended by NIOSH, in the shooting range ventilation system that would remove 99.97% of particles including those responsible for odors. Therefore, the impact is less than significant.

3.3.4 MITIGATION MEASURES

No mitigation measures required.

3.4 Biological Resources

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate,	☐	☒	☐	☐

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or regulated by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?				
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 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☒	☐	☐
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.4.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The proposed Project is located at an elevation of approximately 2,675 feet (815 meters) above mean sea level (msl), within the *Nevada City, California* United States Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute quadrangle (Quad), and within the city limits of the community of Nevada City within Nevada County, California.

The proposed Project site is situated on approximately 5 acres within a developed 10.09-acre parcel within the existing SORDTF within the city boundary off SR-49, northwest of the community of Nevada City. The developed areas within the proposed Project site include the existing dispatch and training buildings, paved parking areas, and maintained open space. The overall topography of the site is generally level with elevations ranging from approximately 2,640 to 2,680 feet above msl. The regional climate is typical of the Sierra Nevada foothills and is characterized by a Mediterranean climate with cool, wet winters and hot, dry summers.

Precipitation in the region occurs as rain and snow. The average annual rainfall is approximately 54.31 inches and typically occurs between October and May. The Project site climate typically exhibits a 10-month growing season from February through November. Most herbaceous growth occurs during spring and ceases as soil moisture depletes in early summer. Air temperatures range from an average January high of 50.7 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) to an average July high of 88.4°F. The annual average high temperature is 67.7°F (WRCC 2025).

Soil within the proposed Project site is almost entirely Placer diggings, with approximately 2% Hoda sandy loam (SoilWeb Earth 2025). The Placer diggings soil type is listed in the NRCS State Soil Data Access Hydric Soils List and consists of remnants of Tertiary river deposits (NRCS 2025a). Areas where this soil type exists have been hydraulicly mined, exist in drainageways and depressions, and are highly variable.

3.4.1.1 Study Methods

3.4.1.1.1 Desktop Analysis Methodology

A desktop analysis to identify sensitive biological resources including wildlife species, plant species, and their habitats that may occur within the proposed Project site and region, as defined by CDFW, USFWS, and California Native Plant Society (CNPS) was conducted. The following resources were used to identify those potentially occurring biological resources:

- CDFW California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) records search of special status species and habitat observations in the proposed Project site and in the 5 miles surrounding the proposed Project site (Figure 5 and Figure 6), (CDFW 2025a) (Appendix B);
- USFWS list of endangered, threatened, and candidate species within 5 miles of the proposed Project site (USFWS 2025a) (Appendix B);
- CNPS online Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California for the *Challenge, Camptonville, Pike, French Corral, Nevada City, North Bloomfield, Rough and Ready, Grass Valley*, and *Chicago Park*, *California* USGS 7.5-minute Quads between 2,600−2,800 feet (792−853 meters) (CNPS 2025a) (Appendix B);
- USFWS Critical Habitat data for federally threatened and endangered species (USFWS 2025b); and
- Calflora online database for Nevada County (Calflora 2025). Calflora was used as a secondary tool for the purpose of assessing rare plant species that have the potential to occur within Nevada County.

Endangered, threatened, rare, and/or special status species that were identified during the desktop analysis of the proposed Project are compiled in Table 4 below. For the purpose of this IS/MND, special status species are defined by the following parameters:

- Species listed or proposed for listing as threatened or endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) (50 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 17.12 for listed plants, 50 CFR 17.11 for listed animals, and various notices in the Federal Register for proposed species);
- Species that are listed or proposed for listing by California as threatened or endangered under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) (14 CCR 670.5);
- Plants listed as rare under the California Native Plant Protection Act of 1977 (California FGC 1900 et seq.);
- Plants considered by the CNPS to be Rank 1- a) "plants presumed extirpated in California and either rare or extinct elsewhere, or b) "rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere";
- Plants considered by CNPS to be a Rank 2- a) Plants presumed extirpated in California, but common elsewhere, or b) "rare, threatened, or endangered in California and common elsewhere";
- Plants considered by CNPS to be a Rank 3- "plants about which more information is needed" and cannot yet be excluded from review;
- Plants considered by CNPS to be a Rank 4- "plants with limited distribution";
- Species that meet the definitions of "rare" or "endangered" under CEQA Guidelines, Section 15380;
- Wildlife State Species of Special Concern (SSC) designated by CDFW;

Plant and wildlife species that are designated as "special animals" or "those of greatest conservation need," by CDFW through the CNDDB;

3.4.1.1.2 Field Survey Methodology

A biological field survey for special status plant and wildlife species and sensitive natural communities, including wetlands, was conducted by a biologist on Monday, November 3, 2025. The main objectives of the biological field survey included characterizing habitats, identifying aquatic resources that may be subject to regulatory agency jurisdiction (e.g., United States Army Corps of Engineers [USACE], Regional Water Quality Control Board [RWQCB] and the CDFW), assessing potential for special status species to occur, and recording observed plant and wildlife species. Specifically, the survey placed emphasis on evaluating suitable habitat for special status plant and wildlife species to determine the likelihood of occurrence. Although the survey occurred outside of the local nesting bird season (approximately February 1 through August 31), the field survey also included an evaluation of suitable nesting habitat within the proposed Project site including an approximate 500-foot buffer. This was achieved through

walking meandering transects throughout the entire proposed Project site and using binoculars to look for signs of nesting birds (i.e., old nests, whitewash, etc.).

3.4.1.2 Study Results

3.4.1.2.1 Desktop Analysis Results

Vegetation Communities

Vegetation types in the proposed Project site were classified based on descriptions provided in CNPS *Manual of California Vegetation* (MCV) (Sawyer et al. 2009), as well as the *California Natural Community List* (CDFW 2025b), which is adapted from the technical approach and vegetation alliance classification system described in Online Edition of *A Manual of California Vegetation* (CNPS 2025b, Sawyer et al. 2009). The majority of the proposed Project site is characterized as developed/disturbed, with impervious surfaces (driveway, parking, storage, buildings), compacted soils, and various ornamental trees. Nearby rural residential properties and limited open space within the proposed Project site support moderate to high quality coniferous forest habitat dominated by a canopy of ponderosa pine, incense cedar (*Calocedrus decurrens*), Douglas fir and California black oak (*Quercus kelloggii*) with a scattered understory of whiteleaf manzanita (*Arctostaphylos viscida*) and some Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus)*. Specific vegetation communities present in the proposed Project site are discussed in detail below.

Developed/Ornamental

Approximately 2.65 acres (115,434 square feet) of developed/ornamental land cover were mapped within the proposed Project site. The proposed Project site currently includes the existing SORDTF and associated driveways, parking lots, open space, and landscaped areas (Google Earth Pro 2025). Many ornamental trees are planted for aesthetic purposes (typically in landscape design projects and gardens). Developed/ornamental areas do not fit any classification described in the MCV (Sawyer et al. 2009) and are not considered a sensitive natural community (CDFW 2025b).

Ponderosa Pine – Incense Cedar – Douglas Fir Forest and Woodland

Approximately 1.65 acres (71,874 square feet) of Ponderosa Pine – Incense Cedar – Douglas Fir Forest and Woodland were mapped within the proposed Project site. The association most closely describing this community in the MCV is *P. ponderosa – C. decurrens – Quercus kelloggii* (Sawyer et al. 2009).

On-site tree canopy dominance was observed to be composed of mostly second-growth ponderosa pine, incense cedar, and black oak, with a sub-dominant canopy of canyon live oak (*Quercus chrysolepis)*. The understory was composed of interspersed whiteleaf manzanita and invasive Himalayan blackberry and scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) (well-known and documented in this area), with a sub-dominant layer of black oak saplings, and patches of bull

thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), which is also invasive. This vegetation community is not considered sensitive (CDFW 2025b).

Sensitive Natural Communities

Habitats are considered "sensitive" by CDFW if they are identified on the List of Vegetation Alliances and Associations as being highly imperiled or classified by CDFW in the CNDDB as natural communities of special concern – Ranks S1 to S3. No sensitive vegetation communities were observed within or adjacent to the proposed Project site. Therefore, the proposed Project is not expected to impact any sensitive natural communities.

Aquatic Features

No aquatic features mapped in databases such as the National Wetlands Inventory or the National Hydrography Dataset are present within the proposed Project site (USFWS 2025c, USGS 2025a). However, during the November 3, 2025 biological field survey, one small aquatic feature was observed in the northwest corner of the proposed Project site along a riprap slope. This feature is likely a relic linear water drainage that historically carried runoff and drainage flows at the northern boundary of the proposed Project site. The feature includes a semi-buried plastic, corrugated pipe with no observable source culvert and no bed or bank observed. Riparian vegetation consisting of common rush (*Juncus effusus)* and Himalayan blackberry is present around the margin of the feature. No standing water was visible and no drainage channels extending from this feature were observed at the time of the survey.

Wetlands and Other Waters

Based on the isolated nature of the relic drainage pipe discussed above, with no upland hydrologic connection or connection to downstream waters (i.e., no defined drainage channel or culvert), this feature is not considered a potential waters of the United States (U.S.) (see Section 5.2.3 of the Biological Resources Technical Report). This feature is likely associated with infrastructure managed by the Nevada Irrigation District and would also not be considered a waters of the State. Therefore, this feature would not be subject to CDFW jurisdiction (see Section 5.2.3 of the Biological Resources Technical Report).

Critical Habitat

The proposed Project site is not within USFWS designated critical habitat (DCH). The nearest USFWS DCH is for California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*) located approximately 2.5 miles north of the proposed Project site (USFWS 2025b). The proposed Project site does not provide suitable aquatic habitat for this species and therefore, the California red-legged frog is not expected to occur (see Section 5.3.2 of the Biological Resources Technical Report).

Habitat Connectivity

Habitat corridors are segments of land that provide linkages for wildlife movement between different habitats while also providing cover (CDFW 2020). Corridors also function as avenues

along which plants can propagate, genetic interchange can occur, populations can move in response to environmental changes and natural disasters, and populations can be replenished from other areas. Habitat corridors often consist of riparian areas along streams, rivers, or other natural features. The proposed Project site is situated within a developed County complex surrounded by existing infrastructure, roadways and limited open space. Although surrounding development reduces the extent of continuous habitat, patches of undeveloped land and mixed conifer woodland adjacent to the proposed Project site provide some localized movement opportunities for common terrestrial species. Alternatively, the lack of quality aquatic features, such as wetlands or waterways, offers minimal connectivity for riparian species. Overall, the proposed Project site provides low to moderate habitat connectivity but likely does not serve as regionally significant wildlife movement corridor.

Special Status Species

Special status plant and wildlife species and DCH known to occur within 5 miles of the proposed Project site are shown below on Figure 5, CNDDB Special-Status Wildlife Occurrences and Figure 6, CNDDB Special-Status Plant Occurrences (CDFW 2025a).

Figure 5. CNDDB Special-Status Wildlife Occurrences

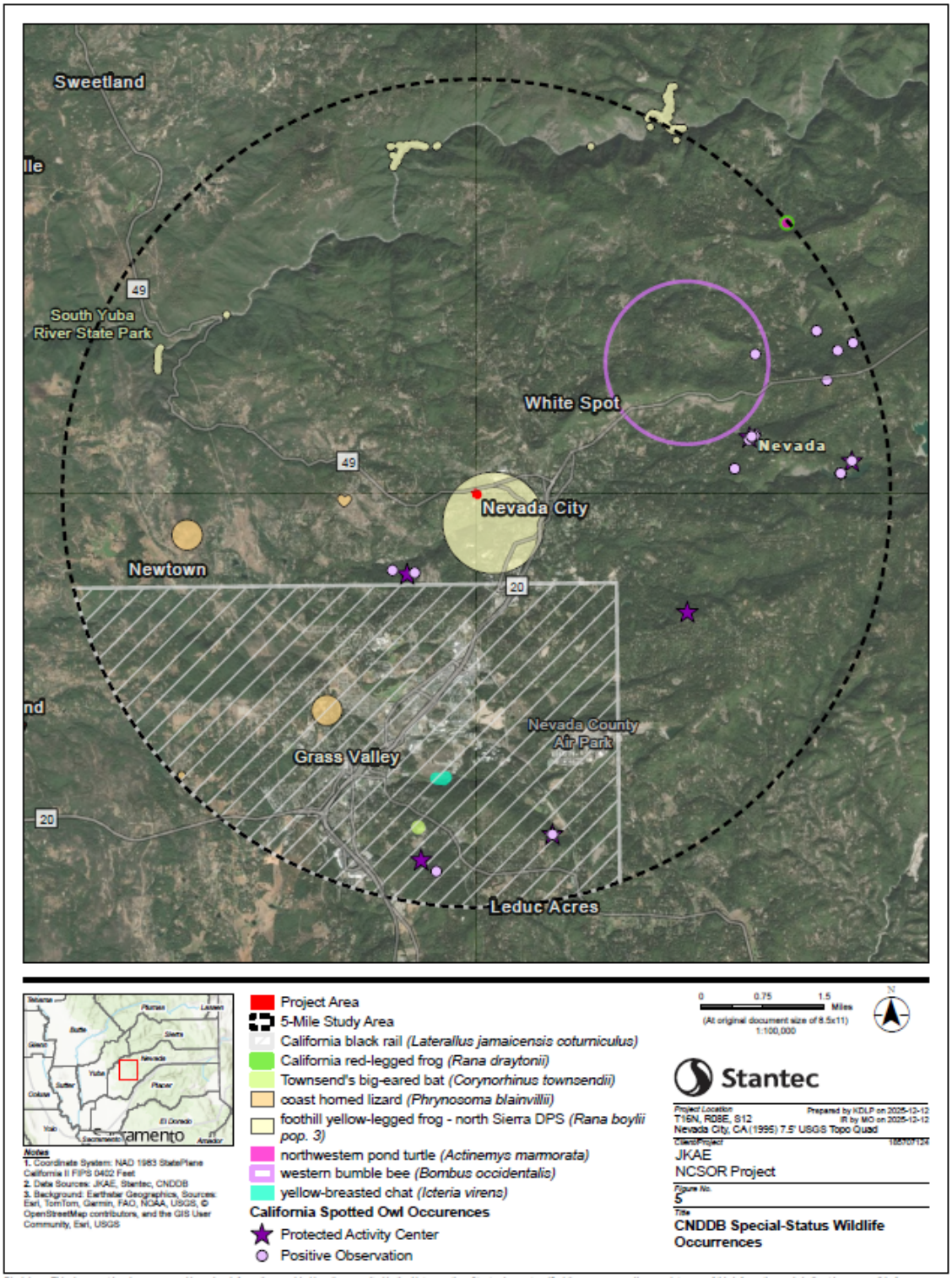

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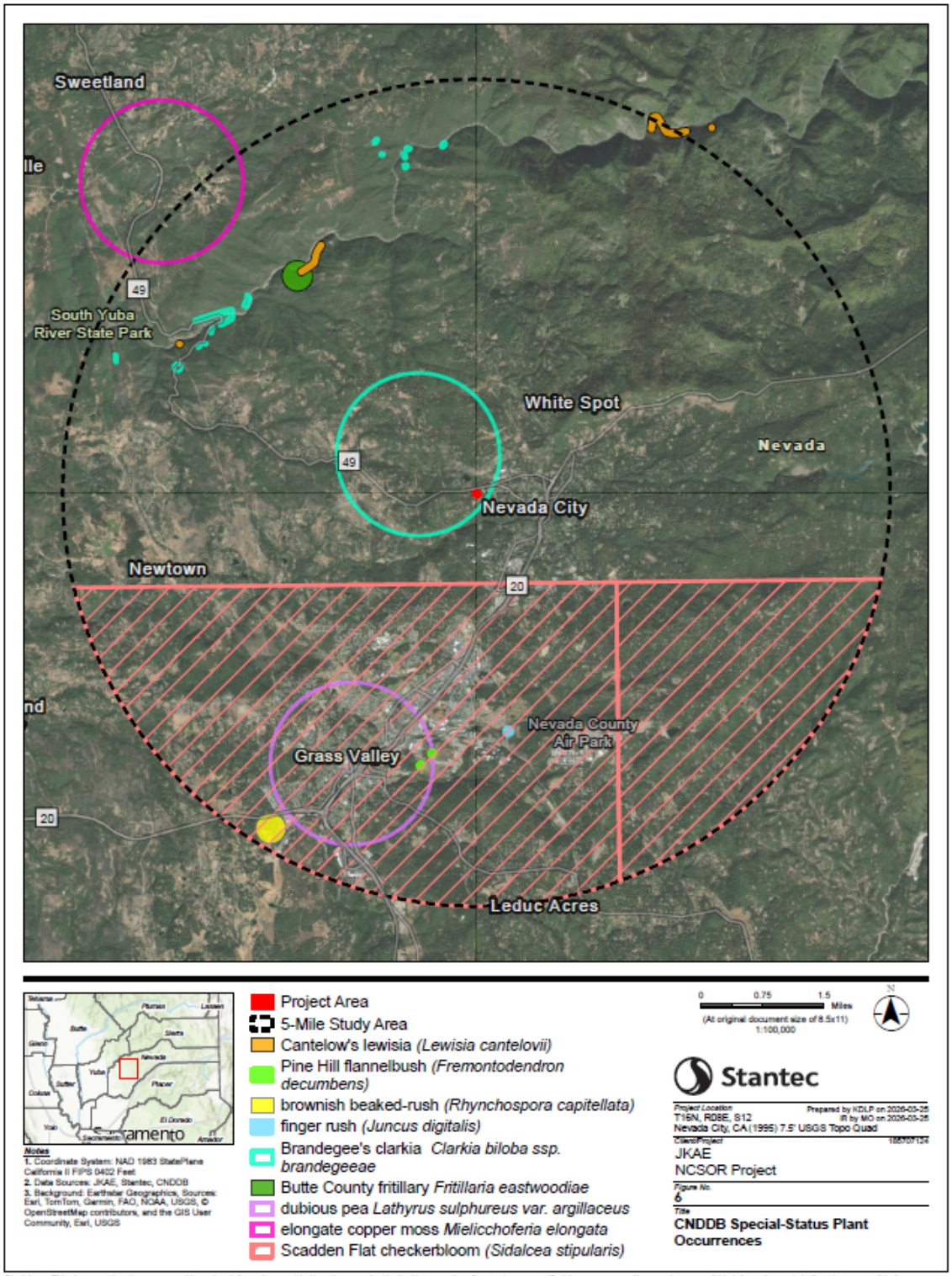
Figure 6. CNDDB Special-Status Plant Occurrences



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Based on the results of the background research listed above in Study Methods, 16 special status plant species and 16 special status wildlife species were defined as potentially occurring within the proposed Project region. The potential for nesting raptors and other migratory birds to occur within the proposed Project site was also evaluated. Species within Table 4 below includes special status plant and wildlife species that are known to occur within 5 miles of the proposed Project site or have the potential to occur based on background research data from the CDFW CNDDB, USFWS list of Federal Endangered and Threatened Species, CNPS online inventory, and Calflora (CDFW 2025a, USFWS 2025a, CNPS 2025a, Calfora 2025).

Conclusions in Table 4 regarding the habitat suitability and the potential for species occurrence were based on the background research, database searches, and local habitat suitability evaluated during the biological field survey within the proposed Project site. For each special status species known to occur in the Project region, a “potential for occurrence” within the proposed Project site was assigned; definitions for level of potential are as follows:

- **Very Low to Nil:** The proposed Project site and/or immediate area do not support suitable habitat for a particular species. The proposed Project site is outside the species known range;
- **Low:** The proposed Project site and/or immediate area only provide limited habitat for a particular species. In addition, the known range for a particular species may be outside the immediate proposed Project site;
- **Moderate:** The proposed Project site and/or immediate area provide suitable habitat for a particular species, and habitat for the species may be impacted;
- **High:** The proposed Project site and/or immediate area provide ideal habitat conditions for a particular species, and/or known populations occur in the immediate area and within the potential area of impact; and
- **Present:** Recorded historically or observed on site during biological surveys for the proposed Project.

Species with a moderate potential, high potential, or known potential to occur in the proposed Project site are further discussed in the species accounts below (Table 4) and are analyzed for potential impacts associated with the proposed Project.

Table 4. Special Status Wildlife Plant Occurrences

Common Name Scientific Name	Federal Status	State Status	CNPS Status	Geographic Distribution	Preferred Habitat	Identification Period	Potential to Occur within the Project Site
Plants							
Ahart's buckwheat *Eriogonum umbellatum var. ahartii*	—	S3	1B.2	1,310–6,560 feet	Serpentine soils in openings or slopes in chaparral or cismontane woodland.	June–September	**Very Low to Nil.** Limited to no suitable habitat (serpentine soils) in the proposed Project site, and no known occurrences within 5 miles of the proposed Project site.
Bacigalupi's yampah *Perideridia bacigalupii*	—	S3	4.2	1,475-4,120 feet	Chaparral, Lower montane coniferous forest	June – August	**Low.** Limited suitable habitat in the Project area. No known occurrences within 5 miles of the Project area.
Brandegee's clarkia *Clarkia biloba* ssp. *brandegeeae*	—	S4	4.2	245-3,000 feet	Chaparral, Cismontane woodland, lower montane coniferous forest. (Roadsides)	May-July	**Moderate.** Suitable habitat in the proposed Project Area. There is one non-specific known occurrence within 1 mile of the Project area, but no observations were made during the reconnaissance level surveys conducted in 2025.
Brownish beaked-rush *Rhynchospora capitellata*	—	S2	2B.2	145–6,560 feet	Marshes, swamps, meadows, and seeps in upper and lower montane coniferous forests.	July–August	**Very Low to Nil.** Limited to no suitable habitat in the proposed Project site. One known occurrence approximately 5 miles southwest of the proposed Project site from 1973.
Butte County fritillary *Fritillaria eastwoodiae*	—	S3	3.2	165−4,920 feet	Chaparral, cismontane woodland, lower montane coniferous forest (openings) (serpentine).	March−June	**Low.** Limited suitable habitat in the Project area. No known occurrences within 5 miles of the Project area.
California lady's-slipper *Cypripedium californicum*	—	S4	4.2	100-9,025 feet	Bogs and fens, Lower montane coniferous forest	April – August	**Very Low to Nil.** Limited to no suitable habitat in the proposed Project site, and no known occurrences within 5 miles of the proposed Project site.
California pitcherplant *Darlingtonia californica*	—	S4	4.2	0-8,480 feet	Bogs and fens, Meadows and seeps	April – August	**Very Low to Nil.** Limited to no suitable habitat in the proposed Project site, and no known occurrences within 5 miles of the proposed Project site.
Cantelow's lewisia *Lewisia cantelovii*	—	S1	1B.2	1,080–4,495 feet	Mesic granitic soils in broadleaf upland forest, chaparral, cismontane woodland, and lower montane coniferous forest, sometimes in serpentine soils or seeps.	May–October	**Very Low to Nil.** Limited to no suitable habitat in the proposed Project site. Multiple known occurrences within 5 miles of the proposed Project site in areas of the South Fork Yuba River.
Chaparral sedge *Carex xerophila*	—	S3	1B.2	1,440–2,525 feet	Dry serpentinite or gabbroic soils in chaparral, cismontane woodland, or lower montane coniferous forest.	March–June	**Very Low to Nil.** Limited to no suitable habitat (serpentine or gabbroic soils) in the proposed Project site, and no known occurrences within 5 miles of the proposed Project site.
clustered lady's-slipper *Cypripedium fasciculatum*	—	S4	4.2	330-7,990 feet	Lower montane coniferous forest, North Coast coniferous forest	March – August	**Low.** Limited suitable habitat in the Project area. No known occurrences within 5 miles of the Project area.
Dubious pea *Lathyrus sulphureus* var. *argillaceus*	—	S1S2	3	490-3,050 feet	Cismontane woodland, lower montane coniferous forest, upper montane coniferous forest.	April-March	**Low.** Limited suitable habitat in the Project area. No known occurrences within 5 miles of the Project area.

Common Name Scientific Name	Federal Status	State Status	CNPS Status	Geographic Distribution	Preferred Habitat	Identification Period	Potential to Occur within the Project Site
Elongate copper moss *Mielichhoferia elongata*	—	S3S4	4.3	0−6,430 feet	Broadleafed upland forest, chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, lower montane coniferous forest, meadows and seeps, subalpine coniferous forest.	Year-round	**Very Low to Nil.** Limited to no suitable habitat in the proposed Project site, and no known occurrences within 5 miles of the proposed Project site.
Finger rush *Juncus digitatus*	—	S3	1B.1	2,165–2,590 feet	Vernal pools, swales, or volcanic seeps in openings within cismontane woodland or lower montane coniferous forest.	May–June	**Very Low to Nil.** Limited to no suitable habitat (vernal pools, swales, or volcanic seeps) in the proposed Project site. One known occurrence approximately 3 miles south of the proposed Project site from 2011.
giant checkerbloom *Sidalcea gigantea*	—	S3	4.3	2,200-6,400 feet	Lower montane coniferous forest, Upper montane coniferous forest	July – October	**Low.** Limited suitable habitat in the Project area. No known occurrences within 5 miles of the Project area.
Humboldt lily *Lilium humboldtii* ssp. *humboldtii*	—	S3	4.2	295-4,200 feet	Chaparral, Cismontane woodland, Lower montane coniferous forest	May – July	**Low.** Limited suitable habitat in the Project area. No known occurrences within 5 miles of the Project area.
Inundated bog-clubmoss *Lycopodiella inundata*	—	S3	1B.2	0–3,280 feet	Perennially wet areas, such as bogs, marshes, and swamps in lower montane coniferous forest.	NA (moss)	**Very Low to Nil.** Limited to no suitable habitat in the proposed Project site, and no known occurrences within 5 miles of the proposed Project site.
Minute pocket moss *Fissidens pauperculus*	—	S3	1B.2	35–3,360 feet	Damp coastal soils in North Coast coniferous forest.	N/A (moss)	**Very Low to Nil.** Limited to no suitable habitat in the proposed Project site, and no known occurrences within 5 miles of the proposed Project site.
Mosquin's clarkia *Clarkia mosquinii*	—	S2	1B.2	605–4,890 feet	Dry, rocky soils in foothill woodland.	May–July	**Very Low to Nil.** Limited to no suitable habitat in the proposed Project site, and no known occurrences within 5 miles of the proposed Project site.
mountain lady's-slipper *Cypripedium montanum*	—	S4	4.2	2,345-4,920 feet	Broadleafed upland forest, Cismontane woodland, Lower montane coniferous forest, North Coast coniferous forest	March – August	**Low.** Limited suitable habitat in the Project area. No known occurrences within 5 miles of the Project area.
northern Sierra daisy *Erigeron petrophilus* var. *sierrensis*	—	S4	4.3	605-7,300 feet	Cismontane woodland, Lower montane coniferous forest, Upper montane coniferous forest	June – October	**Low.** Limited suitable habitat in the Project area. No known occurrences within 5 miles of the Project area.
Pine Hill flannelbush *Fremontodendron decumbens*	E	S1	1B.2	1,390–2,495 feet	Rocky gabbroic or serpentinite soils in chaparral or cismontane woodland.	April–July	**Very Low to Nil.** Limited to no suitable habitat (serpentine or gabbroic soils) in the proposed Project site. One known occurrence approximately 3 miles south of the proposed Project site from 2009.
Quincy lupine *Lupinus dalesiae*	—	S3	4.2	2,805-8,205 feet	Chaparral, Cismontane woodland, Lower montane coniferous forest, Upper montane coniferous forest	May-August	**Low.** Limited suitable habitat in the Project area. No known occurrences within 3 miles of the Project area.
Sanborn's onion *Allium sanbornii* var. *sanbornii*	—	S3S4	4.2	855-4,955 feet	Chaparral, Cismontane woodland, Lower montane coniferous forest	May–September	**Low.** Limited suitable habitat in the Project area. No known occurrences within 5 miles of the Project area.

Common Name Scientific Name	Federal Status	State Status	CNPS Status	Geographic Distribution	Preferred Habitat	Identification Period	Potential to Occur within the Project Site
Scadden Flat checkerbloom *Sidalcea stipularis*	—	E, S1	1B.1	2,295–2,395 feet	Marshes and swamps.	July–August	**Very Low to Nil.** Limited to no suitable habitat in the proposed Project site. Two known occurrences in the Grass Valley area (undisclosed location) south of the proposed Project site from 2008.
Sierra arching sedge *Carex cyrtostachya*	—	S2	1B.2	2,000–4,460 feet	Marshes, swamps, meadows, seeps, and the margins of riparian forest in lower montane coniferous forest.	May–August	**Very Low to Nil.** Limited to no suitable habitat in the proposed Project site, and no known occurrences within 5 miles of the proposed Project site.
Sierra blue grass *Poa sierrae*	—	S3	1B.3	1,200–5,000 feet	Openings in lower montane coniferous forest or canyons, sometimes in meadows, forest edges or alpine tundra; prefers moist slopes, often on mossy rocks, in rocky and well-drained soils.	April–July	**Very Low to Nil.** Limited to no suitable habitat in the proposed Project site, and no known occurrences within 5 miles of the proposed Project site.
Sierra clarkia *Clarkia virgata*	—	S3	4.3	1,310 – 5,510 feet	Cismontane woodland, Lower montane coniferous forest	May-Aug	**Low.** Limited suitable habitat in the Project area. No known occurrences within 5 miles of the Project area.
Sierra foothills brodiaea *Brodiaea sierrae*	—	S3	4.3	165 – 3,215 feet	Chaparral, Cismontane woodland, Lower montane coniferous forest	May-Aug	**Low.** Limited suitable habitat in the Project area. No known occurrences within 5 miles of the Project area.
Spicate calycadenia *Calycadenia spicata*	—	S1	1B.3	130–4,595 feet	Dry, open meadows, hillsides, grasslands, and openings in foothill woodland; some preference for adobe, clay, gravelly, or rocky soils.	May–September	**Very Low to Nil.** Limited to no suitable habitat in the proposed Project site. The only known occurrence (2018) is approximately 5.5 miles away.
Stebbins' morning glory *Calystegia stebbinsii*	E	E, S1	1B.1	600–3,575 feet	Openings in chaparral or cismontane woodland, sometimes in gabbroic or serpentine soils.	April–July	**Very Low to Nil.** Limited to no suitable habitat in the proposed Project site, and no known occurrences within 5 miles of the proposed Project site.
Sticky pyrrocoma *Pyrrocoma lucida*	—	S2	1B.2	2,295–6,400 feet	Alkaline, clay soils in lower montane coniferous forest, meadows, and seeps.	July–October	**Very Low to Nil.** Limited to no suitable habitat in the proposed Project site, and no known occurrences within 5 miles of the proposed Project site.
Tompkins' sedge *Carex tompkinsii*	—	S3S4	4.3	1,380 – 6,005 feet	Chaparral, Cismontane woodland, Lower montane coniferous forest, Upper montane coniferous forest	May-July	**Very Low to Nil.** Limited to no suitable habitat in the proposed Project site, and no known occurrences within 5 miles of the proposed Project site.
True's manzanita *Arctostaphylos mewukka* ssp. *truei*	—	S3	4.2	1,395 – 4,560 feet	Chaparral, Lower montane coniferous forest	Feb-July	**Low.** Limited suitable habitat in the Project area. No known occurrences within 5 miles of the Project area.
True's mountain jewelflower *Streptanthus tortuosus* ssp. *truei*	—	S2	1B.1	2,505–2,820 feet	Partial shade on steep rocky slopes in lower montane coniferous forest.	June–July	**Very Low to Nil.** Limited to no suitable habitat in the proposed Project site, and no known occurrences within 5 miles of the proposed Project site.
Invertebrates							

Common Name Scientific Name	Federal Status	State Status	CNPS Status	Geographic Distribution	Preferred Habitat	Identification Period	Potential to Occur within the Project Site
Monarch butterfly *Danaus plexippus*	PT	S2	N/A	Throughout North America to southern Canada as well as Hawaii and other Pacific islands, Australia, New Zealand, Spain, and Portugal.	Occurs in a variety of habitats spring through fall and uses milkweed (*Asclepias* spp.) as the larval host plant. Migrates to overwintering sites within 1.5 miles off the California coast from September to November. They overwinter on eucalyptus trees (*Eucalyptus globulus*), Monterey pines (*Pinus radiata*), and/or Monterey cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*).	Spring−Early Fall	**Moderate.** The proposed Project site does not provide suitable larval host plant habitat; however, there is potentially suitable foraging habitat within the proposed Project site. No known occurrences from within 5 miles of the proposed Project site.
Western bumble bee *Bombus occidentalis*	—	CE, S1	N/A	Northwestern and central United States extending north into Canada and Alaska. Since 1998. Drastic declines have occurred in western and central California. Found in isolated areas, primarily in the Rocky Mountains.	Found near blooming flowers along streams, meadows, roadsides, and burned or logged areas. Nests underground in abandoned rodent burrows with colonies starting in early spring and occupying the nest through early fall.	Spring−Summer	**Moderate.** Suitable foraging and nesting habitat within the proposed Project site. One known occurrence approximately 3 miles northeast of the proposed Project site from 1968.
Amphibians							
California red-legged frog *Rana draytonii*	E	SSC, S2S3	N/A	Primarily in coastal California, from Mendocino County south to Baja California, Mexico, with key populations in the Coast Ranges and isolated spots in Sierra Nevada foothills and Southern California counties.	Requires perennial or near-perennial aquatic habitats, especially for breeding; slow-moving streams, freshwater pools and ponds over 1-foot deep are preferred, with submerged vegetation. Adjacent upland habitats are often used for temporary refuges or dispersal movements.	Spring−Fall	**Very Low to Nil.** The presumed relic irrigation feature located on the northern boundary of the proposed Project site does not provide suitable aquatic habitat for this species, and no other aquatic features are present. Suitable aquatic habitat exists approximately 0.25-mile away at Hirschman's Pond; however, no occurrences are recorded at this location, and State Route 49 creates a significant dispersal barrier that limits movement to the proposed Project site. One known occurrence approximately 5 miles northeast of the proposed Project site from 2016.
Foothill yellow-legged frog North Sierra Distinct Population Segment (DPS) *Rana boylii pop. 3*	—	T, S2	N/A	Found from near sea levels to 6,365 feet (1,940 meters) in California, mostly distributed throughout the foothill portions of most drainages from the Oregon border to the San Gabriel River.	Found in or near perennial or intermittent streams during all seasons but may be found up to 50 feet from flowing water. Prefers pebble or cobble streams with cool, clear water in a variety of habitats from valley and foothill oak woodland, riparian forest, ponderosa pine, mixed conifer, coastal scrub, and mixed chaparral.	Year-round	**Very Low to Nil.** The proposed Project site does not provide suitable aquatic habitat for this species. Multiple known occurrences within 5 miles of the proposed Project site in areas of the South Fork Yuba River. One non-specific occurrence from 1903 is mapped within the proposed Project site, however it is noted that the occurrence is between Nevada City and Champion Mine.
Reptiles							
Coast horned lizard *Phrynosoma blainvillii*	—	SSC, S4	N/A	Has a broad range from the Bay Area south to Baja California, including the Coast Ranges, Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys), Sierra Nevada foothills, and Southern California.	Requires exposed friable soils in sandy-gravelly substrate with scattered shrubs in grasslands, coniferous forests, woodlands, and chaparral up to 4,000 feet above msl in the Sierra Nevada foothills.	Year-round	**Very Low to Nil.** The proposed Project site does not provide suitable habitat for this species. One known occurrence approximately 1.7 miles west of the proposed Project site from 1991.

Common Name Scientific Name	Federal Status	State Status	CNPS Status	Geographic Distribution	Preferred Habitat	Identification Period	Potential to Occur within the Project Site
Northwestern pond turtle *Actinemys marmorata*	PT	SSC, SNR	N/A	Extreme western United States into Baja, Mexico.	Aquatic habitat includes ponds, marshes, rivers, or streams with rocky or muddy bottoms and vegetative cover with available sunny basking sites up to 5,000 feet above msl. Hatchlings prefer shallow water with dense submergent or short emergent vegetation. Adult females require a suitable upland oviposition site near the aquatic site.	Spring−fall	**Very Low to Nil.** Limited to no suitable habitat within the proposed Project site. The presumed relic irrigation feature located on the northern boundary of the Project site does not provide suitable habitat for this species, and no other aquatic features are present within the Project site. Suitable aquatic habitat is approximately 0.25-mile away at Hirschman's Pond, however no CNDDB occurrences are recorded at this location, and SR-49 creates a significant dispersal barrier that limits movement to the Project site. One known occurrence approximately 5 miles northeast of the proposed Project site from 2016.
Birds							
American goshawk *Astur atricapillus*	—	SSC, S3	N/A	Found across North America, breeding from Alaska and Canada down through the mountainous western United States (Rockies, Sierra Nevada, Cascades) and into Mexico. Also found in the Northeastern United States within the Great Lakes and Appalachian Regions.	Closed-canopy forests with greater than 50% cover for protection and thermal cover. Nests and roosts in older stands of mixed conifer forests and hunts in forests and in forest clearings and meadows.	Year-round	**Very Low to Nil**. No suitable nesting habitat is present in the proposed Project site. No known occurrences within 5 miles of the proposed Project site.
Bald eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*	D, BGEPA, BCC	E, FP, S3	N/A	North America including all continuous United States.	Near lakes or streams	Year-round	**Very Low to Nil**. No suitable nesting or foraging habitat is present in the Project site. No known occurrences from within 5 miles of the proposed Project site.
California condor *Gymnogyps californianus*	E	E, FP (EXPN)	N/A	The current range covers mountainous and grassland areas in Southern and Central California, the Grand Canyon region (Arizona/Utah), and Baja California, Mexico.	Natural cavities or caves in cliffs are primarily used for nesting but have also been known to nest in large trees, such as coast redwoods and giant sequoias. Foraging habitat can be far from nest sites, is typically in open grasslands and oak savannas.	Year-round	**Very Low to Nil.** The Project site does not provide suitable nesting or foraging habitat. Within the region, this species occurs as a non-essential experimental population under FESA Section 10(j).
California black rail *Laterallus jamaicensis coturniculus*	—	T, FP, S2	N/A	Primarily resides in the San Francisco Bay Area tidal marshes and smaller coastal pockets and also in freshwater marshes in the Sierra Nevada foothills.	Saltwater, brackish, and freshwater marshes in coastal California and throughout the lower foothills of the Sierra Nevada.	Year-round	**Very Low to Nil.** No suitable habitat within the proposed Project site. One known occurrence from 2007 within the vicinity (non-specific) of Grass Valley south of the proposed Project site
California spotted owl *Strix occidentalis occidentalis*	PT	SSC, S2	N/A	Found throughout northern California extending into southern California along the Sierra Nevada, Coastal, and transverse ranges. Found in elevations up to approximately 8,500 feet.	Mature forest with permanent water and suitable nesting trees and snags in the Sierra Nevada. Foraging habitat consists of intermediate-to-late successional forests with greater than 40% canopy cover, while nesting habitat is typically in forested areas with greater than 70% cover.	Year-round	**Low**. According to the CNDDB, there are numerous observations of nests, individuals, and Protected Activity Centers (PACs) within 5 miles of the proposed Project site. The closest occurrence is approximately 1.2 miles to the southwest consisting of an observed pair and established PAC. This species has potential to nest or forage in suitable coniferous habitat adjacent to the proposed Project site, although the likelihood is considered low due to the degree of pre-existing residential and commercial development and disturbance.

Common Name Scientific Name	Federal Status	State Status	CNPS Status	Geographic Distribution	Preferred Habitat	Identification Period	Potential to Occur within the Project Site
Great gray owl *Strix nebulosa*	—	E, S1	N/A	Primarily found in northern Canada and Alaska with a portion of range extending into the United States following the Rocky Mountains and Sierra Nevada Mountains.	Generally found in mixed coniferous forests from 2,500 to 8,000 feet (762 to 2,838 meters) above mean sea level in combination with meadows or other vegetated openings. Nesting typically occurs in broken top snags of dead trees, usually at least 24-inch diameter breast height, in close proximity to meadows, which are used for foraging.	Year-round	**Very Low to Nil.** The proposed Project site contains no suitable meadow habitat.
Yellow-breasted chat *Icteria virens*	—	SSC, S4	N/A	Occurs within a broad, patchy distribution across North America, breeding from southern Canada down through the United States and into Mexico, while wintering from Mexico to Panama.	Uncommon resident and migrant in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada in valley foothill riparian habitats up to around 4,800 feet above mean sea level. Nests and forages in dense, brushy thickets of vegetation along streams or rivers.	Migration (March–May; August–September)	**Very Low to Nil.** Limited to no suitable habitat within the proposed Project site. One known occurrence approximately 3.5 miles south of the proposed Project site from 2021.
Nesting raptors and other migratory birds	MBTA	FGC	N/A	Migrants and resident species.	Tree, shrub, ground, riparian vegetation, and/or manmade structures.	Nesting (approximately February–August)	**High.** Suitable habitat present within the proposed Project site.
Mammals							
Fisher – West Coast DPS *Pekania pennanti*	—	SSC, S2S3	N/A	In California, currently in two separated regions: the northwest including the northern Coast Range and Klamath Province, and the southern Sierra Nevada.	Found in mixed evergreen forests with regularly closed canopies, large trees and snags, and preferably in areas with limited human use. Dens in cavities of large trees, snags, stumps, logs or burrows, caves, and crevices in rocky areas.	Year-round	**Very Low to Nil.** Limited to no suitable habitat within the proposed Project site. No known occurrences from within 5 miles of the proposed Project site.
Gray wolf *Canis lupus*	E	E, S1	N/A	Circumpolar range including North America, Europe and Asia. In California, they are currently located in the northeastern counties and the southern Sierra Nevada mountains.	Known to occupy a diverse set of habitats in North America including tundra, forests, grasslands, and deserts. Factors affecting wolves' use of habitat include availability and abundance of prey, snow conditions, absence of occurrence of livestock, road density, human presence, and topography.	Year-round	**Very Low to Nil.** Limited to no suitable habitat within the proposed Project site. No known occurrences from within 5 miles of the proposed Project site.
Townsend's big-eared bat *Corynorhinus townsendii*	—	SSC, S2	N/A	Found throughout California.	Forms maternity roosts and hibernacula in caves, mines, tunnels, or old buildings in mesic habitats. Will occasionally use decaying, hollow trees and bridges for day or night roosting. The species forages along habitat edges, gleaning insects from bushes and trees.	Year-round	**Very Low to Nil.** Limited to no suitable habitat present within the proposed Project site. One known occurrence approximately 4 miles south of the proposed Project site from 2015.

Sources: *Beck and Winter 2000, CDFW 2025a, CDFW 2025c, CNPS 2025a, Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2025, Greene 1995, Jameson and Peeters 2004, Nafis 2025, Shuford and Gardali 2008, Sibley 2003, Stebbins and McGinnis 2012, USFWS 2017, USFWS 2025a, Xerces Society 2025, Zeiner et al. 1988-1990.*

Federal Status	State Status	State Rank	California Native Plant Society (CNPS)
FESA = Federal Endangered Species Act	**CESA** = California Endangered Species Act	**S1** = Critically Imperiled	**1A** = Plants presumed extirpated in CA and either rare or extinct elsewhere
E = Endangered under FESA	**E** = Endangered under CESA	**S2** = Imperiled	**1B** = Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere
T = Threatened under FESA	**T** = Threatened under CESA	**S3** = Vulnerable	**2A** = Plants presumed extirpated in CA but more common elsewhere
PT = Proposed Threatened under FESA	**C** = Candidate for listing under CESA	**S4** = Apparently Secure	**2B** = Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California but more common elsewhere

C = Candidate for listing under the federal Endangered Species Act	**SSC** = Species of Special Concern	**S** = Secure	**3** = Plants about which more information is needed - a review list
D = Delisted under FESA	**FP** = Fully Protected	**SNR** = Not Yet Ranked	**4** = Plants of limited distribution - a watch list
BGEPA = Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act	**FGC** = California Fish and Game Code		**0.1** = Seriously threatened in California
MBTA = Migratory Bird Treaty Act	**–** = No listing		**0.2** = Fairly threatened in California
X = Designated Critical Habitat			**0.3** = Not very threatened in California
BCC = Bird of Conservation Concern			
– = No listing			

3.4.2 REGULATORY SETTING

3.4.2.1 Federal

3.4.2.1.1 Federal Endangered Species Act

The FESA of 1973 was established to protect and recover endangered and threatened species and the ecosystems upon which they depend (USFWS 2026a). According to the FESA "endangered" indicates a species is in danger of extinction throughout all or within a significant portion of its range. In addition, the FESA defines a species as "threatened" if that species is likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future. The USFWS and the National Marine Fisheries Service administer FESA and are responsible for consulting with other federal agencies pursuant to FESA. Consultation with the USFWS would be necessary if a project action has the potential to affect federally listed species, their habitat, as well as areas of DCH. This consultation would proceed under Section 7 of the FESA if a federal action is required for the project or it would proceed through Section 10 of the FESA if no such federal nexus were available.

3.4.2.1.2 Clean Water Act

The objective of the Clean Water Act (CWA) of 1977, as amended, is to maintain and restore the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation’s waters (EPA 2025).The discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S., including jurisdictional wetlands, is regulated under Section 404 of the CWA by the USACE via a permitting process. Surface water quality is further regulated by the USEPA; in California this authority is delegated to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) or the RWQCB. Applicants for Section 404 permits are also required to comply with Section 401 of the CWA by obtaining Water Quality Certification (WQC) through the State.

3.4.2.1.3 Migratory Bird Treaty Act

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918 enacts the provisions of treaties between the U.S., Great Britain, Mexico, Japan, and Russia and authorizes the U.S. Secretary of the Interior to protect and regulate the taking of migratory birds (USFWS 2026b). This treaty prohibits “take,” which has been defined to include harming any migratory bird listed under the MBTA, including nests, eggs, and/or young.

3.4.2.2 State

3.4.2.2.1 California Endangered Species Act

The CESA prohibits “take” of plants or animals listed as endangered or threatened and protects native species of fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals, invertebrates, and plants, and their habitats, that are threatened with extinction or experiencing a significant decline which, if not halted, would lead to a threatened or endangered designation (CDFW 2026a). “Take” is defined

in Section 86 of the California Fish and Game Code (FGC) as to "hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill." CESA authorizes the CDFW to issue incidental take permits for State-listed species when specific criteria are met.

3.4.2.2.2 California Environmental Quality Act

The CEQA requires public agencies to identify and disclose the potential environmental effects of proposed discretionary projects and to avoid or mitigate significant impacts where feasible (OPR 2024). The CEQA Guidelines (CCR Title 14, Section 15000 et seq.) establish standardized procedures, evaluation criteria, and definitions used to determine whether a project may result in a significant environmental effect. CEQA requires feasible avoidance, minimization, and compensatory mitigation when significant impacts are identified. If impacts cannot be reduced to a less-than-significant level, the Lead Agency must prepare an Environmental Impact Report. CEQA emphasizes informed decision-making, public disclosure, and environmental protection through feasible mitigation.

3.4.2.2.3 Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act

The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (Porter-Cologne), Sections 1601 to 1602 of the California FGC, authorizes the SWRCB to oversee water rights and water quality policy, and the SWRCB has established nine RWQCBs to protect and enhance water quality at the regional and local levels (SWRCB 2025a). In addition to preparing WQCs to designate beneficial uses of water bodies in each region, each RWQCB issues permits, referred to as a Waste Discharge Requirements, for activities that result in pollutant or nuisance discharges that may affect surface or groundwater, including isolated wetlands not subject to the jurisdiction of the USACE.

3.4.2.2.4 California Fish and Game Code

The California FGC has several provisions for the protection of waters of the State, and special status plant, fish, and wildlife resources, including their habitat (CFGC 2026). The applicable sections of the California FGCs are as follows:

- **Sections 1600–1616 (Streambed Alteration):** The CDFW is responsible for the protection and conservation of fish and wildlife resources in California. Under Section 1602, CDFW has the authority to issue Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreements for construction activities that substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow or substantially change the bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream, or lake designated by the CDFW as providing resources for fish or wildlife.
- **Sections 1900–1913 (Native Plant Protection Act):** The Native Plant Protection Act of 1977 prohibits the taking, possessing, or sale within the State of any plants that the CDFW has determined are rare, threatened, or endangered. CDFW has the authority to enforce the provisions of this act and authorize measures to salvage native plants that may otherwise be affected by project activities, if deemed appropriate.

- **Sections 3500–3516 (Game Birds and Birds of Prey):** CDFW protects game birds, birds of prey, migratory birds, and Fully Protected birds and their nests, eggs, and young from take or possession, except as otherwise provided by the code (e.g., incidental take under CESA).
- **Sections 3511, 4700, 5050, and 5515 (Fully Protected Species):** California statutes accord a "Fully Protected" status to specific birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and fish. These species cannot be "taken," and no process exists for the issuance of incidental take permits for Fully Protected species.

3.4.2.3 Local

3.4.2.3.1 Nevada City Tree Preservation

Chapter 18.01 of the Nevada City Municipal Code includes requirements for trees to be preserved through development review processes and requires permits for the cutting or removal of, or other significant impacts to, such protected trees within the city limits on public or private property (Nevada City 2007). A protected tree is defined as trees of certain species and size (diameter breast height), as defined below (Section 18.01.030 of the Nevada City Municipal Code):

Protected Trees	Cumulative Diameter Breast Height
Broadleaf maple	6 inches
Cedar	6 inches
Fir	6 inches
Madrone	4 inches
Manzanita	4 inches
Oak	4 inches
Pine (Ponderosa, Gray)	6 inches
Pine (Sugar Pine)	All protected
Sequoia giganteum	6 inches
All other trees not specified	6 inches

The County, as the CEQA Lead Agency and property owner, is not subject to local land use regulations within the city limits of Nevada City. However, the County considers county and/or city policies and guidelines, as appropriate, to determine whether a project would be consistent. Although the County is not subject to the NCMC, proposed Project design would take these protected trees into consideration and would be consistent with the NCMC.

3.4.3 IMPACT ANALYSIS

Based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, a project could have a significant impact related to biological resources if the project would:

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 CDFW or USFWS;

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 CDFW or USFWS;

c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means;

d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites;

e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance; or

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.

Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or regulated by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Construction and Operation

Species listed in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or regulated by the CDFW and USFWS are called special status species. Potentially occurring special status species within the proposed Project site and surrounding region were identified by conducting a desktop query of local lists and databases including those managed by CDFW, USFWS and CNPS (CDFW 2025a, USFWS 2025a, CNPS 2025a) (Appendix B). As noted above, species identified through desktop queries were then refined following further research and reconnaissance-level biological field surveys to identify habitats that support special status species and/or the species themselves that could occur within or within the vicinity of the proposed Project site where they could potentially be adversely impacted by proposed Project construction or operation. Desktop queries identified 34 special status plant species and 16 special status wildlife species with the potential to occur within the region surrounding the proposed Project site (Table 4).

Although the proposed Project would have short-term construction-related impacts, the proposed Project has the greatest potential to have a substantial adverse effect on species with a moderate or high potential to occur on site as determined by high habitat suitability or by the species' variable range and mobility. While the potential for adverse effects on species with low or very low or nil potential to occur is possible, it is unlikely due to limited or no suitable habitat and/or a species limited mobility from a nearby occurrence to reach the proposed Project site. The potential impacts to species with a moderate or high potential to occur are discussed below.

3.4.3.1.1 Impacts to Special Status Plant Species

No special status plants were observed during the reconnaissance-level field survey conducted on November 3, 2025. Database records included 34 special status plants within a nine-quad search of the proposed Project site (CDFW 2025b, CNPS 2025a). For each species, habitat requirements were assessed and compared to the habitats present within the proposed Project site to determine potential to occur within the proposed Project site. Much of the proposed Project site is disturbed, with impervious paved surfaces, compacted soils, and various ornamental trees and invasive plants. Pockets of natural habitat remain around the boundary, primarily to the west of the proposed Project site as part of the coniferous community. However, based on the literature review and field survey, none of the 34 special status plant species listed in Table 4 have a high potential to occur within the proposed Project site, based on the known range of the species and marginal suitable habitat available within the proposed Project site.

The closest CNDDB occurrence for special status plants is for Scadden flat checkerbloom (*Sidalcea stipularis*) from 2008 located approximately 1.1 miles south of the proposed Project site, mapped non-specifically to the *Grass Valley* and *Chicago Park, California* USGS 7.5 quadrangles (CDFW 2025a). The closest occurrence within the CNDDB is for Brandegee's clarkia (*Clarkia biloba* ssp. *brandegeeae*) for one non-specific known occurrence within 1 mile of the Project area. Also, there is one occurence for finger rush (*Juncus digitatus*) from 2011, mapped approximately 2.8 miles south of the proposed Project (CDFW 2025a). There is suitable habitat near the roadsides for Brandegee's clarkia, but these locations are outside of impact areas. There is no suitable habitat for Scadden flat checkerbloom or finger rush within the proposed Project site, and therefore, is not expected to occur. As such, impacts from the proposed Project would not have a substantial adverse effect on any special status plant species. However, Mitigation Measure BIO-1 has been incorporated to ensure any potential adverse impacts are less than significant. Therefore, potential impacts to special status plant species are considered less than significant with mitigation.

3.4.3.1.2 Impacts to Special Status Wildlife Species

Much of the proposed Project site is disturbed and includes impervious paved surfaces, compacted soils, and various ornamental trees, making it marginal habitat for most special status wildlife species. However, pockets of natural habitat remain around the boundary of the proposed Project site including the forested and other vegetated communities present and could provide suitable habitat. Out of the 16 wildlife species listed in Table 4, three were found to have a moderate potential to occur based on the presence of suitable habitat and the known range of the species. In addition, nesting raptors and other migratory birds were found to have a high

potential to occur within the proposed Project site. However, no special status wildlife species were observed during the biological field survey.

CNDDB special status wildlife species occurrences within 5 miles of the proposed Project site are listed in Table 4. Within 5 miles, and to the north, east, northwest, and southwest of the Project site are hillsides, stream and river canyons, and less developed areas where there are CNDDB occurrence records for several species, including California black rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis coturniculus*), California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*), coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum*), foothill yellow-legged frog (*Rana boylii*), and northwestern pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata*) (CDFW 2025a). While suitable habitat is present within the 5-mile radius, these species are not expected to be present within the proposed Project site due to lack of suitable habitat as well as species' typical dispersal habitats and ranges (i.e., connecting waterways and riparian corridors).

The three species with a moderate potential to occur in the proposed Project site include the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus plexippus*), western bumble bee (*Bombus occidentalis*), and California spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis occidentalis*). Potential impacts to these three species as well as nesting raptors and other migratory birds are discussed below.

Monarch Butterfly

Distribution, Biology, and Habitat Requirements

In the western United States, the monarch butterfly has a distribution range from the Rocky Mountains to the coast of California. They typically live west of the Rocky Mountains and travel to the coast of California to overwinter due to colder temperatures they cannot withstand. Overwintering sites along the Pacific Coast include roost sites in eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus* sp.), Monterey pine (*Pinus radiata*), and Monterey cypress (*Hesperocyparis macrocarpa*) (USFWS 2025d).

Monarchs rely on flowering plants for foraging in many different habitats but require milkweed (*Asclepias* sp.) as host plants to lay their eggs on. Eggs hatch within 2 to 5 days, and the larvae and then caterpillars feed on the milkweed. They emerge as larvae (caterpillars), which are active for about 2 weeks. After this time, they pupate and emerge 1 to 2 weeks later as a butterfly. Caterpillars have black, white and yellow stripes. Adult monarch butterflies have two sets of wings that span 3 to 4 inches. The wings are bright orange with a black outline, which has a double row of white spots on the upper section of the wings (USFWS 2025d). The overwintering migration can be more than 1,500 miles and take over 2 months to complete, typically in early spring when the butterflies disperse back to where they came from (USFWS 2025d).

Occurrence Records

There were no CNDDB occurrences for the monarch butterfly within 5 miles of the proposed Project site (CDFW 2025a).

Suitable Habitat within the Proposed Project Site

No life stage of monarch butterfly or milkweed species were observed during the November 3, 2025 reconnaissance survey. No suitable foraging habitat for monarch larvae and caterpillars was observed due to the absence of milkweed species within the proposed Project site. However, the survey occurred outside the monarch's active breeding season, as milkweed typically senesces in late summer and adult monarchs migrate to overwintering sites by early fall, reducing the likelihood of detecting any life stage during this time of year. Suitable foraging habitat for adults within the proposed Project site was observed in the form of limited flowering plants, and therefore, potential exists, although limited, for monarch butterfly to occur within the proposed Project site.

Potential Impacts

The proposed Project site contains limited suitable foraging habitat for monarch butterfly. If present, individual monarch butterfly could be significantly impacted by Project construction activities. However, with implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1: Pre-Construction Worker Environmental Awareness Training, this impact would be reduced to less than significant.

Western Bumble Bee

Distribution, Biology, and Habitat Requirements

Western bumble bees are known to occur along the Pacific coast and western interior of North America from New Mexico, Arizona and California, north through the Pacific Northwest, Western Canada, and into Alaska (Xerces Society 2025). Despite historically being one of the most abundant bumble bee species in the western United States and Canada, this species has undergone severe declines in range, relative abundance, and genetic diversity (Hatfield et al. 2015).

The western bumble bee is found in a range of habitats, including mixed woodlands, farmlands, urban areas, montane meadows, and open grassy areas (Hatfield et al. 2015). Elevations of known sites range from sea level to over 6,500 feet (1,981 meters). This species relies on a wide range of plants that bloom and provide adequate nectar and pollen throughout their life cycle, which is generally from early February to late November, though dates may vary by elevation. Nector-producing forage species include: California lilac *(Ceanothus* sp.), knapweed (*Centaurea* sp.)*,* rabbitbrush (*Ericameria nauseosa*)*,* thistle (*Cirsium* sp.), wild geranium (*Geranium maculatum*)*,* gumplant (*Grindelia camporum*)*,* lupine (*Lupinus* sp.)*,* sweet clover (*Melilotus officinalis*), coyote mint (*Monardella villosa*)*,* Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*)*,* goldenrod (*Solidago* sp.), and clover species (*Trifolium* sp.) (Hatfield et al. 2015, Williams et al. 2014).

Like many other bumble bee species, the western bumble bee typically nests underground in abandoned rodent burrows or in other cavities typically in open west-southwest slopes bordered by trees (Hatfield et al. 2015). Their overwintering habitat is likely in more shaded areas near

trees or in banks without dense vegetation, or in bare patches within short grass (Xerces Society 2025).

Occurrence Records and Observations

One historical CNDDB observation (1968) is mapped approximately 3 miles from the proposed Project site (CDFW 2025a). No western bumble bees or other bumble bee species were observed during the November 3, 2025 reconnaissance survey.

Suitable Habitat within the Proposed Project Site

Suitable foraging and nesting habitat within the proposed Project site was observed in the form of limited suitable flowering floral resources (i.e*.,* scotch broom *(Cytisus scoparius),* Himalayan blackberry, deerweed *(Acmispon glaber*) and abandoned rodent burrows. Potential for occurrence is moderate due to the presence of suitable foraging and nesting habitat within the proposed Project site.

Potential Impacts

The proposed Project site contains suitable habitat for western bumble bees. If present, western bumble bees or their nest(s) could be impacted by Project construction activities. With implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1: Pre-Construction Worker Environmental Awareness Training and Mitigation Measure BIO-2: Conduct Pre-construction Surveys and Avoidance Measures for Western Bumble Bee, this impact would be reduced to less than significant.

California Spotted Owl

Distribution, Biology, and Habitat Requirements

California spotted owl, one of three subspecies of the spotted owl occupies the southern Cascades south throughout the Sierra Nevada mountains, the mountainous regions of southern California, and the central coast ranges at least as far north as Monterey County (Gutiérrez and Barrowclough 2005). The California spotted owl is found in mature forests with permanent water and suitable nesting trees and snags typically in multi-layered, mature mixed-conifer and yellow pine forest, and also found in riparian/hardwood and red fir forests where they may nest, roost, and forage on rodents such as northern flying squirrel (*Glaucomys sabrinus*) and woodrat (*Neotoma* sp.). Typical foraging habitat for this species consists of intermediate-to-late successional forests with greater than 40% canopy cover (USFWS 2017). Nesting habitat is generally characterized as forested areas having canopy cover greater than 70%, with medium-to-large trees and a multi-storied structure. They do not typically nest every year as nesting largely depends on the weather before and during breeding season, which begins typically mid-February (USFWS 2017). California spotted owl nests are found most often in cavities within the Sierra region and are often used year after year by the same pair. Eggs take approximately 30 days to hatch, and owlets fledge about 35 days later despite being unable to fly for several weeks, relying on a multi-layered forest structure to move above the forest floor. California

spotted owls have high site fidelity and will return to the same established territory year after year. Juveniles undergo dispersal in the fall, establishing new territories that average 6–10 miles from their natal site.

Occurrence Records

There are many positive observations of California spotted owl within 5 miles of the proposed Project site, primarily to the northeast and the southwest (CDFW 2025a). The closest established activity center is approximately 1.2 miles to the southwest of the proposed Project site where a pair and suspected nest have been recorded (Figure 5) (CDFW 2025a). No observations of individual California spotted owl or sign of the species were made during the reconnaissance-level survey conducted on November 3, 2025.

Suitable Habitat within the Proposed Project Site

Suitable coniferous foraging and nesting habitat is present within and adjacent to the proposed Project site. However, habitat quality is limited and marginal provided the pre-existing level of disturbance and development and the lack of defined, contiguous canopy cover. Potential for occurrence in the proposed Project site is low due to the limited suitable foraging and nesting habitat; however, California spotted owl could potentially forage within or nest in adjacent areas.

Potential Impacts

If present, California spotted owl or its nest(s) could be significantly impacted by Project construction activities. With implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1: Pre-Construction Worker Environmental Awareness Training and Mitigation Measure BIO-3: Avoid Disturbance to Nesting Raptors and Other Nesting Migratory Birds, this impact would be reduced to less than significant.

Nesting Raptors and Other Migratory Birds

There is a high potential for nesting raptors and other migratory birds protected under the MBTA to occur within the proposed Project site and areas immediately adjacent including tree, shrub, and ground nesting birds. Project construction activities occurring during the nesting season (approximately February 1 through August 31) have the potential to cause impacts to nesting raptors and other migratory birds such as disturbance resulting in nest abandonment, the loss of eggs, or direct mortality to a nesting bird, which would be considered a significant impact. To the extent feasible, vegetation removal shall be conducted during the non-nesting season (approximately September 1 to January 31). Additionally, with the implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1, Pre-Construction Worker Environmental Awareness Training, workers would be educated to look for nests and/or the species present on site which would reduce potential construction impacts (i.e., a biologist and/or CDFW would be contacted to facilitate ensure avoidance). Further, Mitigation Measure BIO-3, Avoid Disturbance to Nesting Raptors and Other Migratory Birds provides measures specific to nesting raptors and other migratory birds to ensure the appropriate avoidance methods by scheduling disturbance activities during non-

nesting season or implementing other prescribed avoidance measures by having workers prepared to identify sensitive resources themselves that would reduce the potential significance of any potential impact. Therefore, with the implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1 and BIO-3, potential impacts to nesting raptors and other migratory birds would be reduced to a less than significant level.

Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat, sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Construction and Operation

The proposed Project site does not contain any riparian habitat or sensitive natural communities as identified by CDFW or USFWS. Therefore, the proposed Project would have no impact on riparian habitat or sensitive natural communities, and no mitigation is required.

Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

Construction and Operation

The proposed Project site has a storm water drainage system that occurs on the west side of the proposed Project site. Based on the isolated nature of this relic drainage feature and small drainage pipe, with no upland hydrologic connection or connection to downstream waters (i.e., no defined drainage channel, or culvert), this feature is not considered a potential waters of the U.S. or waters of the State. Therefore, the proposed Project is anticipated to have no impact on federal and state-regulated aquatic resources and no mitigation would be required.

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?

Construction and Operation

The proposed Project site does not contain any features that would typically facilitate wildlife movement, such as riparian corridors or other contiguous spans of vegetative cover. The proposed Project would not significantly increase the existing level of ongoing human disturbance and would not remove any habitat suitable for facilitation of wildlife movement. Furthermore, proposed Project implementation would not interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species, or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites. Therefore, there would be no impact and no mitigation required.

Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

Construction and Operation

The Nevada County Code, Chapter 2, Section 4.15, regulates the planting, removal, and preservation of the following trees on public property, as defined by the County Code: landmark trees (*Quercus* species with a diameter at breast height [dbh] of 36 inches or greater), landmark groves (hardwood tree groves marked for preservation by the County, State, or Federal Government), and heritage trees and groves (a tree or group of hardwood trees designated by the Board of Supervisors to be of historical or cultural value, outstanding specimens, unusual species, or of a significant community benefit) (Nevada County 2018). Additionally, in Nevada County, in accordance with the Nevada County General Plan Policy 13.2, tree removal may be allowed where necessary to comply with public right-of-way development or dedication, or development of required site access and public utilities (Nevada County 1995). Individual trees or groups of trees shall be protected during construction to prevent damage to the trees and their root systems. The trees that may be removed as part of the project do not meet the criteria for tree preservation in Nevada County, with the exception of one landmark tree (i.e. oak species >36” dbh) that would be removed as part of the project. Otherwise, individual trees or groups of trees shall be protected during construction to prevent damage to the trees and their root systems. Therefore, with the implementation of MM BIO-4, impacts will be less than significant.

Conflict with the provisions of an adopted habitat conservation plan, natural community conservation plan, or other approved local, regional, or State habitat conservation plan?

Construction and Operation

The proposed Project site is not currently subject to a habitat conservation plan or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plans. Therefore, the proposed Project will not conflict with any other approved or planned local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources and no mitigation is required.

3.4.4 MITIGATION MEASURES

3.4.4.1 Mitigation Measure BIO-1: Pre-Construction Worker Environmental Awareness Training

Prior to construction, a qualified biologist shall conduct a Worker Environmental Awareness Training (WEAT) for construction personnel. The WEAT shall brief construction personnel on how to recognize special status plant and wildlife species and sensitive habitats, as well as the appropriate avoidance measures for those species and habitats. This includes special status plant and wildlife identification, nesting bird identification and habitat, relevant best management practices (BMP), mitigation, and applicable environmental regulations. WEAT reference

pamphlets shall also be provided to keep onsite for use by an environmentally trained foreman for training new Project personnel in the absence of a biologist. If special status species are encountered in the work area, construction shall cease and the NCSO and a qualified biologist shall be notified for guidance before any construction activities are resumed. Depending on the listing of the observed species and their persistence in the area, the NCSO shall notify the CDFW and/or USFWS for guidance.

3.4.4.1.1 *Mitigation Measure BIO-1 Implementation:*

Responsible Party: The NCSO shall ensure that a qualified biologist conducts a pre-construction Worker Environmental Awareness Training.

Timing: Prior to the initiation of construction.

Monitoring and Reporting Program: The training shall be conducted by a qualified biologist, and the environmental training reference pamphlets shall be kept on the construction site for the life of the Project. A sign-in sheet for all personnel required to attend the training shall be included in the Mitigation and Monitoring and Reporting Program report.

Standards for Success: Construction personnel are trained in the key characteristics for identifying and avoiding impacts to special status species and sensitive habitats.

3.4.4.2 Mitigation Measure BIO-2: Conduct Pre-construction Surveys and Avoidance Measures for Western Bumble Bee

The following measures are recommended to minimize potential impacts to the western bumble bee:

- If the western bumble bee is no longer a candidate for listing or formally listed species under the CESA at the time ground-disturbing activities occur, then no additional protection measures are proposed for the species.
- Because western bumble bee nest locations are chosen on an annual basis and the site provides nesting habitat, a CDFW-approved biologist trained in the identification of western bumble bees shall conduct three weekly pre-construction nesting surveys with focus on detecting active nesting colonies. The third and final survey shall be conducted within 24 hours prior to ground disturbing activities, if ground-disturbing activities are scheduled to occur during the flight season (February through November). Surveys shall be completed at a minimum of one person-hour of searching per 3 acres of suitable habitat during suitable weather conditions (sustained winds less than 8 mph, mostly sunny to full sun, temperatures between 65 and 90°F) at an appropriate time of day for detection (at least an hour after sunrise and at least 2 hours before sunset, though ideally between 9:00 AM and 1:00 PM).
    - If no nests are found but the species is present, a full-time qualified biological monitor shall be present during initial vegetation or ground disturbing activities that are scheduled to occur during the queen flight period (February through March),

colony active period (April through September), and/or gyne flight period (October through November). The western bumble bee biologist shall immediately notify CDFW of the detection as further coordination may be required to avoid or mitigate certain impacts.

- If an active western bumble bee nest is detected, an appropriate no disturbance buffer zone (including foraging resources and flight corridors essential for supporting the colony) shall be established around the nest to reduce the risk of disturbance or accidental take and the designated biologist shall coordinate with CDFW to determine if an Incidental Take Permit under Section 2081 of the CESA will be required. Nest avoidance buffers may be removed at the completion of the flight season and/or once the qualified western bumble bee biologist deems the nesting colony is no longer active and CDFW agrees with the determination.

- If initial grading is phased or delayed for any reason, the 24-hour pre-construction nesting survey will be repeated prior to ground-disturbing activities that are scheduled to occur during the same flight season (February through November). Three pre-construction western bumble bee nesting surveys shall be required in subsequent years of construction whenever vegetation and ground disturbing activities are scheduled to occur during the flight season (February through November) if nesting habitat is still present or has re-established and will be affected.

3.4.4.2.1 Mitigation Measure BIO-2 Implementation:

Responsible Party: The NCSO shall ensure that qualified biologist conducts pre-construction western bumble bee surveys according to the timing and appropriate agency-approved survey protocol.

Timing: Surveys shall be conducted prior to construction, and any required monitoring if species is present may occur during construction.

Monitoring and Reporting Program: The qualified biologist shall prepare a short survey report detailing the results of the western bumble bee surveys and any required monitoring. NCSO shall keep this report on file and provide to agencies as needed and/or on request. Any confirmed observations of the western bumble bee shall be submitted to the CDFW CNDDB.

Standards for Success: No nest or individuals are impacted as a result of the proposed Project.

3.4.4.3 Mitigation Measure BIO-3: Avoid Disturbance to Nesting Raptors and Other Nesting Migratory Birds

To the extent feasible, ground disturbance and vegetation thinning and/or removal activities shall be conducted during the local non-nesting season (approximately September 1 to January 31). If construction, such as tree removal, grading, excavation, etc., that have the potential to disturb nesting birds occur during the nesting season, a qualified biologist shall conduct a pre-

construction nesting bird survey prior to vegetation removal or ground disturbing activities within the proposed Project site with the following criteria:

- Surveys shall be conducted within the proposed Project site and all potential bird nesting habitat for passerine species within 150 feet.
- Surveys shall be conducted within the proposed Project site and all potential raptor nesting habitat within 500 feet.
- The surveys should be conducted within 1 week before initiation of construction if construction is scheduled to occur between February 1 and August 31.
    - If no active nests are detected, then no additional mitigation is required.
    - If surveys indicate the presence of nesting birds, the biologist shall establish an appropriate avoidance buffer around the nest in which no work would be allowed until the young have successfully fledged or the nest has been abandoned. The size of the avoidance buffer shall be determined by a qualified biologist and shall depend on the status of the species present, the level of noise or construction disturbance, line of sight between the nest and the disturbance, ambient levels of noise and other disturbances, other topographical or artificial barriers, and the sensitivity of the nesting bird to the disturbance. Typically, avoidance buffers are up to 500 feet for raptors and up to 150 feet for waterfowl and passerines. Generally, these distances are sufficient (depending on the species and project activities) to prevent substantial disturbance to nesting birds which would cause direct mortality. However, these buffers may be increased or decreased at the discretion of the biologist, as appropriate.
    - If nesting birds are documented to have established themselves in a given location within the proposed Project site during pre-existing construction activities, then it shall be assumed that the nesting birds are habituated to the construction activities. Under this scenario, the active nest shall be monitored by a qualified biologist periodically until the young have successfully fledged, or the nest has been abandoned, as described above.
    - If active nests are identified on or immediately adjacent to the proposed Project site, then all non-essential construction activities (e.g., equipment storage and meetings) should be avoided in the immediate vicinity of the nest site, but the remainder of construction activities may proceed.

3.4.4.3.1 Mitigation Measure BIO-3 Implementation:

Responsible Party: The NCSO shall ensure that a qualified biologist conducts a pre-construction nesting bird survey within 1 week before initiation of construction if construction activities are scheduled to occur between February 1 and August 31.

Timing: A pre-construction survey shall be conducted within 1 week before initiation of construction, and any required monitoring of active nests may occur during construction.

Monitoring and Reporting Program: The qualified biologist shall prepare a short survey report detailing the results of the pre-construction nesting bird surveys and any required monitoring. NCSO shall keep this report on file and provide to agencies as needed and/or on request. Any confirmed observations of special status species shall be submitted to the CDFW CNDDB.

Standards for Success: No nesting birds are impacted as a result of the proposed Project.

Mitigation Measure BIO-4 Implementation

3.4.4.4 Mitigation Measure BIO-4: Landmark Tree Mitigation

Due to the removal of the 36-inch dbh oak tree as identified in the design plans, the NCSO shall pay an in-lieu fee based on the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) appraisal value of the 36-inch tree shall be paid into a Tree Preservation Fund or plant a seedling(s) to replace the removed oak tree.

3.5 Cultural Resources

CULTURAL RESOURCES Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	☐	☒	☐	☐

3.5.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

3.5.1.1 Regional Setting

The Project site is located in the Northern Sierra Lower Montane Forests ecoregions (Griffith et al. 2016). This ecoregion consists of lower elevation (2,000–4,000 feet above mean sea level) forests containing a mix of montane hardwood, montane hardwood-conifer, and mixed conifer forests. Douglas fir is a relatively widespread conifer, with hardwoods including canyon live oak (*Quercus chrysolepis*), northern red oak (*Quercus rubra*), and California black oak (*Quercus kelloggii*), among others.

The closest water source would have been an unnamed north to south trending unnamed intermittent stream, approximately 0.15 miles east of the Project site, though currently there are also ponds as close as 0.10 mi. north of the Project site.

3.5.1.2 Precontact Cultural Context

Archaeological research of the Sierra Nevada has documented use of the region for thousands of years. Nevertheless, several questions remain, including basic cultural chronology, and subsistence strategies of the indigenous communities (Hull 2007).

In 1953, Heizer and Elsasser presented the first cultural chronology for the Sierra Nevada. This chronology was based on survey work conducted to the east of the crest of the Sierra Nevada around Lake Tahoe and parts of the drainages of the Truckee and Carson Rivers. Heizer and Elsasser (1953), in the course of this work, identified two "complexes", or material cultural toolkits. The earliest cultural group was named the Martis Complex which was followed by the King's Beach Complex. Both complexes were defined on the basis of surface material.

Heizer and Elsasser (1953) defined the Martis Complex based on 9 criteria derived from data obtained from 13 sites. These criteria are: 1) the use of basalt as the preferred lithic material for tools; 2) the rare use of chert and obsidian for tool production; 3) the use of roughly chipped, large, heavy projectile points in a variety of forms; 4) the use of the mano and metate; 5) the use of bowl mortars with cylindrical pestles; 6) the use of boatstones and atlatls; 7) an economy primarily based on hunting and supplemented by the gathering of seeds; 8) the use of large numbers of basalt flake scrapers; and 9) the frequent use of expanded base, finger held drills (Heizer and Elsasser 1953:19). The use of basalt as the preferred material for tools was highlighted by Heizer and Elsasser as the most distinguishing characteristic of the Martis Complex. They (1953:20) also suggest that the Martis Complex, based on this characteristic, may be related to other basalt-using complexes in the Great Basin, the Mohave Desert, and the Early Horizon in the Central Valley of California. Boatstones from the Martis Complex type site, CA-Pla-5, resembling those from the Central Valley of California, reinforced the supposition of Heizer and Elsasser (1953:26) that the Martis Complex may be related to the Early or Middle Horizon of the Central Valley.

Elsasser (1960:68) suggested Martis people most likely hunted large, seasonally migratory animals, such as deer and antelope, which they followed between the lower and higher elevations of the Sierra Nevada. Elsasser (1960) also emphasized the expanding and apparently widespread distribution of the Martis Complex across the mid-elevations of the Sierra Nevada.

Elston (1971) augmented the work of Heizer and Elsasser (1953) by exploring the relationship between the Martis Complex and the Kings Beach Complex. Elston (1971) identified a “pre-Martis” culture, the Spooner Complex, and suggested a revision of the Martis Complex based on his excavation of four sites east of Lake Tahoe, within the ethnographic territory of the Washoe. The Spooner Complex is characterized by Humboldt Concave-based and Pinto projectile points and is dated between 7,000 Before Present (BP) to approximately

3,000 BP (Elston 1971:135). He proposed that the Spooner Complex represents the initial colonization of the higher elevations of the Sierra Nevada by groups from the western Great Basin who were seeking refuge from the conditions induced by the Altithermal.

In addition, Elston (1971:136-137) suggested dividing the Martis Complex into two phases. Phase 1 dates from 3,000 BP to 2,000 BP and is linked to the first intensive occupation of the Sierra Nevada. This phase may also be derived from cultural groups of the Great Basin, but it seems to exhibit specialization in the exploitation of the Transition Zone (Elston 1971:137). Indeed, the groups associated with the first phase of the Martis Complex probably had already incorporated patterns of transhumance similar to those of ethnographic groups in the area (Elston 1971:137). Phase 1 is also marked by Elko series, Martis series, and Sierra stemmed triangular projectile points. Phase 2 dates from 2,000 BP to 1,500 BP and is differentiated from the first phase by smaller stemmed and triangular projectile points, an increase of the use of chert and obsidian for tools, the introduction of bedrock mortars, and a concomitant decline in the use of manos and metates.

At about 1,500 BP, shifts in the cultural patterns of the Martis Complex become evident in the archaeological record. For example, changes become evident in technology and subsistence and settlement strategies. Technological shifts are apparent in the appearance of larger numbers of smaller projectile points made from obsidian flake blanks rather than larger projectile points made from basalt. Subsistence and settlement strategies highlight an intensification of plant exploitation, an increase in regional population size, and a reduction in the size of regularly used territory (Zeier and Elston 1986; Elston et al. 1994). These changes are probably related to a shift in climatic regime and an overall increase in population size across the region (i.e., growth of local populations and/or an influx of new cultural groups). Regardless, these changes mark the waning of the Martis Complex and the emergence of the Kings Beach Complex.

Initial characterizations of the Kings Beach Complex by Heizer and Elsasser (1953:20) highlighted: a preference for obsidian in the production of small projectile points; the rare use of basalt; an absence of drills; bedrock mortars; and an economic emphasis on seed processing and fishing. The Kings Beach Complex is commonly divided into two periods: Early Kings Beach (1,300–700 BP), characterized by Rosegate Series points; and Late Kings Beach (700–150 BP), characterized by Desert Series Points (Elston 1971; Zeier and Elston 1986).

3.5.1.3 Ethnography

Nisenan

The Project site is located within traditional Nisenan tribal territory (Kroeber 1925; Wilson and Towne 1978). Most of the following is excerpted and adapted from McCarthy (1994) and Waechter et al. (2007).

The Nisenan in the area traditionally lived in large villages, along streams and rivers on ridges, knolls, and benches above the waterways (Beals 1933; Kroeber 1925; Wilson and Towne 1978). The Nisenan were the southernmost Maidu speakers, which is part of the California Penutian linguistic Family. Three dialects of Nisenan were distinguished: Northern Hill Nisenan, Southern Hill Nisenan, and Valley Nisenan (Shipley 1978:83; Wilson and Towne 1978). The Nisenan once held a territory that stretched from the South Fork Feather River south to the Middle Fork Cosumnes River, and from the Sacramento River east to the Sierra crest (Beals 1933:338-339; Kroeber 1925:391-392; Merriam and Talbot 1974:16-17). They apparently did not reside in the mountains above approximately 3,000 feet but used this territory for summer hunting and gathering expeditions (Beals 1933:363).

Villages ranged in size from 30 to 1,000 people (Cook 1976:9; Kroeber 1925:831; Wilson and Towne 1978:389). The largest villages were in the Sacramento Valley along the river and its tributaries. Structures (which might be represented in the archaeological record) included pole-frame dome-shaped houses 10 to 15 feet in diameter covered with tule or tule mats plastered with earth (Kroeber 1925:407; Wilson and Towne 1978:388); dance houses or k'um that are large semi-subterranean structures with the door facing the west; and at least one sweathouse or k'um-im-hü, separate from the dance house and similar in construction, although smaller (Kroeber 1925:259; Wilson and Towne 1978:389).

Both the Valley and Foothill Nisenan had access to diverse resources throughout their territories, and they scheduled their subsistence activities according to the seasonal availability of critical harvests. Families or groups of families moved to the gathering sites, now seen on the landscape as small, sparse scatters of flaked and/or ground stone, as the location of the resources and season dictated, returning to the permanent village to store the harvests and to live during the winter months. Valley people collected acorns from the local valley oaks, while the Foothill people collected blue oak and black oak acorns. Black oak acorns were the most highly preferred variety, and the Valley people traded with the Foothills people to obtain them (Beals 1933:351). The people stored as many acorns as possible since this was a food staple and was also important for ceremonies.

Fish, particularly salmon and lamprey eels, were essential protein sources for the Nisenan. Salmon were taken by the Valley people with fish weirs, which were built communally. The Foothill people used spears and harpoons but made extensive use of willow nets hung from two long poles. The rivers also yielded numerous other fish, as well as freshwater clams and mussels (Wilson and Towne 1978:389). Large game mammals were an important component of the diet and included deer, antelope, elk, and bear (Beals 1933:347-348; Kroeber 1925:409-410; Voegelin 1942:58-59). Small game, such as rabbits and squirrels, were taken, as were many varieties of birds, particularly waterfowl. Bones from a variety of fish, birds, and mammals have been recovered from archaeological sites in the area.

Limited, formal trade was practiced between the Foothill Nisenan and their Valley neighbors. Acorns, salt, and beads were the major trade items (Beals 1933:365). The Valley people received black oak acorns; sugar pine nuts; manzanita berries; yew wood for bows;

yellowhammer and red-headed woodpecker scalps and feathers; dried deer and bear meat; wild cat, mountain lion, and bear hides; rabbit-skin blankets; redbud for baskets; milkweed for fiber; and salt, all of which were available in the foothills (there were valuable salt deposits near both Rocklin and Cool) (Beals 1933:365; Littlejohn 1928:35). In return, the Foothill people received basket roots, oyster shells, salmon, antelope meat, and the valuable shell beads that moved from the coast into the interior through active trade networks (Beals 1933:365; Littlejohn 1928:35). Clamshell disk beads had a standard value and acted as currency for most other resources and goods. Many other kinds of highly valued shell beads also moved through this exchange system. The east-west trade routes generally followed the major streams and major trails in Nisenan territory approximated the routes of U.S. Highway 50 and old Highway 40, which is now partially re-routed to Interstate 80 (Davis 1974:73, Map 1).

The closest ethnographically recorded Nisenan village to the Project site would have been *Tetema*, approximately 1.52 miles east, b (Wilson and Towne 1978). Though during tribal consultation, *Wokodot* was revealed to potentially be located on the opposite side of Highway 49, north of the Project site.

Washoe

The traditional territory of the Washoe is centered around Lake Tahoe but extends from the southwest shore of Honey Lake in the north to Sonora Pass in the south and from the mid-elevations of the west Sierran slope to just east of Reno and Carson City (d'Azevedo 1986). The Washoe are the only non-Numic speaking group in the Great Basin. There are three subgroups within Washoe that are distinguished by where they live in Washoe territory, with each group speaking its own dialect. The three groups are the northern, central, and southern Washoe.

The northern Washoe inhabited the area around Honey Lake, Sierra Valley, Long Valley, Truckee Meadows, Washoe Valley, and Eagle Valley (Tiley and McBride 2013:10), though they also had ties to Nevada City region in Nevada County. The area of Truckee-Donner Lake was mainly occupied in summer months (Nevers 1976:3). Some Washoe-named sites along the northern end of Lake Tahoe are attributed to Welmelti, and their summer hunting grounds included the current location of Olympic Valley (Tiley and McBride 2013:10). The Truckee River was the main riverine resource flowing through Welmelti lands, and it provided resources from Lake Tahoe to Derby Dam (Tiley and McBride 2013:10). Indeed, d'Azevedo (1986:471) believes that the Washoe may have exploited the river's resources all the way to Pyramid Lake. In the findings for the Washoe Indian Claims Commission case, it was noted that Siskin identified the northern boundary of Welmelti territory as Long Valley near Honey Lake but did not establish a southern "boundary" for the group (Tiley and McBride 2013:10).

Washoe speak a Hokan language (d'Azevedo 1986; Kroeber 1925). Kroeber (1925:569, 1955) and Downs (1966:70) postulate an early relationship, prior to 4,500 years ago, between the Hokan speaking Washoe and other Hokan speakers in California. Washoe are unique in that they span both California and the Great Basin and exploit environments and resources in both areas. Washoe moved seasonally across the landscape from one elevation to another to harvest plants and fish and to hunt across contrasting and vertically defined ecological zones.

The Washoe subsistence calendar is divided into three “years": the fishing year, the gathering year, and the hunting year (Downs 1966:12). Property rights to piñon gathering areas, fishing traps, and platforms, and the right to hunt certain animals were passed down within individual families (Downs 1966:41). Washoe built two types of seasonal structures: the winter house (similar to typical residential structures of their neighbors to the west, such as Nisenan and Northern Sierra Miwok), which consisted of a conical framework of poles covered by overlapping slabs of cedar and/or other conifer bark with a short, covered doorway or vestibule; and the summer brush house, which varied from a simple low enclosure resembling a windbreak to a completely covered, dome-shaped house (Barrett 1917:10-11).

Washoe commonly used flaked and ground stone tools, including knives, arrow and spear points, club heads, arrow straighteners, scrapers, rough cobble and shaped pestles for use in bedrock mortars, grinding stones (metates), pipes, and charms (Barrett 1917). Wood was also used for a variety of tools and weapons, including both simple and sinew-backed bows, arrow shafts and points, looped stirring sticks, flat-bladed mush paddles, pipes, and hide preparation tools. Cordage was made from plant material and was used to construct fishing nets and braided and twined tumplines. Baskets were designed for a variety of tasks, including storage; cooking, serving and processing foods; burden baskets; traps; cradles; hats; cages; seed beaters; and winnowing trays. In addition, since fishing formed a very large component of overall Washoe subsistence, they used an extensive assemblage of fishing-related implements and facilities. These implements included spears, cordage lines with bone fishhooks, harpoons with detachable points, dams for stream diversion, nets of cordage and basketry, weirs, and an array of fish traps (d'Azevedo 1986:473). Washoe also made tule, lashed log, and bark rafts to acquire resources and facilitate travel (d’Azevedo 1986).

3.5.1.4 History

Development of Nevada City

The earliest non-native inhabitants of Nevada County were migrants from the eastern United States who used the Emigrant Trail to travel west from the Missouri River. The first successful wagon train to cross the Sierra Nevada was the Stephens/Townsend/Murphy Party, also known as the Stephens Party, who reached California in 1844 with the help of a Paiute Native American guide (Truckee Chamber of Commerce 2025). The Paiute man’s name sounded like “Truckee” to the group, which led to the naming of the branch of the Emigrant Trail they used, the Truckee Trail, as well as the town of Truckee and the Truckee River. The Truckee Trail followed the Truckee River from the northeast corner of present-day Nevada County westward across the county, over the Sierra Nevada to the Central Valley. Large groups of emigrants continued to migrate through the county via this path in the 1840s and 1850s (Kyle 2002).

Between 1846 and 1848, thousands of migrants traversed the Sierra Nevada on the Truckee Trail prompting new trading posts and settlements to be established along the trail and down the Yuba River. In 1849, after President James K. Polk announced that gold had been found in California, a large influx of miners come to the region (Grass Valley Chamber of Commerce 2025). New towns and trading posts were founded along the Truckee Trail, including Rough and

Ready in 1849, the town of Nevada (later renamed Nevada City when Nevada became a state) in 1849, and Grass Valley in 1850 (Bean 1897). With the increase in population, as well as establishment of new saloons, stores, and homesteads, the State of California created Nevada County in 1851 from land belonging to the existing Yuba County, naming the county after the town of Nevada.

Gold mining in Nevada County was originally conducted along the south Yuba River in gravel bars and streambeds. In October 1851, George McKnight discovered gold in a quartz rock on Gold Hill, after which other discoveries were made in nearby quartz veins at Ophir Hill, Rich Hill, and Massachusetts Hill (Western Mining History 2025). By 1867, a large portion of the mines in the area had been located, and roughly 1,600 men were working in Gold Hill. Nevada County contained roughly 2,194 mines, the most profitable of which were the Empire Mine, the North Star Mine, and the Gold Hill Mine, located between Grass Valley and Nevada City. The Empire and North Star Mines were consolidated under one management in 1929 and remained this way until they closed in 1942. The Empire Mine briefly reopened in 1945 but permanently closed again in 1956 due to lack of profitability as a result of regulations on the price of gold. When the final Gold Rush mines closed in the late 1950s, Nevada County was the wealthiest gold mining county in California, producing approximately $400 million worth of gold between 1849 and 1959.

Nineteenth Century Gold Mining in Nevada County

Nevada City is located near the center of the Nevada City Mining District, which spans from Indian Flat in the west to Willow Valley in the northeast and the Lava Cap mine in the southeast. Gold was first discovered in the district along Deer Creek in 1849. The area surrounding the discovery became known as the Deer Creek Diggings. In 1850, the name of the community that formed near the diggings was changed to Nevada. Early placer mining efforts were successful, and the community grew quickly. Hydraulic and drift mining techniques were introduced in the early 1850s, and lode mining followed in the early 1860s. Hydraulic mining was first used in California outside of Nevada City and proved to be a popular and efficient method of mining. Hydraulic mining was banned in 1884 under certain conditions, and drift mining ended near the turn of the twentieth century. After a period of inactivity, lode mining was resumed in the district in the 1930s and continued through the beginning of the country's involvement in World War II. With productive veins including the Gold Tunnel vein, and notable mines including the Champion and Providence mines, the total output of the Nevada City Mining District is estimated to be $50 million to $70 million, and possibly more (Clark 1970:97; Diggings 2017).

The Project site is southwest of the summit of Sugarloaf Mountain, historically Sugar Loaf Hill, a prominent and scenic rise north of Nevada City. A wide swath of granitic rock that characterizes the central portion of the Nevada City Mining District underlies the property (Clark 1970:98-99). The Project site was historically bound to the northeast by a gold mine named the Abegast Mine (also spelled Abrogast Mine) (California Division of Mines 1933). While mining features fall within the Project site, they are not associated with a specific named mining operation, nor are

any specific mining claims shown on the historic Bureau of Land Management GLO record maps (Bureau of Land Management 2025).

3.5.1.5 Study Methods

To identify cultural resources within the project site, the following tasks were completed: 1) A records search and literature review were conducted at the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) at the North Central Information Center (NCIC), located at California State University, Sacramento; 2) a buried sensitivity analysis to assess the potential for buried precontact and historic-era resources; 3) pedestrian surveys of the project site completed in 2024 by qualified archaeologists.

3.5.1.5.1 Cultural Resource Records Search

On October 29, 2025, the staff at the NCIC conducted a records search for the Project site and a 0.25-mile radius. The NCIC, an affiliate of the California Office of Historic Preservation, is the official state repository of cultural resources records and reports for Nevada County. As part of the records search, the following local and state inventories were inventoried:

- California Inventory of Historic Resources
- California Points of Historical Interest
- California Historical Landmarks

Three previously recorded cultural resources were identified within the Project site and are listed in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Previously Recorded Cultural Resources within the Project Area

P-Number	Trinomial	Description	Period	Previous NRHP/CRHR Recommendations
P-29-000348	CA-NEV-290H	Arbogast Mine	Historic	7 (Unevaluated)
P-29-000355	CA-NEV-297H	E 41; E 47-49; E 53: E 55-56	Historic	6Y (Not eligible for NRHP/CRHR through Section 106 consensus determination)
P-29-0005148	CA-NEV-297H	Northern Nevada City Placer Diggings	Historic	7 (Unevaluated)

The Arbogast Mine, resource P-29-000348, is a historic-era hydraulic mining site located along State Route 49 near Nevada City, California. Originally recorded in 1978 and updated during a 2007 Caltrans survey, the site encompasses approximately 30 acres and features remnants of a large central sluiceway partially blasted from rock, fed by five smaller sluices. The area is characterized by extensive mine tailings along the highway right-of-way, with no standing structures observed during the update.

Resource P-29-000355 represents a large hydraulic mining area first documented in 1978. It consists of multiple structures, features, and artifacts associated with historic mining operations.

The site was later evaluated and determined ineligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under status code 6Y, following a consensus determination between a federal agency and the State Historic Preservation Officer in 2001.

Resource P-29-005148, located within the Project site is the proposed Northern Nevada City Placer Diggings. The district was first proposed in 2016 and developed in 2022 (Selvester 2022a, 2022b). It was delineated according to an 1896 map (USGS 1896), which depicted an approximately 345-acre landscape labeled “Placer Diggings” and some associated historical documentation of gold mining in the Nevada City region. However, the proposed district has not been subject to survey or even substantial recordation, and the site record says, with regards to assessing the integrity of the district (as required for eligibility for listing in the NRHP and/or California Register of Historic Places [CRHR]) that “construction of the highways …and other large municipal buildings, including a Nevada County government center and jail, county library, US Forest Service headquarters, and a fire station appear to have likely caused additional impacts” (Selverston 2022b). The district has not been formally evaluated for eligibility for listing in the CRHR/NRHP, though several proposed components of the district, located approximately 0.15 miles north of the Project site, have been.

Six additional resources were located within 0.25-miles of the Project site (Table 6 below).

Table 6. Previously Recorded Cultural Resources within 0.25-miles of the Project Area

P-Number	Trinomial	Description	Period	Distance for Project Area
P-29-000312	CA-NEV-254	Bedrock Mortar station (BRM) with lithic scatter	Precontact	0.14 miles east
P-29-000313	CA-NEV-255H	BRM	Precontact	235 feet east
P-29-000314	CA-NEV-256	BRM	Precontact	0.11 miles west
P-29-000346	CA-NEV-288	Nevada City Dump	Historic	0.18 miles east
P-29-000347	CA-NEV-289	Hydraulic Mine	Historic	0.13 miles east
P-29-000349	CA-NEV-000349	American Hill Diggings	Historic	32 feet south

Three previous cultural resource studies were conducted within the Project site and are listed in Table 7 below.

Table 7. Previous Studies Within the Project Area

Study Number	Author	Date	Title
NCIC-00437	Storm, Donald J.	1979	Archeological Investigations of the Champion Mine Property, North Portion, Nevada City, Nevada County, California.
NCIC-01164	Jensen, Peter M.	1998	Archaeological Inventory Survey, County's Proposed Juvenile Hall Complex Development Site, c. 50 Acres between State Route 49 and American Hill Road, Nevada City, Nevada County, California.

Additionally, nine studies were identified within 0.25-miles of the Project site (Table 8).

Table 8. Previous Studies Within the 0.25-miles of Project Area

Study Number	Author	Date	Title
NCIC-00381	Peak & Associates, Inc.	1987	Cultural Resource Assessment of the Proposed Nevada City Elderly Apartment Complex and Nevada City Village Apartment Complex, Nevada City, California.
NCIC-05360	Meals, Hank	2000	Archaeological Inventory of the Proposed Project for Erickson Realty, Ltd.; an 8.37-acre parcel located on American Hill, in Nevada City, California
NCIC-05362	Jensen & Associates	1992	Elks Lodge Development Project
NCIC-05387	Decker, Dean	1985	Cultural Resource Inventory for Nevada County Public Sale Parcels
NCIC-09323	Hank Meals	2008	Archaeological Study for the Deer Creek Tribute Trail
NCIC-09326	Laura Leach-Palm, Bryan Larson, Paul Brandy, Jay King, Lindsay Hartman, and Pat Mikkelsen	2008	Cultural Resources Inventory of Caltrans District 3 Rural Conventional Highways in Butte, Colusa, El Dorado, Glenn, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, Sierra, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba Counties
NCIC-09871	Sean Michael Jensen	2008	Proposed Hirschman's Pond Trail Development Project, c. 40-Acres, Nevada City, Nevada County, California
NCIC-12002	James Barnes	2012	Christ ROW (CA-018-S-YN-12/04)
NCIC-12797	Theadora Fuerstenberg	2019	Cultural Resources Final Monitoring Report for the Caltrans Hazard Tree Removal Project in Placer, Nevada, and Yuba Counties

3.5.1.5.2 Buried Sensitivity Analysis

The Project site is situated within the Mesozoic granitic rocks unit 3 geological unit of California (Jennings 1977). This unit consists of Mesozoic granite, quartz monzonite, and quartz diorite. Given the gold mining history of this region, this is unsurprising. Soils underlying the Project site consist of placer diggings, which is also indicative of the history of the region (NRCS 2025b). The Project site sits within the footprint of a former gold mining landscape dating predominantly from the mid-nineteenth century. Additionally, recorded resources confirm that an active mining operation occurred within the Project site (refer to Pedestrian Survey Section). Thus, the possibility exists that the Project site itself is not situated above in situ, native soils, but instead on the remnants of placer mining, i.e., tailings and spoil piles, that have been graded for suitability of construction. While final geotechnical results are not yet available, this landscape history and preliminary geotechnical study suggests a low possibility of encountering buried precontact-era cultural deposits.

Given this landscape history and anticipated excavation depth, the potential for encountering buried precontact-era cultural deposits is considered low. Three recorded Bedrock Mortar stations (P-29-000312, P-29-000313, and P-29-000314) are located within 0.25 miles of the Project site, with the closest (P-29-000313) only 235 feet east. These resources indicate

precontact activity in the vicinity; however, extensive mining disturbance within the Project site reduces the likelihood of intact precontact deposits. Conversely, given the documented mining history and uncertainty regarding the depth and extent of grading, the potential for buried historic-era resources remains moderate, particularly along the periphery and in areas where excavation will not exceed the depth of previous disturbance.

3.5.1.5.3 Historical Topographic Maps and Aerial Imagery

On the 1888 and 1891 USGS maps, no buildings or features are visible within the Project site (USGS 1888, 1891). The Indian Flat Road alignment is present directly north of the Project site. In 1948, State Highway 49 appears south of Indian Flat Road and north of the Project site. Aerial imagery shows that between 1984 and 1998, although no structures are depicted, the Project site appears cleared of vegetation and graded. By 2005, a rectangular facility appears on the southern portion of the Project site, encompassed by a parking lot on its north-facing side and situated adjacent to State Highway 49. An additional facility appears approximately 0.04 miles east of the Project site. From 2009 through 2022, no changes are evident, and the site remains in this developed state (Nationwide Environmental Title Research 2026). The map review suggests that the Project site was not developed until the early 21st century. As a result, the potential for buried historic-era cultural resources such as features, refuse, and debris is low.

3.5.1.5.4 Field Survey

Methods and Observations

On November 21, 2025, Stantec archaeologists Samantha Dunham and Grant Hayes conducted an intensive pedestrian survey of the Nevada County Sheriff's Office Shooting Range Project site. The survey consisted of parallel transects spaced 5–10 m apart across the entire Project site, both inside the existing fenced facility and extending to the outer project boundary. All exposed ground surfaces, including vehicle tracks, rodent burrows, and erosional exposures, were closely inspected for evidence of subsurface cultural deposits. In areas with reduced ground-surface visibility due to leaf litter and vegetation debris, systematic boot scrapes were performed to expose underlying soils. All planters and landscaped areas were examined for evidence of culturally modified soils. The survey was documented with digital photographs and detailed field notes.

The Project site is situated on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada foothills in a landscape of rolling hills covered by mixed oak-pine woodland with scattered granite outcrops. Three distinct soil types were observed: the northern third consists of light grayish-brown loamy clay with no inclusions; the northeastern, eastern, and southeastern portions consist of tan sandy loam derived from decomposing granite with a slight reddish hue and no inclusions; and the southern, southwestern, and western portions consist of reddish-brown clayey loam containing gravel inclusions. The surrounding area is characterized by rural-residential development, small-lot ranches, and scattered denser subdivisions. The Project site encompasses the existing Nevada

County law enforcement facility, formerly the Carl F. Bryan II Regional Juvenile Hall, which has undergone extensive development. The site is bordered to the north by SR 49, with private property to the east and south and county-owned land to the west.

The facility includes a main building and a fully fenced secure perimeter that contains parking, equipment storage, a fruit-tree orchard, a vegetable garden, and the former juvenile recreation yard now used for K9 training. Access from SR 49 is provided by a paved roundabout with associated parking, a fire-truck turnaround, and professionally landscaped areas. An unpaved access road extends along the southwestern side of the facility, and an unnamed roadway exits westward, eventually connecting to American Hill Road to the south.

An ephemeral drainage, designated Feature 4 and described in greater detail below, runs along the western edge of the Project site and passes beneath SR 49 via a culvert. This drainage has been heavily altered by historic mining activity and subsequent facility construction, resulting in ponding and the formation of a small riparian zone in the northwest portion of the Project site. Extensive grading, fill placement, rip-rap installation, and landscaping associated with construction of the former juvenile hall have significantly disturbed native soils throughout the site. Additional disturbances include utility pole installations, understory clearing, and scattered modern refuse such as glass fragments, plastic, and metal debris. Ground-surface visibility was generally poor due to dense vegetation, leaf litter, pavement, gravel surfaces, and landscaping. Approximately ten percent of the Project site was inaccessible because of steep slopes on the eastern side and pockets of dense vegetation on the western side.

Results

The pedestrian survey was positive for cultural resources, with five historic-era features, one small concentration of historic artifacts mixed with modern refuse, and three isolated historic-era artifacts recorded during the survey, all associated with P-29-000355. Feature 1 is a drainage system in the northeastern portion consisting of three converging channels on a north-trending slope that discharge into a culvert beneath SR 49. Feature 2 is a suspected dam footing located approximately ten feet inside the southwestern project boundary. Feature 3 is a small prospect pit with associated tailings pile situated within the footprint of the proposed indoor shooting range. Feature 4 is an ephemeral stream channel or ditch, altered by historic mining, that extends approximately 510 feet along the western project boundary from near Feature 2 northward to a culvert beneath SR 49; this feature crosses the proposed indoor shooting range footprint and has been further impacted by construction of the fire-truck turnaround and the unnamed western roadway. Feature 5 is a segment of abandoned interior roadway extending from SR 49 to the current unnamed western roadway and is likely the precursor to the modern paved entrance.

The five archaeological features observed are listed in Table 9 below.

Table 9. Summary of Features

Feature #:	Resource Type:	Description:	Previously Recorded Site Association:

Feature 1	Historic	Network of modified drainages and channels	P-29-000355
Feature 2	Historic	Dam footings associated with a previously recorded reservoir	P-29-000355
Feature 3	Historic	A small prospect pit	P-29-000355
Feature 4	Historic	A deep channel	P-29-000355
Feature 5	Historic	Historic road segment	P-29-000355

One small concentration of historic artifacts mixed with modern refuse was recorded adjacent to Feature 1 (Concentration 1). It primarily consisted of disintegrated motor-vehicle components, including wheels and tires, seat springs, fender and trim pieces, upholstery remnants, steel rebar, and concrete debris.

Three isolated historic-era artifacts were also documented: a possible historic mason-jar alcohol stove top (A1), a wooden plank (A2), both just outside the facility fence line in the northeast portion; and an additional milled wooden plank or post fragment measuring 3.5 inches by 5.5 inches by 13 feet in length (A3), located on a southwest-trending slope above the large channel near Feature 2.

The recorded features and artifacts are believed to be associated with previously recorded site P-29-000355. No elements of hydraulic mining site P-29-000348 were observed within the Project site. As part of this survey, all components of P-29-000355 that fell within the survey area were updated while components that extended past the survey area were not updated. P-29-000355 was observed to continue northwest and south of the surveyed area.

3.5.2 REGULATORY SETTING

3.5.2.1 Federal

3.5.2.1.1 National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 – Section 106

The National Historic Preservation Act is the primary federal law governing the protection of historic and archaeological resources. Section 106 requires federal agencies to consider the effects of their undertakings on historic properties listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP. Agencies must consult with the State Historic Preservation Officer, Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, and other interested parties to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects.

3.5.2.2 State

3.5.2.2.1 California Environmental Quality Act, Public Resources Code Section 21082.2, and State CEQA Guidelines

CEQA requires the lead agency to consider the effects of a project on historical resources. State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 provides specific guidance for determining the significance of impacts on historical resources (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(b)) and unique archaeological resources (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(b) and PRC Section

21083.2). Under CEQA, these resources are called “historical resources” whether they are of historic or pre-European contact age. CEQA Section 21084.1 defines *historical resources* as those listed, or eligible for listing, in the CRHR, or those listed in the historical register of a local jurisdiction (county or city) unless the preponderance of the evidence demonstrates that the resource is not historically or culturally significant. NRHP-listed “historic properties” in California are considered historical resources for the purposes of CEQA and are also listed in the CRHR. The CRHR criteria for listing such resources are based on, and are very similar to, the NRHP criteria. CEQA Section 21083.2 and State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(c) provide further definitions and guidance for archaeological sites and their treatment.

3.5.2.2.2 California Register of Historical Resources (PRC Section 5024.1)

PRC Section 5024.1 establishes the CRHR. The register lists California properties considered to be significant historical resources. The CRHR also includes all properties listed or determined eligible for listing in the NRHP, including properties evaluated and determined eligible under Section 106. The criteria for listing in the CRHR, criteria 1–4, are similar to those of the NRHP:

- Criterion 1: Resources associated with important events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- Criterion 2: Resources associated with the lives of persons important to our past.
- Criterion 3: Resources that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master.
- Criterion 4: Resources that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

The CRHR regulations govern the nomination of resources to the CRHR (14 CCR Section 4850). The regulations set forth the criteria for eligibility as well as guidelines for assessing historical integrity and resources that have special considerations.

3.5.2.2.3 Unique Archaeological Resources

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(c) specifies how CEQA applies to archaeological sites, including archaeological sites that are historical resources, unique archaeological resources, or neither.

PRC Section 21083.2(g) defines a unique archaeological resource as an archaeological artifact, object, or site about which it can be clearly demonstrated that, without merely adding to the current body of knowledge, there is a high probability that it meets any of the following criteria:

- It contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions, and there is a demonstrable public interest in that information.

- It has a special and particular quality, such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type.
- It is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person.

State CEQA Guidelines sections 15064.5(d) and (e) specify responsibilities and respectful treatment of human remains, including Native American human remains, that are found or likely to be found within a project site.

3.5.2.2.4 Human Remains – Health and Safety Code 7050.5

In the event of discovery or recognition of any human remains in any location other than a dedicated cemetery, Section 7050.5 of the Health and Safety Code states that there shall be no further excavation or disturbance of the site or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent remains until the coroner of the county in which the remains were discovered has determined whether the remains are subject to the coroner's authority. If the human remains are of Native American origin, the coroner must notify the Native American Heritage Commission within 24 hours of this identification. State CEQA Guidelines sections 15064.5(d) and (e) specify responsibilities regarding human remains as well as the respectful treatment of human remains, including Native American human remains, that are found or likely to be found within a project site.

3.5.2.3 Local

3.5.2.3.1 Nevada County General Plan

The County General Plan includes policies to protect regional cultural resources, including historic sites, traditional Native American cultural areas, and archaeological resources. Nevada County does not have a dedicated Cultural Resources chapter in its General Plan. Policies within the General Plan emphasize:

- Preservation of important scenic, cultural, and natural features.
- Review of discretionary projects for potential impacts on cultural resources.
- Avoidance or minimization of disturbance through project design.

3.5.3 IMPACT ANALYSIS

Based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, a project could have a significant impact related to cultural resources if the project would:

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as identified in Section 15064.5;

b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5; or

c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries.

Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as identified in Section 15064.5?

Construction and Operation

For a cultural resource to be considered a historical resource (i.e., eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources), it must generally be 50 years or older. Under CEQA, historical resources can include pre-European contact (i.e., Native American) archaeological deposits, historic-period archaeological deposits, historic buildings, and historic districts. CEQA requires that agencies considering projects that are subject to discretionary action shall consider the potential impacts on cultural resources that may occur from project implementation.

Built Environment Resources

The Project site neither contains nor is adjacent to any built environment resource that qualifies as a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA. No historic buildings or structures are located within the Project site. Therefore, development on the project site would not have the potential to cause a substantial adverse change to the significance of any built environment historical resource, as defined in Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines. The project would not demolish a significant historical resource or alter its physical characteristics, nor would it change elements within the historic setting of such a resource. Therefore, the project would have no impact on built environment historical resources.

Archaeological Resources

Resource P-29-000348 (the Arbogast Mine) intersects the very eastern 10 ft. of the Project site. However, during the survey, no components of the resource were observed to intersect the Project site nor were any observed near the Project site. Because the resource has not been evaluated for NRHP/CRHR listing, it is assumed eligible for the CRHR and treated as eligible for the purposes of this project. Since no components of it fall within the Project site, the resource will not be modified and affected by the Proposed project (Section 2.4), and thus the project would not result in new impacts to the resource. However, as the resource is assumed eligible for the CRHR and due to the proximity of the resource to project activities, if unknown subsurface components are present, these components could be subject to destruction or alteration such that the significance of the resource would be materially impaired (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(b)(1)). Implementation of MM CUL-1: Conduct Cultural Resources Awareness Training and MM CUL-2: Cultural Resources Inadvertent Discovery Plan and Protocol would ensure that impacts related to archaeological resources that qualify as historical resources would be reduced to less-than-significant.

Resource P-29-000355 (large hydraulic mining area) overlaps the entire Project site. However, this resource has been previously determined not eligible for the NRHP and CRHR through the Section 106 consensus determination. As a result, even though components of it were observed during the survey, impacts to these features and artifacts do not need to be mitigated due to the sites NRHP and CRHR eligibility status. Thus, no specific cultural mitigation measures need to be applied to this resource.

Resource P-29-005148 (Northern Nevada City Placer Diggings historic district) overlaps the northern 90 percent of the Project site. Because the resource has not been evaluated for NRHP/CRHR listing, it is assumed eligible for the CRHR and treated as eligible for the purposes of this project. However, no proposed components of the district fall within the Project site. Thus, no specific cultural mitigation measures need to be applied to this resource.

Despite the otherwise negative results of the records search, literature review, and field survey, it cannot entirely be ruled out that archaeological deposits could be encountered during project construction activities such as earth-moving and vegetation removal. Should archaeological deposits be encountered during project construction, a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource could occur from its demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration such that the significance of the resource would be materially impaired (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(b)(1)). Implementation of MM CUL-1: Conduct Cultural Resources Awareness Training and MM CUL 2: Cultural Resources Inadvertent Discovery Plan and Protocol would ensure that impacts related to archaeological resources that qualify as historical resources would be reduced to less-than-significant.

Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource as identified in Section 15064.5?

Construction and Operation

According to the CEQA Guidelines, “When a project will impact an archaeological site, a lead agency shall first determine whether the site is a historical resource” (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(c)(1)). Those archaeological sites that do not qualify as historical resources shall be assessed to determine if these qualify as “unique archaeological resources” (California PRC Section 21083.2). As discussed above, excavations related to project construction could encounter archaeological deposits and result in an adverse change to a buried archaeological deposit that could qualify as an archaeological resource. Thus, potentially significant impacts related to buried unidentified archaeological deposits of resources could result from earth-moving activities and vegetation removal.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-1 and CUL-2 would ensure that impacts related to archaeological deposits that qualify as archaeological resources would be reduced to less-than-significant.

Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?

Construction and Operation

There are no known human burials or remains within the Proposed Project site. As discussed above, there is a low potential for the disturbance of historical and/or archaeological resources and/or human remains as a result of the project. In the event that human remains are identified during project activities, these remains would be required to be treated in accordance with Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code and Section 5097.98 of the PRC, as appropriate. Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code states that, in the event of discovery or recognition of any human remains in any location other than a dedicated cemetery, there shall be no further excavation or disturbance of the site or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent remains until the coroner of the county in which the remains are discovered has determined whether or not the remains are subject to the coroner's authority. If the human remains are of Native American origin, the coroner must notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) within 24 hours of this identification. The NAHC will identify a Native American Most Likely Descendent to inspect the site and provide recommendations for the proper treatment of the remains and associated grave goods. Compliance with the California Health and Safety Code and MM CUL-2: Conduct Cultural Resource Awareness Training would ensure that impacts to human remains would be reduced to less-than-significant.

3.5.4 MITIGATION MEASURES

3.5.4.1 Mitigation Measure CUL-1: Conduct Cultural Resource Worker Awareness Training

Prior to the beginning of project construction, a qualified archaeologist (i.e., an archaeologist that meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Professional Qualifications in Archaeology) shall prepare and conduct pre-construction cultural resources awareness training. All construction personnel shall be required to attend the awareness training. The training will inform construction staff of the possibility of encountering precontact or historic-period cultural resources and/or human remains within the Proposed Project site and the protocol(s) to be followed if cultural resources or human remains are encountered during project implementation.

To facilitate compliance, all grading and construction plans shall include a note indicating all equipment operators and employees involved in any form of ground disturbance shall be trained to recognize potential cultural resources and advised of the possibility of encountering subsurface cultural resources during grading activities.

3.5.4.1.1 Mitigation Measure CUL-1 Implementation:

Responsible Party: The NCSO shall ensure that a qualified archaeologist conducts a pre-construction cultural resources awareness training.

Timing: Prior to the initiation of construction. All construction staff (i.e., staff present at the initiation of the project and any new staff) must attend the training prior to participating in any Project-related activities. The qualified archaeologist presenting the awareness training shall provide NCSO with documentation of construction personnel attendance.

Monitoring and Reporting Program: The training shall be conducted by a qualified archaeologist, and the training document and a signature list of all employees who received training shall be kept on the construction site for the life of the Project.

Standards for Success: The identification of and prevention of any impacts to known or inadvertently discovered cultural resources during project construction.

3.5.4.2 Mitigation Measure CUL-2: Cultural Resources Inadvertent Discovery Plan and Implementation, including Halt Work Provisions

An inadvertent discovery plan for cultural resources and human remains shall be prepared prior to and implemented during project construction. The inadvertent discovery plan shall be prepared by a qualified archaeologist (i.e., an archaeologist that meets the Secretary of the Interiors Standards and Guidelines for Professional Qualifications in Archaeology). The inadvertent discovery plan shall address, at a minimum, protocols to be implemented in case of an inadvertent discovery of cultural resources and/or human remains, and/or the treatment of any inadvertently discovered cultural resources and/or human remains.

More specifically, all equipment operators shall be advised of the possibility of encountering cultural resources (MM CUL-1). If such resources are encountered or suspected, work shall be halted immediately within 100 ft of the suspected resource and NCSO shall be contacted. A professional archaeologist shall be retained by NCSO, consulted with, and provided access to any discoveries and develop appropriate management recommendations for archaeological resource treatment. If skeletal remains are encountered and appear to be human, Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Coder requires that the Nevada County Coroner and the NAHC be contacted and, if Native American resources are involved, Native American organizations and individuals recognized by the County shall be notified and consulted about any plans for treatment.

3.5.4.2.1 Mitigation Measure CUL-2 Implementation:

Responsible Party: The NCSO shall ensure that a qualified archaeologist prepares an inadvertent discovery plan.

Timing: Prior to the initiation of construction. Plan implementation shall be prior to and during construction.

Monitoring and Reporting Program: As needed, if cultural resources are found.

Standards for Success: The identification of and prevention of any impacts to known or inadvertently discovered cultural resources and/or human remains during project construction.

3.6 Energy

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

3.6.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

PG&E is the provider of electrical and natural gas supplier to most of the County. PG&E's service area spans 70,000 square miles and serves over 16 million people in Northern and Central California. In 2020, PG&E distributed approximately 35,838 gigawatt-hours (GWh) of electricity and 848,705 million cubic feet of natural gas across its service area (PG&E 2021). In 2024, approximately 98% of the electricity supplied from PG&E was produced free of GHG Emissions (PG&E 2025). Sources of electricity sold by PG&E in 2024 were:

- 23% eligible renewable (solar, wind, geothermal, biomass, and small hydroelectric)
- 2% fossil fuel-fired
- 63% nuclear
- 12% large hydroelectric

The California Energy Commission (CEC) tracks electricity consumption across the state for residential and non-residential sources. In 2024, Nevada County used a total of 769.8 GWh of electricity. Approximately 63% of the electricity usage in the County came from non-residential sources (CEC 2025).

3.6.2 REGULATORY SETTING

3.6.2.1 Federal

3.6.2.1.1 Federal Energy Policy and Conservation Act

The Energy and Policy Conservation Act was enacted by Congress in 1975. This Act established the first fuel economy standards for on-road motor vehicles in the U.S. Pursuant to the act, the NHTSA is responsible for establishing additional vehicle standards.

3.6.2.1.2 Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007

The Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA) set increased Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards for motor vehicles and includes the following provisions related to energy efficiency:

- Renewable fuel standards (RFS)
- Appliance and lighting efficiency standards
- Building energy efficiency

EISA requires increasing levels of renewable fuels to replace petroleum. The USEPA is responsible for developing and implementing regulations to ensure transportation fuel sold into the U.S. contains a minimum volume of renewable fuel.

Additional provisions of the EISA address energy savings in government and public institutions, promoting research for alternate energy, additional research in carbon capture, international energy programs, and the creation of "green jobs."

3.6.2.2 State

3.6.2.2.1 California Energy Code

Compliance with the California Energy Code (Title 24, Part 6, of the CCR, California's Energy Efficiency Standards) and Title 20, Public Utilities and Energy, standards must occur for all new buildings constructed in California. These efficiency standards apply to new construction of both residential and nonresidential (i.e., maintenance buildings and pump station buildings associated with the Program) buildings, and they regulate energy consumed for heating, cooling, ventilation, water heating, and lighting. The building efficiency standards are enforced through the local building permit processes, and local government agencies may adopt and enforce energy standards for new buildings provided that these standards meet or exceed those provided in Title 24 guidelines.

3.6.2.3 Local

3.6.2.3.1 Nevada County Energy Action Plan

The Energy Action Plan (EAP) provides an analysis of the energy use within the unincorporated county limits by the community and County operated facilities as well as a roadmap for accelerating energy efficiency, water efficiency, and renewable energy efforts already underway in Nevada County. It is designed to assist the County in implementing the energy and water-energy related goals and policies in the County's General Plan and Housing Element, and inform the community of cost-effective programs and best practices that will help them save energy and money.

3.6.3 IMPACT ANALYSIS

This analysis is based on the Air Quality, Greenhouse, and Energy Memorandum for the Nevada County Regional Law Enforcement Indoor Shooting Range Project, included as Appendix A. Based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, a project could have a significant impact related to energy if the project would:

a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operations; or

b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operations?

Energy use during the proposed Project construction and operation were calculated based on the CalEEMod modeling as well as CARB's EMFAC and OFFROAD models. Energy modeling files are provided in Appendix A, Attachment B.

Construction

During construction of the proposed Project, energy resources would be consumed in the form of diesel and gasoline fuel from the use of off-road equipment (i.e., tractors, excavators) and on-road vehicles (i.e., construction employee commutes, vendor, haul trucks).

Temporary electricity may be required to provide as-necessary lighting and electric equipment; such electricity demand would be met by portable generator sets and, possibly, connections to an on-site power facility. Fuel demand associated with portable generators is incorporated in the off-road equipment estimate provided below.

Off-Road Equipment

Construction activities associated with the proposed Project were estimated to consume 60,336 gallons of diesel fuel from the use of off-road equipment. For comparison, in 2024, approximately 3.0 billion gallons of diesel fuel was consumed within California (CDTFA 2025a). Thus, the diesel fuel required during construction of the proposed Project would represent approximately 0.002% of the state's annual diesel demand. For the purposes of this analysis, it was assumed that all off road construction equipment would be diesel fueled. In the event that some is alternatively fueled or electric then the percentage of diesel demand would be further reduced. Additionally, any alternative fuel or electricity use from the off-road construction equipment would similarly be assumed to be minor as compared to Statewide consumption.

On-Road Vehicles

On-road vehicles for construction workers, vendors, on-site trucks, and haul trucks would require fuel for travel to and from the site during construction. Table 10 provides an estimate of the total on-road vehicle fuel usage during construction.

Table 10. Construction On-Road Vehicle Fuel and Electricity Consumption

Trip Type	Gasoline (gallons)	Diesel (gallons)	Electricity (kWh)
Worker Trips	62,083	217	27,249
Vendor Trips	1,549	3,014	296
Haul Trips	18	28,394	2,032
Total	**63,650**	**31,625**	**29,577**

Source: Attachment B.
Note:
Calculations use unrounded numbers; totals may not appear to sum exactly due to rounding.
Key:
kWh = kilowatt hour

As shown above, construction of the proposed Project was estimated to consume 63,650 gallons of gasoline and 31,625 gallons of diesel fuel from on-road vehicles. For comparison, in 2024, approximately 3.0 billion gallons of diesel fuel and 12.4 billion gallons of gasoline were sold within California (CDTFA 2025a and CDTFA 2025b). Thus, the fuel required to power the on-road motor vehicles during construction of the proposed Project would represent approximately 0.0005% and 0.001 of the state's annual diesel and gasoline demand, respectively. Additionally, construction of the proposed Project was estimated to consume 29,577 kWh from on-road vehicles. For comparison, in 2024, Nevada County used a total of 769.8 GWh of electricity. Thus, the electricity required would represent 0.004% of the County's annual electricity demand.

Operation

During operation of the proposed Project, energy would be required to fuel the vehicles travelling to and from the proposed Project site and building energy.

Transportation Energy Demand

During operation, the proposed Project would require approximately 75 ADT for on-site staff and regular material deliveries. Table 11 provides an estimate of the annual fuel consumed by vehicles traveling to and from the Project site. As shown in the table, annual vehicular fuel and electricity consumption is estimated to be 5,059 gallons of gasoline, 2,075 gallons of diesel, and 12,790 kWh of electricity.

Table 11. Operational On-Road Vehicle Fuel and Electricity Consumption

Trip Type	Gasoline (gallons)	Diesel (gallons)	Electricity (kWh)
Passenger Cars	4,555	46	11,832
Trucks	465	1,987	868
Other	39	42	90
Project Total	**5,059**	**2,075**	**12,790**

Source: Appendix A, Attachment B.
kWh = kilowatt hour

As noted previously, in 2024, approximately 3.0 billion gallons of diesel fuel and 12.4 billion gallons of gasoline were sold within California. Thus, the fuel required to power the on-road motor vehicles during construction of the proposed Project would represent approximately 0.00004% and 0.0001 of the state's annual diesel and gasoline demand, respectively. Further, over the lifetime of the Project, the fuel efficiency of the vehicles being used during operations is expected to increase. As such, the amount of petroleum consumed as a result of vehicular trips to and from the proposed Project site during operation would decrease over time. As noted previously, in 2024, Nevada County used a total of 769.8 GWh of electricity. Thus, the electricity required would represent 0.002% of the County's annual electricity demand.

Building Energy Demand

As shown in Appendix A, Attachment B the proposed Project is estimated to demand 64,989 kilowatt hours of electricity and approximately 199,952 one-thousand British thermal units of propane on an annual basis. As noted previously, in 2024, Nevada County used a total of 769.8 GWh of electricity. Thus, the electricity required would represent 0.008% of the County's annual electricity demand. Neither statewide nor county-wide propane consumption data is available and, therefore, a comparison is not made.

It would be expected that building energy consumption associated with the proposed Project would not be any more inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary than for any other similar buildings in the region. Current state regulatory requirements for new building construction contained in the 2025 California Green Building Code (CALGreen) and Title 24 standards would increase energy efficiency and reduce energy demand in comparison to existing structures, and therefore would reduce actual environmental effects associated with energy use from the proposed Project. Additionally, the CALGreen and Title 24 standards have increased efficiency standards through each update.

Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

Construction

During construction, off-road equipment and on-road vehicles would comply with applicable federal, state, and local requirements governing fuel efficiency. For example, off-road equipment

would be subject to the most recent In-Use Off-Road Diesel-Fueled Fleets Regulations adopted by the CARB, which establish engine efficiency requirements, among other requirements (CARB 2025j). Off-road engines are categorized per engine tier, with Tier 0 being the least efficient and Tier 4 Final being the cleanest and most efficient. The most recent amendments to the rule are adding an even cleaner Tier 5 engine requirement. Compliance with the In-Use Off-Road Diesel-Fueled Fleets Regulations would ensure that the proposed Project construction fleets would consist of energy-efficient engines.

With respect to the on-road vehicle fleet operations, the USEPA and NHTSA have adopted Federal Vehicle Standards with which the proposed Project would comply. The on-road construction and decommissioning fleets would incorporate these standards as they purchase newer model trucks and turn over their fleet. As such, these regulations would have an overall beneficial effect on reducing nationwide fuel consumption over time as older trucks are replaced. In addition, the Advanced Clean Cars II regulation requires that, by 2035, all new cars and trucks sold in California must be zero emissions. Compliance with this regulation would further reduce the demand for petroleum fuels. Moreover, heavy-duty trucks would be required to comply with CARB's 5-minute idling limits which would reduce fuel consumption. Although the foregoing regulations were primarily designed to reduce air quality emissions, they would also result in an increase in energy efficiency during construction and decommissioning activities.

Operation

California adopted the Renewables Portfolio Standard (RPS) to increase the amount of renewable energy supplied by utilities within the state. PG&E will continue to be subject to state RPS requirements, and the proposed Project would not preclude achievement of the RPS goals. In addition, the new structure developed as part of the proposed Project would comply with federal, state, and local regulations aimed at reducing energy consumption, including the Building Energy Efficiency Standards (California Code of Regulations Title 24, Part 6) and the CALGreen Code (California Code of Regulations Title 24, Part 11). Moreover, the proposed Project directly supports the goals laid out in CARB's 2022 Scoping Plan and the County's EAP, including the measures related to building decarbonization and electric vehicle infrastructure. Additionally, construction of a local shooting range facility would reduce driving demand as the Sheriff's Office currently relies on facilities that are approximately 45 minutes away.

3.6.4 MITIGATION MEASURES

No mitigation measures required.

3.7 Geology and Soils

GEOLOGY AND SOILS Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Directly or indirectly cause substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i. Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv. Landslides?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Be located on strata or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?	☐	☒	☐	☐
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	☐	☒	☐	☐
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geological feature?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.7.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

3.7.1.1 Geology

This analysis is based on the 2025 Geotechnical Report for the Nevada County Training Facility prepared by Gularte & Associates, Inc. and the 1999 Geotechnical Engineering and Geologic

Hazards Report prepared by Holdrege & Kull for the Project site. The Project site lies within the western Sierra Nevada foothills, underlain by a central metamorphic terrane. Regionally, geologic structure is influenced by the north-northwest-trending Foothills Fault System, formed during the Mesozoic era (approximately 230-65 million years before present) under compressional tectonic forces. During the Late Cenozoic (within the last 9 million years), the region transitioned to an extensional tectonic setting, leading to normal faulting that in some cases reactivated portions of older faults near the site.

According to the DOC's 1992 Geologic Map of the Chico Quadrangle (DOC 1992), the site is underlain by Mesozoic Plutonic Rocks, specifically granite/granodiorite.

3.7.1.2 Seismicity

Based on the 2010 Fault Activity Map of California prepared by the Department of Mines and Geology, the nearest faults are the Cleveland Hill Fault (27 miles northwest), the Mohawk Valley Fault (43 miles northeast), and the Polaris Fault (47 miles east). The Project site is expected to experience a relatively low to moderate level of ground shaking for California.

As discussed in the 1999 Geotechnical Engineering and Geologic Hazards Report, several moderate earthquakes have been recorded in the vicinity since the late 19th century, including events in 1892, 1909, 1975 (Oroville earthquake, M5.6), and the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake (M7.1), which produced ground shaking as far east as Reno, Nevada (Holdrege & Kull 1999). Smaller earthquakes have also occurred on an unnamed fault near Emigrant Gap, approximately 18 miles east of the site, and near Stampede Reservoir, about 47 miles northeast. While these events have generated noticeable ground shaking, the site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone, which specifically addresses the hazard of surface fault rupture (CGS 2025).

Several local and regional faults are mapped near the Project site, including branches of the Gillis Hill Fault (within 2 miles), the Wolf Creek Fault Zone (4 miles west), the Foresthill Fault (10 miles east-southeast), and the Grass Valley Fault (2 miles west). These faults are part of the northwest-trending Foothills Fault System, a group of steeply dipping faults with localized thrust components whose major tectonic activity occurred during the late Jurassic. Portions of this system have been classified as potentially active, with evidence of movement within the last 100,000 years based on trenching studies associated with the Auburn Dam project. Additional regional faults that could produce ground shaking felt at the site include the Cleveland Hill Fault (28 miles northwest) and larger, more distant faults such as the Green Valley, Hayward, and San Andreas faults (100–130 miles southwest). Seismologists estimate that the maximum credible earthquake for the Foothills Fault System could reach a magnitude of 6.5, though such events are expected to have very long recurrence intervals, potentially from 1,000 to 100,000 years. The maximum probable earthquake (100-year return period) is estimated at magnitude 5.0.

3.7.1.3 Soil Conditions

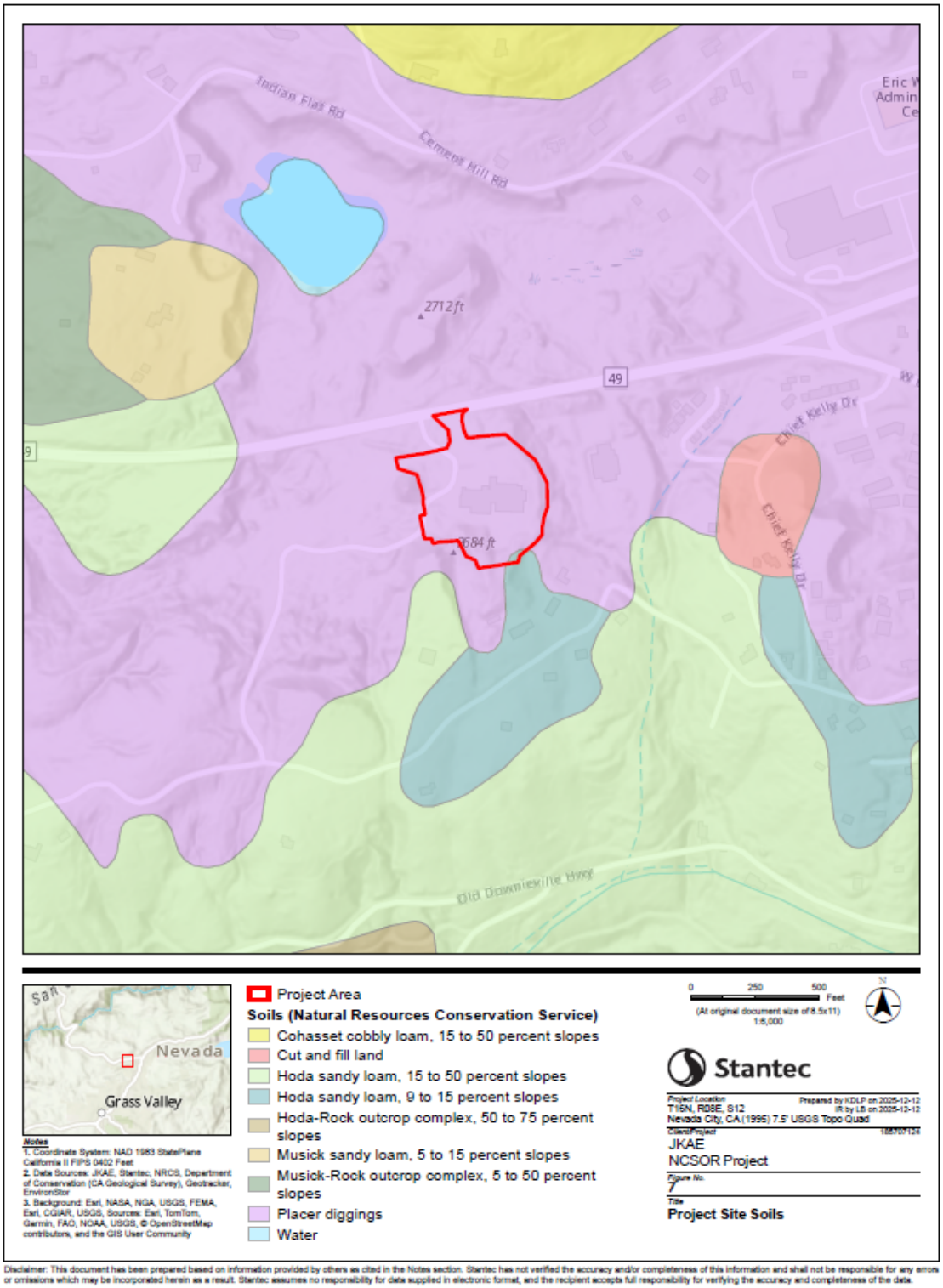
There are two mapped soil units within the Project site: (1) Hoda Sand Loam 9 to 15% slopes and (2) Placer diggings (Figure 7 – Project Site Soils) (SoilWeb Earth 2025). Per the NRCS Web Soil Survey, the majority of soils on the Project site are comprised of Placer diggings, which are described by the soil survey as hydraulically mined areas consisting of remnants of Tertiary river deposits. The soil survey describes the Hoda surface soil as brown, sandy loam, approximately 12 inches thick. The surface soil is generally underlain by reddish yellow loam and yellowish red clay and sandy clay loam. Weathered granodiorite rock is typically encountered at depths of 5 feet below ground surface (bgs) or greater. The soil survey describes Hoda soil types as being moderately expansive due to considerable kaolinitic clay content. Risk of corrosivity for uncoated steel is high due to fine soil texture and high total acidity. Limitations for onsite wastewater treatment are described as severe due to moderately slow permeability and steep slopes. Hoda soils are described as having medium to low strength and variable susceptibility to soil piping.

As described in the 1999 Geotechnical Engineering and Geologic Hazards Report, soil conditions at the Project site were observed to be generally consistent with the Hoda series. Surface soils in the central area of the Project site were relatively thin, consisting of brown to dark brown, loose sandy silt, often underlain within a few inches by completely to severely weathered granodiorite. The weathered granodiorite excavated in the trenches ranged from orange-brown to light grey-green or white, typically classified as sandy silt or silty sand with variable clay content. Erosion of topsoil was noted on the east-facing slopes, and loose fill was observed along the edges of the central cut area. Isolated low-lying areas on the Project site contained forest duff or soft silty clay overlying weathered granodiorite. Near-surface soils in these areas were generally orange-brown, loose to medium-dense, sandy silt, sometimes with minor gravel or clay interbeds. Overall, the site exhibits a combination of natural soils, variable fill deposits, and weathered bedrock, with localized heterogeneity due to past land use and natural topography.

Laboratory results from the 1999 geotechnical investigation determined that some soils on the Project site exhibit low to moderate expansion potential; specifically, these results were collected at trench T-14, which is located directly south of the existing SORDTF (Holdrege & Kull 1999).

As described in the 2025 Geotechnical Report, field investigations were performed (including site reconnaissance and excavation of eight exploratory trenches throughout Project site) prior to construction of the existing SORDTF. Based on the results of these investigations, the Project site was observed to have two to three feet of undocumented fill underlain by medium dense silty sands (decomposed granite). The 2025 Geotechnical Report also states the risk of lateral spreading from landslides and liquefaction are not a concern for the Project given the relatively shallow bedrock and firm soil conditions.

Figure 7. Project Site Soils



3.7.1.4 Groundwater

The 2025 Geotechnical Report did not identify groundwater or groundwater monitoring wells in the vicinity of the Project site. However, perched water is possible over bedrock on the Project site during the rainy season (Gularte & Associates 2025). Localized areas of seepage or saturated near-surface soils have the potential to occur during grading or excavation activities, particularly during or immediately following the rainy season (Holdrege & Kull 1999). In the Sierra Nevada foothills, groundwater depth can vary substantially depending on local hydrogeologic conditions. Groundwater is often controlled by bedrock fractures, making depths and conditions difficult to predict without detailed hydrogeologic investigation. In other locations, perched groundwater may occur above resistant rock layers or low-permeability soils. Based on previous investigations in the local area, groundwater beneath the Project site is expected to occur within approximately 30 feet of the ground surface, with static water levels potentially within 10 feet. General groundwater flow at the site is anticipated to be to the south or southwest, toward Deer Creek (Holdrege & Kull 1999).

3.7.2 REGULATORY SETTING

3.7.2.1 Federal

3.7.2.1.1 Earthquake Hazards Reduction Act (Public Law 95-124, 42 U.S.C. 7701 et. Seq)

The purpose of the Earthquake Hazards Reduction Act is to reduce the risks of life and property from future earthquakes in the U.S. through the establishment and maintenance of an effective earthquake hazards reduction program. The objectives of the program include: (1) the education of the public; (2) the development of technologically and economically feasible design and construction methods and procedures; (3) the implementation of a system for predicting damaging earthquakes and for identifying seismic hazards; (4) the development of model building codes; (5) the development of methods of mitigating the risks from earthquakes; (6) increase the use of existing scientific and engineering knowledge to mitigate earthquake hazards; and (7) the development of ways to assure the availability of affordable earthquake insurance.

3.7.2.2 State

3.7.2.2.1 Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act (Cal. Public Res. Code, Section 2621 et seq.)

The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act provides policies and criteria to assist cities, counties, and state agencies in the exercise of their responsibilities to prohibit the location of developments and structures for human occupancy across the trace of active faults. The act also requires site-specific studies by licensed professionals for some types of proposed construction within delineated earthquake fault zones.

3.7.2.3 Local

There are no local plans, policies, regulations, or ordinances related to geology and soils that apply to the Project.

3.7.3 IMPACT ANALYSIS

Based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, a project could have a significant impact related to geology and soil resources if the project would:

a) Directly or indirectly cause substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:

   i. Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.

   ii. Strong seismic ground shaking;

   iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction;

   iv. Landslides;

b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil;

c) Be located on strata or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse;

d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18 1 B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property;

e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater; or

f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geological feature.

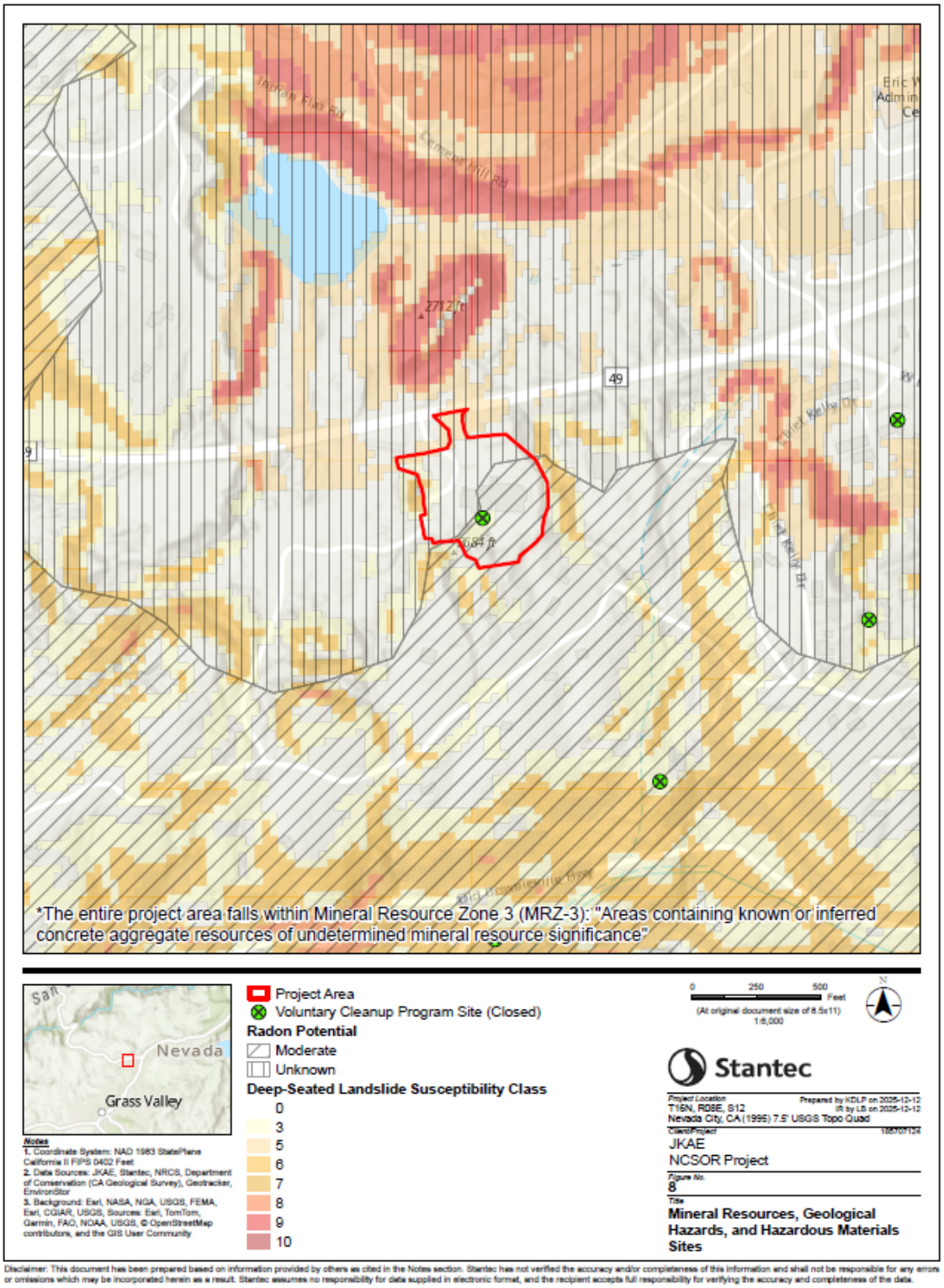
Directly or indirectly cause substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division

of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42. Strong seismic ground shaking? Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction? Landslides?

Construction and Operation

The Project site lies within the western Sierra Nevada foothills on Mesozoic Plutonic Rocks, specifically granite/granodiorite and variable fill associated with historic placer mining. Although several regional and local faults, such as branches of the Cleveland Hill Fault and the Mohawk Valley Fault, occur within 50 miles, the site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone, and no active faults cross or trend directly beneath the Project footprint (Figure 8 – Mineral Resources, Geological Hazards, and Hazardous Material Sites). As a result, the likelihood of surface rupture is very low. The region experiences low to moderate seismicity, and strong ground shaking from distant or regional events is possible; however, the new facility would be required to comply with the 2025 California Building Code Seismic Parameters, which includes structural design criteria to withstand anticipated accelerations of less than 0.2 gravity units associated with the area's maximum probable earthquake scenarios. Site soils include Hoda sandy loam and Placer diggings underlain by weathered granodiorite, which exhibit low to moderate expansion potential but are not mapped as highly susceptible to liquefaction, lateral spreading, or landsliding. The existing topography—sloping gently from southwest to northeast with no steep, unstable slopes—further limits the potential for seismically induced landslides or collapse. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Figure 8. Mineral Resources, Geological Hazards, and Hazardous Material Sites



Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

Construction and Operation

Construction of the new training facility would require grading, foundation excavation, and disturbance of existing fill and weathered bedrock. These activities could temporarily increase the potential for erosion or sediment transport, particularly during the wet season when localized seepage or saturated soils may occur, as previously noted in geotechnical explorations. Because the site drains through an established system of stormwater inlets, pipes, energy dissipators, and rock-lined swales, uncontrolled sediment release could affect downstream conveyances if not properly managed. To minimize this risk, the Project will implement site-specific erosion- and sediment-control BMPs as required by the SWPPP, including ground cover measures, perimeter controls, and staged grading when feasible. Once construction concludes, disturbed areas will be stabilized with paving, landscaping, and permanent drainage features, substantially reducing long-term erosion risk and preventing loss of topsoil. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Be located on strata or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?

Construction and Operation

Landslides

No landslides have been mapped in the area according to the DOC Reported Landslides Map Database (CGS 2025). Although several regional and local faults, such as branches of the Cleveland Hill Fault and the Mohawk Valley Fault, occur within 50 miles, the site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone, and no active faults cross or trend directly beneath the Project footprint. As a result, the likelihood of surface rupture is very low. The region experiences low to moderate seismicity, and strong ground shaking from distant or regional events is possible; however, the new facility would be required to comply with the 2025 California Building Code Seismic Parameters, which includes structural design criteria to withstand anticipated accelerations of less than 0.2 gravity units associated with the area's maximum probable earthquake scenarios. Site soils include Hoda sandy loam and Placer diggings underlain by weathered granodiorite, which exhibit low to moderate expansion potential but are not mapped as highly susceptible to liquefaction, lateral spreading, or landsliding. The existing topography—sloping gently from southwest to northeast with no steep, unstable slopes—further limits the potential for seismically induced landslides or collapse. Impacts related to construction or operations would be less than significant.

Lateral Spreading

Lateral spreading typically occurs as a form of horizontal displacement of relatively flat-lying alluvial material toward an open or "free" face such as an open body of water, channel, or

excavation. This movement is generally due to failure along a weak plane and may often be associated with liquefaction. As cracks develop within the weakened material, blocks of soil displace laterally toward the open face. Site soils include Hoda sandy loam and Placer diggings underlain by weathered granodiorite, which exhibit low to moderate expansion potential but are not mapped as highly susceptible to lateral spreading. Therefore, impacts related to construction or operations would be less than significant.

Subsidence

Subsidence related to compaction settlement, or seismic densification, occurs when loose granular soils above the water table increase in density due to earthquake shaking. Soil densification can result in differential settlement because of variations in soil composition, thickness, and initial density. USGS maps Area of Land Subsidence in California from groundwater pumping, peat loss, and oil extraction. The Project site is not located in an area that has been mapped as an Area of Land Subsidence in California (CGS 2025). Therefore, impacts related to construction or operations would be less than significant.

Liquefaction or Collapse

The Project site is in an area that has not been evaluated by California Geologic Society for liquefaction hazards (CGS 2025). Development will be performed in accordance with current seismic design code and with recommendations from a Project-specific geotechnical investigation, Mitigation Measures GEO-1 through GEO-15. Therefore, impacts associated with construction and operation would be less than significant with mitigation measures.

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?

Construction and Operation

Portions of the Project site contain heterogeneous historic fill with variable density; therefore, the Project should be constructed in accordance with recommendations from the 2025 Geotechnical Report and 1999 Project-specific geotechnical investigation to ensure the building pad is adequately engineered and that foundations, slab design, and utility bedding are suitable for the mapped soil conditions. These engineering requirements address the presence of moderately expansive soils, areas of loose or debris-containing fill, and potential shallow groundwater encountered during wet periods. With implemented engineering design and erosion-control measures (mitigation measures GEO-1 through GEO-15), impacts related to geology, soils, or seismic hazards would be less than significant.

Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?

Construction and Operation

The Project would connect to the existing SORDTF infrastructure and Nevada City's wastewater system and would not require the construction and use of septic tanks or an alternative wastewater disposal system that would impact water quality. In addition, the Project would not involve pumping of groundwater beneath the Site. Therefore, the Project construction and operation would have no impact.

Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geological feature?

Construction and Operation

The Nevada City General Plan and the Nevada County General Plan do not address any paleontological resources or unique geological features within Nevada City or Nevada County. Any paleontological resources that may have been previously located at the site have likely been substantially disturbed or destroyed by the original site construction and ongoing operations. Therefore, the proposed Project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a unique geologic feature or paleontological resource, therefore impacts are less than significant.

3.7.4 MITIGATION MEASURES

3.7.4.1 Mitigation Measure GEO-1: Clearing and Grubbing

On-site soil (less debris and organic materials) are considered suitable as fill material. The site should be cleared and grubbed of vegetation and other deleterious materials as described below.

- Strip and remove the top 2 to 3 inches of soil containing shallow vegetation, roots and other deleterious materials. This highly organic topsoil can be stockpiled onsite and used in landscape areas, but is not suitable for use as fill. The project geotechnical engineer should approve any proposed use of the spoil generated from stripping prior to placement.
- Special care should be taken to remove the entire tree root system and backfill voids to 90% relative compaction per ASTM D1557.
- Overexcavate any relatively loose debris and soil that is encountered in exploratory trenches or any other onsite excavations to underlying, competent material. Possible excavations include exploratory trenches made by others, mantles or soil test pits, tree stump holes, and mining relics.

- Existing fill on the eastern and western edges of the building area should be overexcavated to competent, native soil. Debris encountered in the fill (e.g., wood, metal, tires) shall be removed from the fill if the fill is to be used as structural fill. Material proposed for use as structural fill must be approved by the contractor. Unsuitable materials shall be removed from the site.
- Remove all rocks greater than 6 inches in greatest dimension (oversized rock) from the top 12 inches of soil, if encountered. Oversized rock may be used in landscape areas, rock landscape walls, or removed from the site. Oversized rock can be stockpiled onsite and used to construct fills, but must be placed at or near the bottom of deep fills and must be placed in windrows to avoid nesting. The project geotechnical engineer must approve the use of oversized rock materials prior to constructing fill.
- Fine grained, potentially expansive soil, as determined by a representative of the contractor, that is encountered during grading within proposed building locations and paved parking areas should be mixed with granular soil or overexcavated and stockpiled for removal from the Project site or for later use in landscape areas. A typical mixing ratio for granular to expansive soil is 4:1. The actual mixing ratio should be determined by the contractor.
- Vegetation, other deleterious materials, and oversized rocks not used in landscape areas or rock walls should be removed from the site.
    - Inspection by project geotechnical engineer is required during clearing and grubbing operations.

3.7.4.2 Mitigation Measure GEO-2: Native Soil Preparation for Fill Placement

Undocumented fill along the slope face should be removed to native soil as part of the benching during grading of fill slope. After site clearing and grubbing, the exposed native soil should be prepared for placement of compacted fill as described below.

- The native grade should be scarified to a depth of 12 inches, moisture conditioned to within 0 to 4% optimum moisture and compacted to 90% relative compaction per ASTM D1557, to prepare for structural fill.
- The native soil should then be compacted to achieve a minimum relative compaction of 90% of the ASTM D1557 maximum dry density. The moisture content, density and relative percent compaction should be verified by the construction quality assurance (CQA) monitor. The earthwork contractor should assist the CQA monitor by excavating test pads with onsite earth moving equipment.
    - The upper 6 inches of pavement subgrade and aggregate base rock should be compacted to a minimum of 95% relative compaction per ASTM D1557.
- Construction quality assurance tests should be performed using the following minimum testing frequencies:

Table 12. Minimum Testing Frequencies for Native Soil Preparation

ASTM No.5	Description	Test Frequency
D1557	Modified Proctor Curve	1 per 100,000 sf or material change[1]
D2922	Nuclear Moisture	1 per 10,000 sf
D3017	Nuclear Density	1 per 10,000 sf

Note:
Higher testing frequency shall govern
Key:
sf = square foot

3.7.4.3 Mitigation Measure GEO-3: Fill Placement

Fill placement should incorporate the following recommendations:

- Soil used for fill construction should consist of uncontaminated, predominantly granular, non-expansive native soil or approved import soil. If encountered, rock used in fill should be broken into pieces no larger than 6 inches in diameter. Rocks larger than 6 inches are considered oversized material and should be stockpiled for offhaul or later use in landscape areas or rock walls.
- Existing fill on the eastern and western edges of the building area must be approved by the contractor prior to use as structural fill. Debris encountered in the fill (e.g. wood, metal, tires) shall be removed from the fill prior to placement.
- Proposed import soil should be predominantly granular, non-expansive and free of deleterious material. Import material that is proposed for use onsite should be submitted to the contractor for approval and possible laboratory testing at least 72 hours prior to transport to the site.
- Cohesive, predominantly fine grained, or potentially expansive soil encountered during grading should be stockpiled for removal, mixed as directed by the contractor, or used in landscape areas.
- Soil used to construct fills should be uniformly moisture conditioned to within approximately 2 percentage points of the ASTM D1557 optimum moisture content. Wet soil may need to be air dried or mixed with drier material to facilitate placement and compaction, particularly during or following the wet season.
- Fill should be constructed by placing uniformly moisture conditioned soil in maximum 8-inch-thick loose lifts (layers) prior to compacting.
- All fill should be compacted to a minimum relative compaction of 90% of the ASTM D1557 maximum dry density. The upper 8 inches of fill in building footprints and paved areas should be compacted to a minimum of 95% relative compaction.
- Construction quality assurance tests should be performed using the following minimum testing frequencies:

Table 13. Minimum Testin Frequencies for Fill Placement

ASTM No.5	Description	Test Frequency
D1557	Modified Proctor Curve	1 per 100,000 cy or material change[1]
D2922	Nuclear Moisture	1 per 500 cy
D3017	Nuclear Density	1 per 500 cy[2]

Notes:
[1] Higher testing frequencies shall govern
[2] For small fill, a minimum of 1 test should be take per every 18 inches of elevation change as fill is placed. Irregular fills or fills of inconsistent quality may require more frequent testing.
Key:
cy= cubic yard

The moisture content, density and relative percent compaction of all fills should be verified by the CQA monitor during construction. The earthwork contractor should assist the CQA monitor by excavating test pads with the onsite earth moving equipment.

3.7.4.4 Mitigation Measure GEO-4: Differential Fill Depth

The recommendations presented in this section are intended to reduce the magnitude of differential settlement-induced structural distress associated with variable fill depth beneath structures:

- Site grading should be performed so that cut-fill transition lines do not occur directly beneath any structures. The cut portion of the cut-fill building pads, if proposed, should be scarified to a minimum depth of 8 inches, as described in Section 5.1.2 of the 1999 Geotechnical Engineering and Geologic Hazards Report (Holdrege & Kull 1999), and recompacted to 95% relative compaction.
- Differential fill depths beneath structures should not exceed 5 feet. For example, if the maximum fill depth was 8 feet across a building pad, the minimum fill depth beneath that pad could not be less than 3 feet. If a cut-fill building pad was used in this example, the cut portion would need to be overexcavated 3 feet and rebuilt with compacted fill.

3.7.4.5 Mitigation Measure GEO-5: Fill Slope Grading

Fill slopes should be graded as described below.

- Fill slopes, if proposed, should be no steeper than 2:1, H:V. If fill slopes are to be steeper than 2:1, and/or have a vertical height greater than 10 feet, the slope stability analysis should be reviewed and possibly redone, if necessary.
- Fill should be placed in horizontal lifts to the grades shown on the project plans. Fill slopes should be constructed by overbuilding the slope face and then cutting it back to the design slope gradient. Fill slopes should not be constructed or extended horizontally by placing soil on an existing slope face and/or compacted by track walking.

- A keyway should be constructed at the toe of the fill slope and at least 2 feet deep on the downhill side of the key. The keyway should be a minimum of 8 feet wide and sloped back into the slope at a minimum 5% slope. In order to remove loose soil/rock, excavate benches into competent material after engineered fill has been placed in the keyway per our recommendations. Benches should be cut into the existing slope as filling proceeds every 2 to 4 feet vertically and 4 to 6 feet wide into the slope, to remove loose soil/rock. Once finished pad grade has been achieved, any cut portion of the building pad should be ripped, moisture conditioned and recompacted.
- Steepened fill slopes can be a maximum of 1.5:1 (horizontal to vertical) if recommendations are followed. The fill slope should have Miragrid 5XT, 2 foot vertical spacing, and 12 foot wide with the strong direction perpendicular to the slope.
- Steepened cut slopes can be a maximum of 1.75:1 (horizontal to vertical). The acceptability of the steepened cut slopes will be based on evaluation at the time of grading by a representative of Gularte and Associates.

3.7.4.6 Mitigation Measure GEO-6: Erosion Controls

Graded portions of the site should be seeded as soon as possible following grading to allow vegetation to become established prior to the rainy season. The following erosion controls should be installed on all cut and fill slopes to minimize erosion:

- All slopes should be hydroseeded or hand seeded/strawed with an appropriate seed mixture compatible with the soil and climate conditions of the site as recommended by the local Resource Conservation District.
- Following seeding, jute netting should be placed and secured over the slopes to keep seeds and straw from being washed or blown away. Tackifiers or binding agents may be used in lieu of jute netting.
- Surface water drainage ditches should be established at the top of all slopes to intercept and redirect surface water away from the slope face. Under no circumstances should surface water be allowed to run over slope faces. The intercepted water should be discharged into natural drainage courses or into other collection and disposal structures.
- A v-ditch should also be constructed at the top of the cut slope to direct water away from the slope face.

3.7.4.7 Mitigation Measure GEO-7: Slope Setbacks

Buildings have a minimum setback of 5 feet from ascending slopes and 10 feet from descending slopes, or as outlined in section 1808A.7 of the 2025 California Building Code, whichever is greater. The setback is measured from the outermost footing line closest to the toe/hinge point of slope.

3.7.4.8 Mitigation Measure GEO-8: Underground Utility Trenches

The contractor is responsible for conducting all trenching and shoring in accordance with CALOSHA requirements. Underground utility trenches should be excavated and backfilled as described below.

- It is anticipated that the contractor will be able to excavate underground utility trenches to 6 to 8 feet bgs with a CAT 416B backhoe or equivalent. Resistant, slightly to moderately weathered rock may be encountered at depths greater than exploratory trenches. In addition, previous experience in the area has shown that isolated areas of moderately or slightly weathered rock that is difficult to trench with conventional trenching equipment may be encountered in utility trenches. Approximate locations of observed rock outcrop are shown on the 1999 Geotechnical Engineering and Geologic Hazards Report (Holdrege & Kull 1999) site map, Sheet 1. Pre-ripping of the trench alignment, blasting, or splitting may be required in these isolated areas.
- Fill should be placed in loose lifts not exceeding 12 inches for backhoes and 18 inches for large excavators.
- The California OSHA requires all utility trenches deeper than 4 feet bgs to be shored with bracing equipment prior to being entered by any individuals, whether or not they are associated with the project.
- It is anticipated that shallow subsurface seepage may be encountered, particularly if utility trenches are excavated during the winter, spring, or early summer. The earthwork contractor may need to employ dewatering methods as discussed on page 6 in Section 5.1.8 of the 1999 Geotechnical Engineering and Geologic Hazards Report (Holdrege & Kull 1999) in order to excavate, place and compact the trench backfill materials.
- Soil used as trench backfill should be non-expansive and have a maximum particle size of 2 inches.
- Soil used to backfill trenches should be uniformly moisture conditioned to within 0 to 4% of the ASTM D1557 optimum moisture content.
- Trench backfill should be constructed by placing uniformly moisture conditioned soil in maximum 8-inch-thick loose lifts (layers) prior to compacting.
- Trench backfill placed beneath the utilities (bedding) should be compacted to achieve a minimum relative compaction of 90% of the ASTM D1557 maximum dry density.
- Trench backfill soil should be compacted to a minimum relative compaction of 90% of the ASTM D1557 maximum dry density.

- Trench backfill soil placed within 1 foot of the finished subgrade in road and parking lot areas should be compacted to a minimum relative compaction of 95% of the ASTM D1557 maximum dry density.
- The loose lift thickness, moisture, density and relative compaction of the trench backfill soil should be verified by the CQA Monitor. The earthwork contractor should assist the CQA monitor during construction by excavating test pits in the compacted trench backfill material.
- Jetting of trench backfill is not acceptable except in joint utility trenches where damage to conduits makes mechanical compaction methods impractical.
- Construction quality assurance tests should be performed using the following minimum testing frequencies:

Table 14. Minimum Testing Frequencies for Fill Placement

ASTM No.5	Description	Test Frequency
D1557	Modified Proctor Curve	1 per 100,000 cy or material change[1]
D2922	Nuclear Moisture	1 per 500 cy
D3017	Nuclear Density	1 per 500 cy[2]

Notes:
[1] Higher testing frequencies shall govern
[2] For small fill, a minimum of 1 test should be taken per every 18 inches of elevation change as fill is placed. Irregular fills or fills of inconsistent quality may require more frequent testing.
Key:
cy= cubic yard

3.7.4.9 Mitigation Measure GEO-9: Construction Dewatering

The earthwork contractor should be prepared to dewater utility trench excavations and any other excavations if seepage is encountered during grading. Seepage may be encountered if grading is performed during and immediately after the rainy season. The following recommendations are preliminary and are not based on groundwater flow analysis.

- It is anticipated that dewatering of utility trenches can be performed by gravity or by constructing sumps to depths below the trench bottom and removing the water with sump pumps. Additional sump excavations and pumps should be added as necessary to keep the base of excavations free of standing water when placing and compacting the trench backfill.
- If seepage is encountered during trench excavation, it may be necessary to remove underlying saturated soil and replace it with free draining, granular drain rock enveloped in geotextile fabric. Native backfill soil can again be used after placing the granular rock to an elevation that is higher than the encountered groundwater.

3.7.4.10 Mitigation Measure GEO-10: Subsurface Drainage

If groundwater or saturated soil conditions are encountered during grading, professional engineers should be allowed to observe the conditions and provide site specific subsurface

drainage recommendations. Generally, if moist or saturated soil conditions are encountered which prevent or restrict fill placement, subdrains may be necessary, particularly if grading is performed during or immediately following the wet season. Typically, a subdrain should consist of 1 inch, washed, crushed rock or pea gravel enveloped in non-woven geotextile “filter” fabric. A 4-inch-diameter perforated polyvinyl chloride (PVC) pipe should be placed 2 to 3 inches above the base of the subdrain with the perforations placed down. The base of the subdrain installation should be sloped at a minimum 1% gradient to the desired daylight location.

3.7.4.11 Mitigation Measure GEO-11: Surface Water Drainage

The following measures are recommended to help mitigate surface water drainage problems:

- Slope concrete pavement areas at least 0.5% and asphalt concrete pavements at least 0.5 and preferably 1% to extend pavement life.
- If soil surrounds the building, discharge roof down spouts to storm drain system. Where soil surrounds the building, provide a 5% slope away from building exteriors for a distance of at least 3 feet.
- Compact and slope all soil placed adjacent to building foundations such that water is not allowed to pond or infiltrate. Backfill should be free of deleterious material.
- Direct downspouts to a closed collector pipe which discharges flow to positive drainage.
- Construct V-ditches at the top of all slopes to reduce surface water flow over slope faces. Typically, V-ditches should be 3 feet wide and at least 6 inches deep. Surface water collected in V-ditches should be directed away and downslope from proposed building pads and driveways into a drainage channel.
- Direct sprinklers away from buildings. Use drip irrigation near the structure and pavements. Excess watering increases to risk of premature pavement failure and shrink/swell underneath the structure.

3.7.4.12 Mitigation Measure GEO-12: Foundations

Following are the foundation recommendations:

- All footings are to be designed by the project structural engineer. Unless otherwise directed by the project structural engineer, footings should be a minimum of 12 inches wide and trenched through any loose surface material and a minimum of 18 inches into competent native soil or compacted fill (not including crushed rock or pavement). If clay is encountered at the base of footings, the footing should be deepened through the clay lens into underlying granular material or weathered rock.

- Footing trenches should be cleaned of all loose soil and construction debris prior to placing concrete. A representative from the contractor should observe the footing excavations prior to concrete placement.
- All footing reinforcement is to be designed by the project structural engineer. Unless otherwise directed by the project structural engineer, footings should be designed with a minimum of 2 No. 4 rebar reinforcement, one near the top of the footing and one near the bottom. A minimum of 3 inches of concrete coverage should surround the bars.
- Strip footings may be sized for an allowable bearing capacity of 2,400 pounds per square foot (psf) for dead plus live loads. This value can be increased by 400 psf for each additional foot of embedment, up to a limiting value of 3,600 psf. Allowable bearing values may be increased by 33% for additional transient loading such as wind or seismic. Spread footings may be sized for an allowable bearing capacity of 2,800 psf.
- Footing excavations should be saturated prior to placing concrete to reduce the risk of problems caused by wicking of moisture from curing concrete.
- No attempt should be made to smooth rock in the base of the footings founded in rock. If the required footing depth cannot be achieved, rebar dowels can be used to resist sliding. The depth, spacing, and sizing of dowels should be made on a case-by-case basis. Contractor should review doweling details.
- Total settlement beneath the footings should be no more than 1-inch, with an estimated maximum differential settlement of ½-inch over a distance of 20 feet.
- Utility excavations parallel to footing lines should be clear of a 1:1 (horizontal:vertical) plane projected downward from the base of footings. Where utility lines cross footings, they should be sleeved and footings deepened as appropriate.

3.7.4.13 Mitigation Measure GEO-13: Slab-on-Grade Floor Systems

A concrete slab-on-grade floor may be used in conjunction with the perimeter concrete foundation. The following are recommended regarding the slab-on-grade:

- All slabs-on-grade are to be designed by the project structural engineer.
- Slabs-on-grade should be 1-inch of 3/8-inch pea gravel or clean sand directly under the slab, underlain with. However, it may be omitted if the slab is poured directly on 10-mil polyethylene “plastic” sheeting. If this option is used proper measures should be taken by the contractor to promote even curing and prevent slab curling.
- Unless otherwise directed by the project structural engineer, slabs-on-grade should be a minimum of 4 inches thick. As a minimum, No. 3 rebar on 24-inch centers or flat sheets of 6 x 6, #10 x #10 welded wire mesh (WWM) should be used as slab reinforcement.

- It is not recommended to use rolls of WWM because vertically centered placement of rolled mesh within the slab is difficult to achieve. All rebar and sheets of WWM should be placed in the center of the slab and supported on concrete "dobies". "Hooking and pulling" of steel during concrete placement is not recommended.
- There should be 4 inches of clean crushed rock on the building pad. Crushed rock should have 100% passing the ¾-inch sieve and less than 5% passing the No. 4 Sieve.
- The vapor barrier and sand may be omitted in areas that do not have moisture sensitive floor coverings (i.e., garage slabs and parking areas).
- Vapor barrier membrane should consist of 10-mil polyethylene “plastic” sheeting, properly sealed at penetrations and edges, underlain with. Regardless of the type of vapor barrier used, moisture can wick up through a concrete slab. Slabs can be tested for water transmissivity in areas that are moisture sensitive.
    - Expansion joints should be provided between the slab and perimeter footings and bisect the length and width of the slab at intervals specified by the American Concrete Institute or Portland Concrete Association.
- Exterior slabs-on-grade such as sidewalks may be placed directly on compacted fill without the use of a baserock section. For exterior slabs, the native soil should be ripped, moisture conditioned and recompacted to an 8-inch depth.
- Soil should be moisture conditioned prior to placing concrete. If the soil is not moisture conditioned prior to placing concrete, moisture will be wicked out of the concrete, possibly causing shrinkage cracks.
- All deleterious material must be removed prior to placing concrete.
- Concrete should be a minimum thickness of 5 inches and have a concrete water-cement ratio of 0.48 or less. Concrete should be a higher strength concrete, with a minimum 3,000 psi compressive strength at 28 days.
- Exposed concrete slabs should be moisture cured for at least 7 days after placement.
- Concrete slabs subjected to heavy traffic loads should be reinforced as determined by a structural engineer.
- Concrete slabs impart a relatively small load on the subgrade (approximately 50 psf). Therefore, some vertical movement should be anticipated from possible expansion or differential loading.
- Slabs should be reinforced with No. 3 reinforcing bar at 18 inches on center or No. 4 reinforcing bars placed on 24-inch centers each way. Place dobies per ACI with a maximum dobie spacing of 6’ on center, each way.

3.7.4.14 Mitigation Measure GEO-14: Retaining Wall Design Criteria

Recommendations for design and construction of retaining walls are listed below:

- Provided that adequate drainage is included, walls subjected to active soil pressure should be designed to resist an equivalent fluid pressure of 38 pounds per cubic foot (pcf). At-rest conditions should have an at-rest fluid pressure of 55 pcf with level backfill conditions. Retaining wall backfill should be native or predominantly granular, non-expansive import backfill. A minimum lateral projection of 5 feet be maintained from the base of the footing to daylight on the slope.
- Drainage of the retaining walls may be accomplished by using aggregate drainage blanket or a pre-manufactured wall drainage system. Drainage blanket materials, if selected for use, should consist of Class 2 permeable material per Section 68 of the Caltrans Standard Specifications. The drainage blanket should be at least 12 inches thick and placed to within 12 inches of the top of the wall. If drain rock is used, a clean, ¾-inch crushed rock, should be enveloped in a Mirafi 140N filter fabric. Water collected at the bottom of the drain system should be transmitted away from the wall by a perforated pipe or weep holes. The pipe should be at least 4 inches in diameter with the perforations placed down. The pipe should daylight to a lower grade or drain. If adequate drainage is not provided, an additional equivalent fluid pressure of 40 pcf should be added to the values recommended above. Damp-proofing of the walls should be included in areas where wall moisture would be problematic (e.g. stucco walls); we commonly recommend a waterproofing membrane such as Mirafi 860/861.
- If a tiered retaining wall configuration is to be used then a setback of 1.5xH (H = height of bottom wall) or 10 feet, whichever is greater, should be used. The setback is measured from face of wall to face of wall. The minimum offset from face of retaining wall to a structure should be 5 feet for a wall above and 10 feet for a wall below the structure.

3.7.4.15 Mitigation Measure GEO-15: Pavement Design

The table provides recommended pavement sections based on an R-value of 30 and Procedure 608 of the Caltrans Highway Design Manual.

Table 15. Asphalt Equivalent Pavement Sections

	Traffic Index			
	4	**5**	**6**	**7**
Asphalt Concrete (inches)	2.0	2.5	3.0	4.0
Aggregate Base (inches)	6	7	9	10

3.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

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

3.8.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

To fully understand global climate change, it is important to recognize the naturally occurring "greenhouse effect" and to define the greenhouse gases (GHG) that contribute to this phenomenon. Various gases in the earth's atmosphere, classified as atmospheric GHGs, play a critical role in determining the earth's surface temperature. Solar radiation enters the earth's atmosphere from space, and a portion of the radiation is absorbed by the earth's surface. The earth emits this radiation back toward space, but the properties of the radiation change from high-frequency solar radiation to lower-frequency infrared radiation. GHGs, which are transparent to solar radiation, are effective in absorbing infrared radiation. As a result, this radiation that would have escaped back into space is now retained, resulting in a warming of the atmosphere. This phenomenon is known as the greenhouse effect.

Many gases exhibit these "greenhouse" properties. Some of them occur in nature (water vapor, carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane [CH_4], and nitrous oxide [N_2O]), while others are exclusively human made (like gases used for aerosols). Primary GHGs attributed to global climate change are CO_2, CH_4, N_2O, hydrofluorocarbons (HFC), perfluorocarbons (PFC), and sulfur hexafluoride (SF_6). Each GHG differs in its ability to absorb heat in the atmosphere based on the lifetime, or persistence, of the gas molecule in the atmosphere. Often, estimates of GHG emissions are presented in carbon dioxide equivalents (CO_2e), which weigh each gas by its global warming potential.

GHG emissions are predominantly associated with activities related to energy production; changes in land use, such as deforestation and land clearing; industrial sources; agricultural activities; transportation; waste and wastewater generation; and commercial and residential land uses. Worldwide, energy production, including the burning of coal, natural gas, and oil for electricity and heat, is the largest single source of global GHG emissions.

3.8.2 REGULATORY SETTING

3.8.2.1 Federal

3.8.2.1.1 Federal Clean Air Act

As noted previously, the principal air quality regulatory mechanism at the federal level is the CAA and, in particular, the 1990 amendments to the CAA and the NAAQS that it establishes. The CAA does not specifically regulate GHG emissions; however, the U.S. Supreme Court has determined that GHGs are pollutants that can be regulated under the CAA. There are currently no federal regulations that set ambient air quality standards for GHGs.

In 2009, the USEPA Administrator signed two distinct findings regarding GHGs under Section 202(a) of the federal CAA. USEPA adopted a Final Endangerment Finding for six defined GHGs (CO_2, CH_4, N_2O, HFCs, PFCs, and SF_6). The Endangerment Finding was required before USEPA could regulate GHG emissions under Section 202(a)(1) of the CAA. USEPA also adopted a Cause or Contribute Finding in which the USEPA Administrator found that GHG emissions from new motor vehicles and motor vehicle engines are contributing to air pollution, which is endangering public health and welfare. These findings do not themselves impose any requirements on industry or other entities. However, these actions were a prerequisite for implementing GHG emissions standards for vehicles.

3.8.2.2 State

3.8.2.2.1 Assembly Bill 32

In 2006, the California State Legislature enacted Assembly Bill (AB) 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act. AB 32 requires that GHGs emitted in California be reduced to 1990 levels by the year 2020. The State achieved these reductions in 2018.

3.8.2.2.2 Senate Bill 32

Senate Bill (SB) 32 was enacted in 2016 and sets an updated GHG standard that required the State to achieve at least 40% below the 1990 levels by 2030.

3.8.2.2.3 Assembly Bill 1279

AB 1279 was enacted in 2022 and establishes the policy for the State to achieve carbon neutrality as soon as possible, but no later than 2045 and maintain net negative GHG emissions thereafter, and to ensure that by 2045 Statewide anthropogenic GHG emissions are reduced at least 85% below 1990 levels.

3.8.2.2.4 2022 Climate Change Scoping Plan

The Scoping Plan is a blueprint for how the state plans to meet the required GHG reductions under AB 32, SB 32, and AB 1279. CARB is required under AB 32 to update the Scoping Plan

at least once every 5 years. The most recent Scoping Plan is the Final 2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality (2022 Scoping Plan) that was adopted in December 2022 and serves as the third update to the initial plan adopted in 2008. The 2022 Scoping Plan assesses progress toward achieving the SB 32 2030 target and laying out a path to achieve carbon neutrality no later than 2045.

3.8.3 IMPACT ANALYSIS

This analysis is based on the Air Quality, Greenhouse, and Energy Memorandum for the Nevada County Regional Law Enforcement Indoor Shooting Range Project, included as Appendix A. Based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, a project could have a significant impact related to GHG if the project would:

a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment; or

b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases.

Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

The proposed Project would generate GHG emissions from construction and operations. Emissions were calculated with CalEEMod. Modeling details are provided in Section 3.3, Air Quality and Appendix A.

Construction

Construction GHGs would be emitted by the off-road construction equipment and vehicle travel by workers and material deliveries to the Project site. The estimated construction GHG emissions are shown in Table 16 below.

Table 16. Construction Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Year	Annual Emissions ($MTCO_2e$/yr)
2026	382.69
2027	484.07
Total	**866.76**
Amortized over 30 years1	**28.89**

Source: Appendix A, Attachment A.

Operation

Operational or long-term emissions occur over the life of the proposed Project. Operational activities of the project would generate GHG emissions primarily from mobile trips to and from the Project site, energy usage, landscaping equipment, handling of solid waste, and emissions

associated with water and wastewater. The operational GHG emissions associated with the Project are shown in Table 17 and demonstrate that implementation of the Project would result in an increase of GHG emissions of approximately 117 $MTCO_2e$/year.

Table 17. Construction Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Source	Annual Emissions ($MTCO_2e$/yr)
Mobile	66.48
Area	0.20
Energy	11.01
Water	4.38
Waste	5.30
Refrigeration	0.59
Total Operational Emissions	*87.96*
Amortized Construction Emissions	28.89
Total	**116.85**

Source: Appendix A, Attachment A.

Conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

Construction and Operation

CARB's 2022 Scoping Plan sets a framework for California to meet the reduction targets of SB 32 and AB 1279. The 2022 Scoping Plan builds upon previous iterations of state scoping plans to achieve carbon neutrality and reduce anthropogenic GHG emissions by 85% of year 1990 levels no later than 2045, as directed by AB 1279. Table 18 evaluates project consistency with the GHG reduction strategies identified in the 2022 Scoping Plan. As shown therein, the proposed Project would be consistent with all applicable measures and, as a result, would support the overall carbon neutrality goal established by the 2022 Scoping Plan.

Table 18. Project Consistency with 2022 Scoping Plan Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategies

Measure	Consistency Determination
Deploy Zero-Emission Vehicles and reduce driving demand	**Consistent.** The Sheriff's Office currently relies on external shooting range facilities approximately 45 minutes away and the proposed Project would provide a local facility that would reduce driving demand. Additionally, the propose project would meet the low-traffic-generating criteria (less than 110 average daily trips). The proposed Project would not directly deploy Zero-Emission Vehicles, however consistent with the 2025 California Green Building Standards (CalGreen), or applicable codes at the time of construction, the proposed parking area would include EV-capable spaces and EV chargers.
Generate clean electricity	**Consistent.** The proposed Project would not directly generate clean electricity. However, the proposed Project would purchase electricity from PG&E, which is subject to the RPS. The RPS would require utilities

Measure	Consistency Determination
	to provide 100% GHG free sources of electricity to consumers by 2045. PG&E offers 100% GHG free electricity via two plans, 100% solar Choice and Green Saver, according to their 2024 power content label (PG&E 2025).
Decarbonize Buildings	**Consistent.** The proposed Project would not include any natural gas connections and would be constructed in compliance with the applicable version of the CalGreen.
Reduce non-combustion emissions (Methane)	**Consistent.** The proposed Project would not include any land uses that generate significant levels of methane, such as landfills or dairy farms.
Reduce non-combustion emissions (HFCs)	**Consistent.** The proposed Project would comply with all NSAQMD and state regulations governing SLCPs, including HFCs.
Compensate for remaining emissions	**Not Applicable.** This measure is aimed at the state government to reduce statewide emissions to meet AB 1279 goals.

Source: CARB 2022.
Key:
AB = Assembly Bill
CalGreen = California Green Building Code
EV = electric vehicle
GHG = greenhouse gas
HFC = hydrofluorocarbons
NSAQMD = Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District
PG&E = Pacific Gas & Electric Company
RPS = Renewables Portfolio Standard
SLCP = short-lived climate pollutant

This analysis finds that the proposed Project would be consistent with the applicable strategies recommended in the 2022 Scoping Plan and impacts would be less than significant.

3.8.4 MITIGATION MEASURES

No mitigation measures required.

3.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☒	☐

HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.9.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The SORDTF is primarily an already developed site with existing buildings, paved parking, maintained open space, and ornamental landscaping. The existing SORDTF was originally constructed in 2003 to be the Nevada County Juvenile Hall. Since 2021, a portion of the building has been converted for use as the Sheriff's Regional Dispatch Center. The remaining portions are being remodeled for training and gym facilities. Topography of the site includes rolling hills with existing paved access via Kahele Court, and utilities, drainage, and stormwater infrastructure already established.

The nearest school district is the Nevada City School District, which is composed of Deer Creek Elementary School and Seven Hills Middle School. Deer Creek Elementary School is located at 805 Lindley Avenue, approximately one mile southeast of the Project site. Seven Hills Middle School is located at 700 Hoover Lane, approximately 0.6 miles south of the Project site.

The Project site is not within an airport land use plan or within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport or in the vicinity of a private airstrip. The nearest facility is the Nevada County Airport which is located approximately 3.4 miles southeast of the Project site.

According to the California Environmental Reporting System (CERS), the Project is not within or adjacent to any hazardous materials sites, nor is it located on an abandoned solid waste disposal site known to the County. However, the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) EnviroStor database and the SWRCB online GeoTracker database did identify one past

hazardous site on the project property (see Figure 8 - Mineral Resources, Geological Hazards, and Hazardous Material Sites). T. According to EnviroStor the Nevada County Juvenile Hall (ID#60001882) was a Voluntary Agreement Site. The lead agency (cleanup oversight agency) was DTCS. Contamination was caused by land disposal/ fill with contaminants of concern being arsenic, lead, polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons and TPH- motor oil. Soils were excavated at the site to meet construction requirements and Soil sample data collected from the stockpiled soils were subject to a human health risk assessment. As of December 28, 2001, no further action was needed at the site (DTSC 2025). According to GeoTracker the Nevada County Juvenile Detention Center (ID#SL0605755108) was a Cleanup Program Site. Potential contaminants of concern were listed as “other petroleum.” The site was closed December 1, 2011 (SWRCB 2025b). No additional sites were listed within 1000 feet of the Project (Figure 8 - Mineral Resources, Geological Hazards, and Hazardous Materials Sites).

3.9.2 REGULATORY SETTING

3.9.2.1 Federal

3.9.2.1.1 Federal Toxic Substances Control Act/Resource Conservation and Recovery Act/Hazardous and Solid Waste Act

The Federal Toxic Substances Control Act (1976) and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 established a program administered by the USEPA to regulate the generation, transportation, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste. The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act was amended in 1984 by the Hazardous and Solid Waste Act, which affirmed and extended the “cradle to grave” system of regulating hazardous wastes.

3.9.2.1.2 Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act/Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act

The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), commonly known as “Superfund,” was enacted by Congress on December 11, 1980. This law (42 U.S. Code 103) provides broad federal authority to respond directly to releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances that may endanger public health or the environment. CERCLA establishes requirements concerning closed and abandoned hazardous waste sites, provides for liability of persons responsible for releases of hazardous waste at these sites, and establishes a trust fund to provide for clean-up when no responsible party can be identified. CERCLA also enables the revision of the National Contingency Plan (NCP). The NCP (Title 40, CFR, Part 300) provides the guidelines and procedures needed to respond to releases and threatened releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, and/or contaminants. The NCP also established the National Priorities List. CERCLA was amended by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act on October 17, 1986.

3.9.2.1.3 Occupational Safety and Health Administration

OSHA's mission is to ensure the safety and health of U.S. workers by setting and enforcing standards; providing training, outreach, and education; establishing partnerships; and encouraging continual improvement in workplace safety and health. The OSHA staff establishes and enforces protective standards and reaches out to employers and employees through technical assistance and consultation programs. OSHA standards are listed in 29 CFR 1910. 29 CFR 1926.62 addresses safety and health regulations for construction involving lead. 29 CFR 1910.1001 and 1926.1101 address asbestos exposure for general industry and for the construction industry respectively.

3.9.2.1.4 USEPA, National Emissions Standard for Hazardous Air Pollutants, 40 CFR Part 61

Under the National Emissions Standard for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP) regulation, no visible emissions are allowed during facility demolition or renovation activities, which involve regulated asbestos-containing materials. For this reason, all facilities must be surveyed for asbestos-containing materials prior to demolition or renovation. The USEPA, and/or the local air quality management district which has delegated authority from the USEPA NESHAP, must be notified prior to any building demolition, even if no asbestos-containing materials are present. Assessments are made by the inspector as to the condition of each material and whether or not the materials are "friable."

3.9.2.1.5 USEPA Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act, 40 CFR Part 763, Subpart E

The Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) requires performance of asbestos surveys and the development of Asbestos Management Plans for all K-12 public and non-profit private schools in the U.S. and its territories. Although this regulation applies to such schools only, the procedures mandated under AHERA are considered the industry standard for conducting asbestos surveys.

3.9.2.1.6 Other Regulations

Other federal regulations overseen by the USEPA relevant to hazardous materials and environmental contamination include 40 CFR Parts 100 to 149 -- Water Programs, 40 CFR Parts 239 to 259 -- Solid Wastes, and 40 CFR Parts 260 to 279 -- Hazardous Waste. These regulations designate hazardous substances under CWA; determine the reportable quantity for each substance that is designated as hazardous; and establish quantities of designated substances equal to or greater than the reportable quantities that may be discharged into waters of the U.S. Additionally, USEPA regulations require Freon™ related work be performed by USEPA certified personnel.

3.9.2.2 State

3.9.2.2.1 Asbestos and Lead – California Code of Regulations

In California, potential asbestos exposure in construction is regulated when construction, alteration, repair, maintenance, renovation or demolition of structures, substrates, or portions thereof contain asbestos [8 CCR §1529 (a)(1)(C)]. Additionally, in California, materials containing greater than one-tenth of one percent (>0.1%) asbestos by weight are regulated as asbestos-containing construction materials.

The State of California, Title 17, Division 1, Chapter 8 (Title 17) pertains to all public and residential buildings in California and is enforced by the California Department of Public Health. Pursuant to Title 17 and USEPA regulations, lead-based paint (LBP) is defined as paint or other surface coatings containing an amount of lead equal to or greater than 1 milligram per square centimeter or half of 1 percent [≥0.5% or ≥5,000 ppm] by weight. Title 17 also defines a lead hazard as deteriorated LBP, disturbing LBP or presumed LBP without containment, or any other nuisances which may result in persistent or quantifiable lead exposure. Additionally, worker exposure to materials containing lead during construction work is regulated by the Federal OSHA [29 CFR 1926.62(a)] and the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health [8 CCR §1532.1(a)]. These regulations require worker protection during construction "…where lead or materials containing lead are present."

3.9.2.2.2 California Department of Toxic Substance Control. Universal Waste Rule Control Number R-97-08

The DTSC Universal Waste Rule allows for the safe handling, transport, and recycling of common hazardous materials. This rule aims to manage waste more efficiently and effectively. The DTSC Universal Waste Fact sheet provides an overview of universal waste and the regulations for their management.

3.9.2.2.3 Statewide Asbestos Airborne Toxic Control Measure for Construction, Grading, Quarrying and Surface Mining Operations, Codified in the California Code of Regulations, Title 17, Section 93105

The Statewide Asbestos Airborne Toxic Control Measure for Construction, Grading, Quarrying and Surface Mining Operations (ATCM), codified in the California Code of Regulations, Title 17, Section 93105, contains requirements for projects located in areas mapped as having, likely to have, or observed to have naturally occurring asbestos, ultramafic rock or serpentine. Therefore, every project location should be evaluated for its potential to have these rock types. The Asbestos ATCM specifies more stringent conditions than those listed above. For residential developments in ultramafic areas, the District may require asbestos testing and always requires at least 3 inches of non-asbestos-containing material (up to 12 inches under certain circumstances) covering native soil.

3.9.2.2.4 Statewide Asbestos Airborne Toxic Control Measure for Surfacing Applications (Surfacing ATCM), codified in the California Code of Regulations, Title 17, Section 93106

Prohibits the use of material containing 0.25% asbestos or greater for surfacing of trails, playgrounds, pedestrian areas, roads, landscaping, parking lots, et cetera.

3.9.2.3 Local

3.9.2.3.1 Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District

The NSAQMD is a Non-Delegated Air District. The District requires compliance with Asbestos NESHAP and submittal of the Asbestos Notification Form to the USEPA. A copy of the notification may also be submitted to CARB.

3.9.2.3.2 Regional Water Quality Control Board, 5S / Central Valley

The Land Disposal Program regulates the discharge of land of certain solid and liquid wastes. These wastes include municipal solid waste, hazardous wastes, designated wastes, and nonhazardous and inert solid wastes. In general, these wastes cannot be discharged directly to the ground surface without impacting groundwater or surface water and therefore must be contained to isolate them from the environment. The regulations applicable to these discharges are found in Chapter 15 of Title 23, for hazardous wastes, of the California Code of Regulations. These regulations have both prescriptive and performance standards for waste containment, monitoring, and closure. The requirements are implemented through the adoption of Waste Discharge Requirements for the disposal facilities.

3.9.2.3.3 Certified Unified Program Agency for Nevada County

Starting on January 1, 2013, all Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA)-regulated businesses were required by law (AB 2286) to submit business information electronically through CERS. Instead of printing and submitting forms on paper, entities are required to establish an account with CERS and file their information related to CUPA elements electronically.

The County's Department of Environmental Health has the responsibility to administer and enforce all six Program Elements of the Unified Program. The six Program Elements that are consolidated under the Unified Program are:

- Hazardous Materials Business Plan (HMBP)
- Hazardous Waste Generator
- Hazardous Waste Treatment
- Underground Storage Tank Program
- Aboveground Petroleum Storage Tanks

- California Accidental Release Program

3.9.3 IMPACT ANALYSIS

Based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, a project could have a significant impact related to hazards and hazardous materials if the project would:

a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials;

b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment;

c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school;

d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment;

e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area;

f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan; or

g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires.

Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

Construction

Small quantities of hazardous materials would be stored, used, and handled during construction. The hazardous materials anticipated for use are small volumes of petroleum hydrocarbons and their derivatives (e.g., gasoline, oils, lubricants, and solvents) required to operate the construction equipment. These relatively small quantities would be below reporting requirements for hazardous materials business plans and would not pose substantial public health and safety hazards through release of emissions or risk of upset. Safety risks to construction workers for the proposed project would be reduced by compliance with Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards. Hazardous materials used during construction of the Project will include gasoline, diesel fuel, motor oil, hydraulic fluid, solvents, cleaners, sealants, welding flux, various lubricants, paint, and paint thinner. The types of paint to

be used will be dictated by the types of equipment and structures that must be coated and by manufacturer specifications. The potential exists for these fuels, oil, and grease to drip from construction equipment. The volume of incidental drips of petroleum products is not anticipated to require clean up or disposal of hazardous materials. Spills of fuel may occur during onsite refueling operations if refueling operations are not conducted properly. It is not anticipated that spills related to refueling operations would be large and would be limited to the immediate area and cleaned up at the time of the spill using spill kits stationed on the fuel truck. It is unlikely that the volume of refueling spills will travel beyond the immediate area of the spill and impact offsite receptors. Even so, preparation of a Soil Management Plan (HAZ-1) would help guide the construction contractor and personnel properly handle, remove, and dispose of contaminated soil encountered during construction activities. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant with mitigation measures incorporated.

Operation

Operation of the Project would include dedicated indoor firearms training facility for NCSO and partner agencies. Spent ammunition and lead waste will be collected and recycled through licensed hazardous-materials vendors. All waste will be securely stored in sealed containers within the armory or designated maintenance area until transported for disposal or recycling.

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?

Construction

The proposed Project includes construction of a one-story building of approximately 14,200 square feet. The Project has the potential to create a hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment should subsurface soil impacts be encountered during construction. Therefore, preparation of a Soil Management Plan (HAZ-1) would help guide the construction contractor and personnel properly handle, remove, and dispose of contaminated soil encountered during construction activities. Thus, impacts would be less than significant with mitigation measures incorporated.

Operation

Operation of the Project would include dedicated indoor firearms training facility for NCSO and partner agencies. Spent ammunition and lead waste will be collected and recycled through licensed hazardous-materials vendors. All waste will be securely stored in sealed containers within the armory or designated maintenance area until transported for disposal or recycling.

Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?

Construction and Operation

The Nevada City School District is composed of Deer Creek Elementary School and Seven Hills Middle School. Deer Creek Elementary School is located at 805 Lindley Avenue, approximately one mile southeast of the Project site. Seven Hills Middle School is located at 700 Hoover Lane, approximately 0.6 mile south of the Project site. As both schools are located over one-quarter mile from the Project site impacts are anticipated to be less than significant for construction or operation of the proposed Project.

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?

Construction and Operation

The Project has one hazardous material site within the Project boundary. According to EnviroStor the Nevada County Juvenile Hall (ID#60001882) was a Voluntary Agreement Site. The lead agency (cleanup oversight agency) was DTCS. Contamination was caused by land disposal/ fill with contaminants of concern being arsenic, lead, polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons and TPH- motor oil. Soils were excavated at the site to meet construction requirements and Soil sample data collected from the stockpiled soils were subject to a human health risk assessment. As of December 28, 2001, no further action was needed at the site (DTSC 2025). According to GeoTracker the Nevada County Juvenile Detention Center (ID#SL0605755108) was a Cleanup Program Site. Potential contaminants of concern were listed as “other petroleum.” The site was closed December 1, 2011 (SWRCB 2025b). Given that the site was listed as no further action needed/ closed, and that no additional sites were listed within 1000 feet of the Project, impacts will be less than significant.

For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within 2 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?

Construction and Operation

The proposed Project site is not located within an Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan or within the direct safety review area of any public or public use airport. The nearest facility is the Nevada County Airport which is located approximately 3.4 miles southeast of the Project site. In addition, the proposed Project site is not located in the vicinity of a private airstrip Given the distance of the Nevada County Airport, the proposed Project will not introduce or increase risk of safety hazard to the people residing or working in the Project site. Therefore, impacts will be less than significant.

Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Construction and Operation

The Nevada County has an adopted Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) and Nevada City has a Community Wildfire Protection Plan, Wildfire Prevention and Mitigation Plan and City Disaster Plan, all of which are all intended to provide emergency resources and plans in response to local hazards. Nevada City participated in the development of the Nevada County LHMP, which includes an Annex for Nevada City (Nevada County 2024a). The Annex did not identify any critical highways, roads, and other transportation infrastructure, but states Nevada City adopted the same Emergency Operations Plan as Nevada County. This EOP describes the responsibilities of First Responders and other response support organizations for natural disasters and manmade emergency incidents (Nevada County 2024a). Critical transportation infrastructure is only determined during any hazard-specific evacuation planning. Nevada City's Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) identifies that the proposed Project site is within evacuation zone NEV-E244, as identified by Genasys Protect (Nevada City 2021).

In an emergency, the Project staff and visitors would evacuate onto SR-49. Given the proposed Project site's proximity to Nevada County Consolidated Fire District Station 84 (approximately 0.8 miles east of the Project site), the proposed Project site would have adequate emergency access and would not significantly restrict opportunities for ingress and egress in the Project vicinity in the event of an emergency.

In the event of an emergency, staff and visitors would be directed to specific evacuation routes to avoid conflicts with emergency response plans. Therefore, potential impacts regarding conflicts with emergency response plans during construction would be less than significant and no mitigation is required.

Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?

Construction

The proposed new building within the Project site would be constructed per the California Fire Code (CFC) standard and would comply with the enhanced ignition-resistant construction standards of the updated 2025 California Building and Chapter 7 California Wildland-Urban Interface Code, which replaced CFC Chapter 7A. Since the Project is located within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ), the Project will need to comply with wildfire-resistant construction and site-design provisions in Chapter 7, including utilizing ignition-resistant construction, vegetation and fuel modification zones, and wildfire-adapted building materials such as ember-resistant vents, fire-rated roofing, and appropriate exterior wall systems. These requirements also include defensible space and access provisions that facilitate firefighting operations, consistent with the risk-reduction intent of Chapter. Compliance with the 2025 California Building and Fire Code, now including Chapter 7.

The Project would be reviewed by the Nevada County Building Department and Fire Department to ensure that building construction meets the minimum standards for fire safety as defined in the 2025 California Building and Fire Code. . This review would provide oversight on the proper installation and maintenance of fire access roadways, placement of hydrants, adequate water supply, access to structures, and appropriate use of building materials and practices. Review of the Project by the County Building Department and Fire Department would provide the necessary oversight to implement applicable building and safety requirements, including those for the 2025 California Building and Fire Code would reduce potential fire risk impacts to acceptable levels.

The proposed Project construction would also require the storage of hazardous materials including: gasoline, diesel fuel, motor oil, hydraulic fluid, solvents, cleaners, sealants, welding flux, various lubricants, paint, and paint thinner. The proposed Project will have all flammable liquids, gases, and vapor stored and handled with accordance with Title 8, Section 5451 of the California Code of Regulations. Proper storage and hand. An HMBP will be submitted to the County's Department of Environmental Health (i.e., designated CUPA) as required by the California Environmental Protection Agency. These flammable materials can be a source of fuel during a wildfire as such the HMBP will be made available to emergency response agencies which will provide them with types of chemicals, quantities, maps of chemical locations, and evacuation assembly areas in the case of an emergency which will greatly reduce the risk of a wildfire to proposed Project site and adjacent properties. Therefore, impact would be less than significant.

Operation

The Project would install and tie in utilities into existing SORDTF infrastructure. No explicit fuel breaks or aboveground power lines are proposed. The LHMP Annex for Nevada City lists ongoing wildfire mitigation efforts and states brushing and debris chipping and ladder fuel reduction on public lands (i.e., the Project site) and street rights-of-way are currently ongoing (Nevada County 2024a). The Project would not interfere with these ongoing efforts and thus, not exacerbate wildfire risk.

The Project does not include the installation of roads as access to the Project site. Access is provided via a single roadway connection to Kahele Court, which would serve as a fire turnaround access driveway/easement. The new building within the Project site would be constructed per the CFC standard and would comply with the enhanced ignition-resistant construction standards of the 2025 California Building and Fire Code Chapter 7. Prior to issuance of a building permit, the Project would need to demonstrate that the building's features (e.g., roofing, eaves, exterior wall surfaces, overhangs, sprinkler systems, defensible space) are in conformance with the 2025 California Building and Fire Code (officially published as Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations), as required by the California State Fire Marshal.

Conformance with these codes as overseen by the Nevada County Building Department and coordination with the Fire Department would reduce potential fire risk impacts to acceptable levels; and therefore, be less than significant. No mitigation is required.

3.9.4 MITIGATION MEASURES

3.9.4.1 Mitigation Measure HAZ-1: Preparation of a Soil Management Plan

Preparation of a Soil Management Plan to be prepared by the construction contractor and submitted to Nevada County for review and approval prior to initiating construction and grading activities. Contaminated soil encountered during construction activities shall be handled, removed, and disposed in accordance with regulatory requirements.

3.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would: i. Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site; ii. Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site; 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 iv. Impede or redirect flood flows.	☐	☐	☒	☐

HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.10.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

3.10.1.1 Regional Hydrology

The Project site lies on the western slope foothills of the Sierra Nevada within the 56.3-square-mile Little Deer Creek-Deer Creek watershed (HUC 12 Code: 180201250802), which is a sub-watershed of the larger Yuba River watershed (USGS 2025b). The Yuba River watershed is characterized by steep, granitic headwater terrain that transitions downslope into rolling oak-woodland foothills. Surface runoff originates from seasonal rainfall and high-elevation snowmelt, producing strong seasonal streamflow with peak runoff in late winter and spring and low flows in summer and fall. Vegetation cover and local land uses (mixed native forest, oak woodland, and scattered rural development) influence infiltration, surface erosion potential, and storm-flow response across the watershed (YWA 2025). The regional climate is typical of the Sierra Nevada foothills and is characterized by a Mediterranean climate with cool, wet winters and hot, dry summers. Precipitation in the region occurs as rain and snow. The average annual rainfall is approximately 54.31 inches and typically occurs between October and May. In winter months, temperatures are moderate but can drop near freezing at night; frost and occasional light snow are possible, though heavy snow is uncommon at foothill elevations. Air temperatures range from an average January high of 50.7°F to an average July high of 88.4°F. The annual average high temperature is 67.7°F (WRCC 2025).

3.10.1.2 Site Drainage

No aquatic features mapped in databases such as the National Wetlands Inventory or the National Hydrography Dataset are present within the Project site (USFWS 2025, USGS 2025a). The nearest downstream mapped waterbody is Deer Creek, which is located approximately 0.3 miles south of the Project site. A small drainage is just east of the Project site (Figure 9 – Project Site Hydrology). As discussed in the Biological Resources Technical Report (Stantec 2025b), during a November 3, 2025 biological field survey, one small aquatic feature was observed in the northwest corner of the Project site along a riprap slope. This feature is likely a relic linear water drainage that likely historically carried runoff and drainage flows at the northern boundary of the Project site. The feature included a semi-buried plastic, corrugated pipe with no observable source culvert and no bed or bank observed. No standing water was visible, and no drainage channels extending from this feature were observed. Based on the isolated nature of the presumably relic drainage pipe, with no upland hydrologic connection or connection to

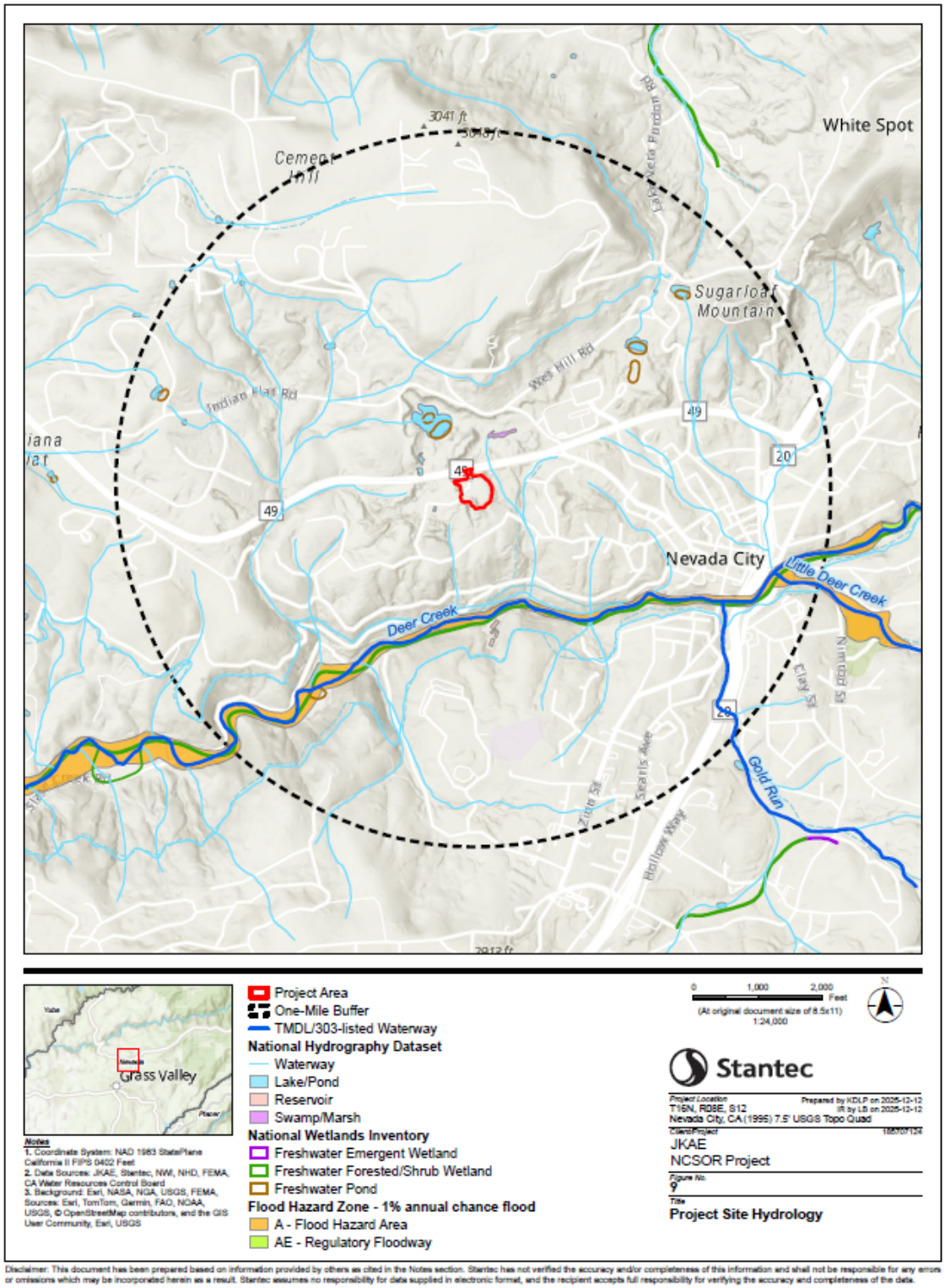
downstream waters (i.e., no defined drainage channel, or culvert), this feature is not considered a potential water of the U.S. nor a water of the state subject to state or federal regulatory jurisdiction.

Elevations on the Project site range from approximately 2,700 feet msl to 2,660 feet msl generally draining from the southwest to the northeast. Within the built portion of the parcel, stormwater drainage is conveyed away from the existing SORDTF via stormwater conveyances including underground pipe, drop inlets, underground pipe, rock flow dissipators, and rock lined ditches located throughout the property.

3.10.1.3 Flood Hazard Risk

The Project corridor is not located within or near a 100-year flood hazard zone according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Flood Information (FEMA 2010). The Federal Emergency Management Agency identifies the area as Zone X, within an area of minimal flood hazard. The Project is not located in a coastal zone, nor nearby an enclosed body of water; therefore, the Project is not located within a tsunami or seiche zone.

Figure 9. Project Site Hydrology



3.10.2 REGULATORY SETTING

3.10.2.1 Federal

3.10.2.1.1 Clean Water Act

The CWA consists of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1972 and subsequent amendments. The CWA provides for the restoration and maintenance of the physical, chemical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters. The CWA is the primary federal law regulating water quality in the U.S., establishing a comprehensive framework to restore and maintain the integrity of the nation's surface waters. Originally enacted in 1972, the CWA sets the basic structure for controlling discharges of pollutants to rivers, lakes, wetlands, and coastal waters through a combination of regulatory programs, permitting systems, and water quality standards. One of its central components is NPDES, which requires permits for point-source discharges of pollutants, including stormwater associated with construction and industrial activities. The Act also directs states to develop water quality standards, identify impaired water bodies, and implement total maximum daily loads to reduce pollutant loads where needed. In addition, Section 404 regulates the placement of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S., including most wetlands, through a permitting program overseen by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Together, these provisions create a multilayered approach that protects aquatic resources, promotes responsible land and water use, and ensures that federally regulated activities meet both national and state water quality objectives.

3.10.2.1.2 Section 402

Section 402 of the CWA establishes the NPDES permit program to regulate discharges of pollutants into waters of the U.S. An NPDES permit sets specific discharge limits for point sources discharging pollutants into waters of the U.S. and establishes monitoring and reporting requirements, as well as special conditions. Two types of nonpoint source discharges are controlled by the NPDES program: discharges caused by general construction activities and the general quality of stormwater in municipal stormwater systems. The goal of the NPDES nonpoint source regulations is to improve the quality of stormwater discharged to receiving waters to the maximum extent practicable. RWQCBs in California are responsible for implementing the NPDES permit system (see the discussion of state regulations below).

3.10.2.2 State

3.10.2.2.1 Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act

Porter-Cologne requires that each of the nine RWQCBs prepare and periodically update basin plans for water quality control. Each basin plan sets forth water quality standards for surface water and groundwater and actions to control nonpoint and point sources of pollution to achieve and maintain these standards. Basin plans offer an opportunity to protect wetlands through the establishment of water quality objectives. The RWQCB's jurisdiction includes waters of the U.S., as well as areas that meet the definition of "waters of the state." "Waters of the state" is defined

as any surface water or groundwater, including saline waters, within the boundaries of the state. The RWQCB has the discretion to take jurisdiction over areas not federally protected under CWA Section 404 provided they meet the definition of waters of the state and the SWRCB published a new set of procedures for discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the state on March 22, 2019. Mitigation requiring no net loss of wetlands functions and values of waters of the state typically is required by the RWQCB.

3.10.2.2.2 Central Valley Basin Plan

The Project site lies within the geographic jurisdiction of the Central Valley RWQCB and is therefore subject to the water-quality standards established under the Water Quality Control Plan for the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Basins (Basin Plan). The Basin Plan designates “beneficial uses” for both surface water and groundwater (such as aquatic habitat, recreation, municipal supply, and wildlife) and sets narrative and numeric water quality objectives to protect those uses (RWQCB 2019). The Plan also integrates a program of implementation to ensure that any discharges to water bodies, or potential land-based discharges, do not degrade water quality below the standards adopted for the region.

For any proposed actions that encompass activities such as grading, construction, stormwater runoff, or potential discharge of any waste or materials, compliance with the Basin Plan’s standards is required, including compliance with regulatory controls under waste discharge requirements or NPDES permitting frameworks administered by the RWQCB. The Basin Plan further incorporates the SWRCB and RWQCB’s antidegradation policy, which mandates that existing high quality waters not be degraded and that any permitted discharges maintain or enhance water quality.

3.10.2.2.3 Construction General Permit

The California Construction General Permit (CGP), issued by the SWRCB, regulates stormwater discharges from construction activities that disturb one acre or more of soil, as well as smaller projects that are part of a larger common plan of development. The CGP operates under the NPDES program, authorized by Section 402 of the CWA, which requires permits for discharges of pollutants from point sources to waters of the U.S. The CGP requires the preparation and implementation of a SWPPP that identifies potential sources of sediment and pollutants, establishes BMPs to minimize discharges, and outlines inspection and maintenance procedures. Compliance with the CGP is intended to protect surface water quality by preventing erosion, sedimentation, and the transport of construction-related pollutants into nearby water bodies. The CGP provides a regulatory framework for evaluating and mitigating potential water quality impacts associated with grading, excavation, and other construction activities at a given Project site.

3.10.2.3 Local

3.10.3 IMPACT ANALYSIS

Based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, a Project could have a significant impact related to hydrology and water quality if the Project would:

a) Violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality;

b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin;

c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:

   i. Result in substantial erosion or siltation on or off site;

   ii. Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on or off site;

   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

   iv. Impede or redirect flood flows.

d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation; or

e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan.

3.10.3.1 Violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?

3.10.3.1.1 Construction and Operation

The Project is not anticipated to violate water quality standards or degrade surface or groundwater quality because construction activities would be limited in scale and duration and would incorporate erosion and sediment control measures consistent with state and regional water quality requirements; specifically, because the Project entails ground disturbance greater than one acre, preparation of a SWPPP will be required under the GCP. Short-term increases in turbidity or sediment mobilization may occur during ground disturbance, but these effects would be localized, temporary, and managed through standard BMPs identified in the SWPPP such as

stabilized construction entrances, perimeter controls, containment for potential pollutants, and timely site stabilization. No long-term operational discharges are proposed, and the Project would not generate wastewater requiring new or expanded treatment facilities. As a result, the Project would not conflict with applicable waste discharge requirements established within the Basin Plan. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?

Construction and Operation

The Project would not substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere with groundwater recharge because it would not rely on groundwater extraction for construction or operation and would not introduce new impermeable surfaces of a size or configuration that could meaningfully alter infiltration patterns. Post-construction stormwater management would adhere to CGP requirements, including three stormwater detention basins with a combined capacity of approximately 8,000 cubic feet. Any temporary compaction resulting from equipment use would be relieved through standard restoration practices, and the Project would not alter regional groundwater management conditions or interfere with sustainable groundwater management activities. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

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: Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site; Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site; 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 Impede or redirect flood flows?

Construction and Operation

The Project would not substantially alter existing drainage patterns or redirect concentrated flows in a manner that would cause erosion, sedimentation, or flooding on- or off-site. Although minor reshaping of ground surfaces or small-scale modifications to drainage features may occur, these changes would be designed to maintain existing hydrologic functions, avoid creating new points of concentrated runoff, and protect downstream resources. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?

Construction and Operation

The Project is not located in a flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zone in a manner that would increase the risk of pollutant release due to inundation, and it would not introduce new hazardous materials beyond those typical of construction. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

Construction and Operation

Through adherence to regulatory requirements, including compliance with the CGP and the Basin Plan, the Project would not obstruct implementation of local or regional water quality or groundwater management policies. Overall, with standard practices and regulatory compliance, the Project's effects on hydrology and water quality would be minor and transient and would not require mitigation to ensure impacts remain less than significant.

3.10.4 MITIGATION MEASURES

No mitigation measures required.

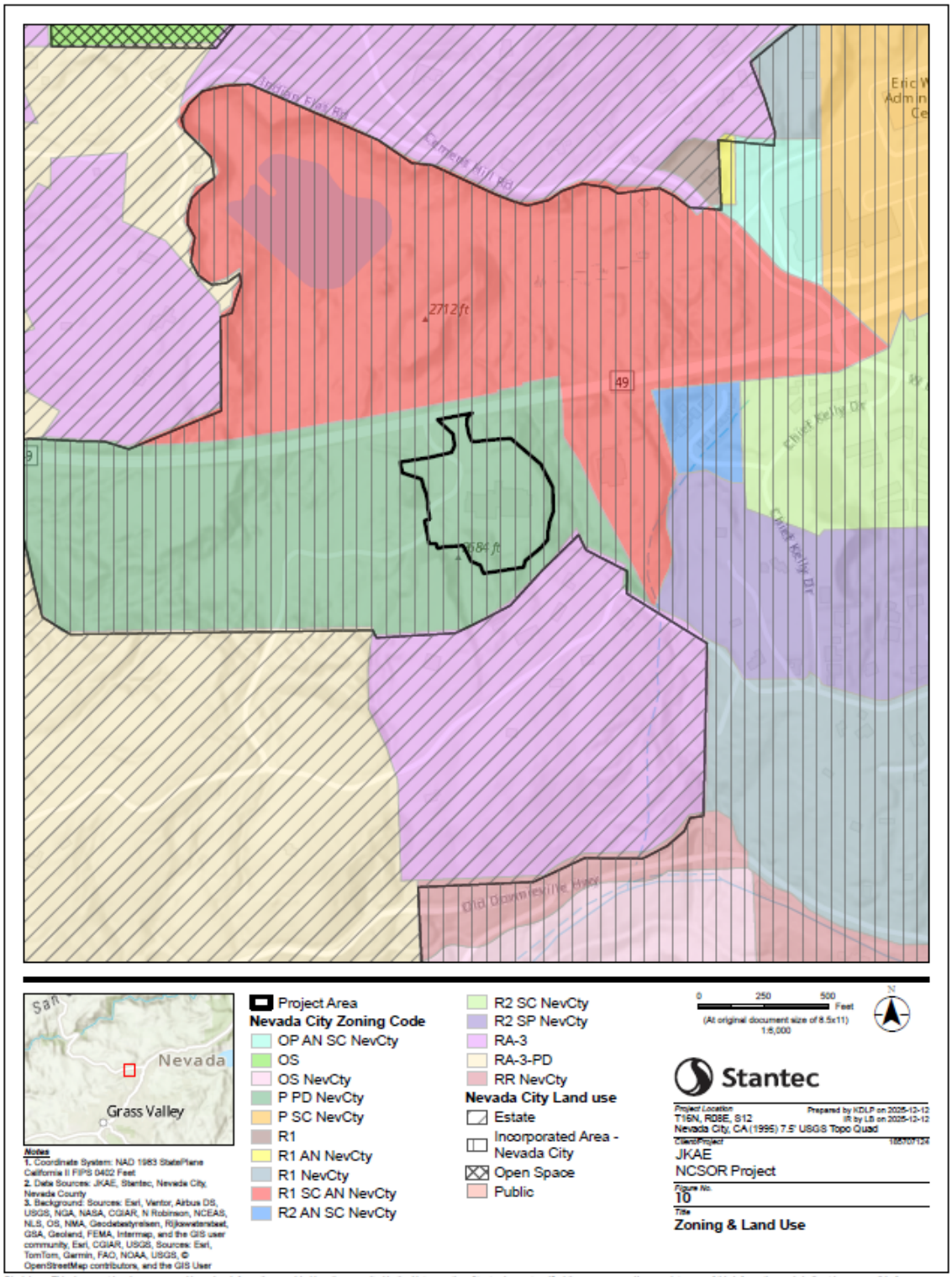
3.11 Land Use and Planning

LAND USE AND PLANNING Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.11.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

As shown on Figure 10 Zoning and Land Use, the Project site (APN 005-050-015) is zoned Public, PD Combining District, and SC Combining District. The Project site is designated in the Nevada City General Plan as Incorporated Area - Nevada City. Surrounding land to the proposed Project is predominantly zoned for Residential use. Residential uses are located nearby on secondary streets. This neighborhood and its infrastructure are suburban. The parcel is owned by the County.

Figure 10. Zoning and Land Use



3.11.2 REGULATORY SETTING

3.11.2.1 Federal

There are no federal plans, policies, regulations, or ordinances related to land use and planning that apply to the Project.

3.11.2.2 State

There are no state plans, policies, regulations, or ordinances related to land use and planning that apply to the Project.

3.11.2.3 Local

3.11.2.3.1 Nevada City Municipal Code

The Project site is zoned Public, PD Combining District, and SC Combining District. Chapter 17.60 of the Municipal Code addresses requirements for public zoning and Chapter 17.68 Article IV. of the Municipal Code addresses requirements for the PD Combining District. The purpose of the Public zoning is to provide zoning for areas occupied by federal, state, county, and city government uses, along with recreation areas and parks, cemeteries. This district is also intended to accommodate quasi-public and public utility uses, along with uses incidental to public services (Nevada City 1986). The purpose of the PD Combining District is to provide for greater flexibility in the design of integrated development in context with the general character of Nevada City which would not be otherwise possible through strict interpretation or application of district regulations (Nevada City 1986).The purpose of the SC Combining district is to protect the existing essential character of Nevada City within land areas which are adjacent to roads and highways which are indicated on the General Plan with the symbol for scenic corridors. These roadways are generally entryways to Nevada City which were recognized in the General Plan as being particularly important to protect the existing essential character of Nevada City, namely that of a small, compact historical town surrounded by green, wooded hills, by hiding development from view from the highways and preserving the existing tree cover to the greatest extent possible, and assuring visually pleasing corridors through design control.

3.11.2.3.2 Nevada City General Plan

The Nevada City General Plan was adopted March 24th, 1986. It was updated to incorporate Resolution 2009-49 (Land Use Element) And Sphere of Influence Boundaries Map, dated October 8, 2008 and 2014-2019 Housing Element Adopted January 2014. The General Plan Land Use and Economic Development section is to support Nevada City’s aim to grow and diversify economically, while still maintaining the good qualities so cherished by residents and visitors (Nevada City 1986).

3.11.3 IMPACT ANALYSIS

Based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, a Project could have a significant impact related to land use and planning if the Project would:

a) Physically divide an established community; or

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.

Physically divide an established community?

Construction and Operation

The Project involves the construction and operation of a Regional Law Enforcement Indoor Shooting Range on County-owned property at the existing SORDTF. The new facility would provide a secure, modern indoor firearms range to support the NCSO and other law enforcement agencies in meeting required firearms training and certification standards. The Project site is zoned Public, PD Combining District, and SC Combining District. No existing residential uses are located on the property. The Project would not entail the displacement of any residential uses, or the use of any land designated for residential uses. Therefore, the Project would have no impact and would not disrupt or physically divide an established community.

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?

Construction and Operation

The Project involves the construction and operation of a new Regional Law Enforcement Indoor Shooting Range on County-owned property at the existing SORDTF. The new facility would provide a secure, indoor firearms range to support the NCSO and other law enforcement agencies in meeting required firearms training and certification standards. The Project site is zoned Public, PD Combining District, and SC Combining District. Given the P zone is designated for federal, state, county, and city government uses, the Project for the NCSO would be in conformance with the City Municipal Code regulations related to Public zoning. The Project site is within the PD and SC combining districts. Both designations require a project to be a harmonious, integrated addition to the historic character of Nevada City. Therefore, the Project's installation of a new building and removal of trees has the potential to increase the intensity of the use and create impacts to environmental resources. The Nevada City General Plan Development and Annexation Objective is to "foster a compact rather than a scattered development pattern in order to preserve the existing impression of a tightly clustered, fine-grained core within tree-covered, rural surroundings, to prevent "strip" development along the highways, and reduce the extent and cost of public services." The Project site is being

constructed and operated on previously developed property and thus, does not conflict with the General Plan's objective. Therefore, the Project would not conflict with the adopted plans for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect and the Project would have no impact.

3.11.4 MITIGATION MEASURES

No mitigation measures required.

3.12 Mineral Resources

MINERAL RESOURCES Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.12.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The Project site is located within an existing public service complex off Kahele Court in Nevada City. It is bordered to the west by County-owned open space, to the north by SR-49, to the east by the Nevada City Elks Lodge, and to the south by residential parcels along American Hill Road. The site's topography and existing vegetation provide natural visual and sound screening from surrounding properties.

Nevada City has a long history of gold mining, with 16 major mines historically operating in the area. Originally settled in 1849 along Deer Creek during the California Gold Rush, Nevada City became one of the State's most prominent mining towns by 1850. Following the discovery of gold in Deer Creek, Nevada City quickly grew into a large and wealthy mining town, reaching a population of 10,000 in 1850 (Nevada City 2025b). Alongside nearby Grass Valley, this Sierra Foothill region emerged as California's leading gold mining area (Oakland Museum of California 1998). This mining boom significantly altered the landscape. The soils, topography, hydrology, and vegetation across the area were heavily shaped by the hydraulic mining activities that took place in and around Nevada City during the late 19th century. Miners used high-pressure hydraulic equipment to erode hillsides in search of gold and introduced large quantities of mercury into the environment to extract gold. Although many abandoned mines remain in Nevada City, none are currently operational. Nevada City is using Brownfields assessment and collaborating with federal and local partners including USEPA and non-profits to evaluate

whether the former mining sites are safe for future use as recreation areas. Assessments indicate that these historical sites likely contain mercury and arsenic (USEPA 2017).

In order to promote conservation of mineral resources through the state the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 was enacted and provides a framework for evaluating mineral resources through a classification system known as Mineral Resource Zones (MRZ). According to the California Geological Survey Mineral Land Classification Map of Concrete Aggregate in the Greater Sacramento Area Production-Consumption Region, the Project site is located within MRZ-3 (Areas containing known or inferred concrete aggregate resources of undetermined mineral resource significance) (CGS 2018). According to the Nevada County General Plan Master Environmental Inventory the Project site was within MRZ-2a or b (area where geological data indicates that significant measured or indicated [MRZ-2a], or inferred [MRZ-2b) resources are present) (Nevada County 1991). The Nevada City General Plan does not list any mineral resources for Nevada City (Nevada City 1986).

3.12.2 REGULATORY SETTING

3.12.2.1 Federal

3.12.2.1.1 The Mining and Minerals Policy Act of 1970

The Mining and Minerals Policy Act of 1970 established that promoting private enterprise in mining is a matter of national interest. It encourages private enterprise in the following ways:

- Developing stable and economically sound domestic mining and mineral related industries.
- Ensuring the orderly and efficient use of mineral resources to meet industrial, security, and environmental needs.
- Advancing research to promote wise and efficient use of resources.
- Advancing research and development of mining and reclamation methods to reduce the impact of mining on the environment.

This act formally recognized the significance of mining and mineral resources and recognized that public policy should evaluate these resources.

3.12.2.2 State

3.12.2.2.1 Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975

The Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 is a California statute designed to manage the State's mineral resources. Its primary goal is to establish a policy that supports both the responsible production and conservation of these resources, while minimizing environmental impacts. The Surface Mining and Reclamation Act provides a framework for evaluating mineral

resources through a classification system known as MRZs, which identify the known or potential presence and significance of mineral deposits (DOC 1975).

3.12.2.3 Local

There are no local plans, policies, regulations, or ordinances related to mineral resources that apply to the Project.

3.12.3 IMPACT ANALYSIS

Based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, a Project could have a significant impact related to mineral resources if the Project would:

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; or

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.

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?

Construction and Operation

Although operating mines exist within the County, there are currently no operating mines within Nevada City or near the Project site. The Project is within MRZ-3, however, the site has already been developed. All construction activity and material storage will occur within the existing SORDTF parcel. The impact on mineral resources that would be of value to the region and the residents of the State by the proposed Project would be less than significant.

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?

Construction and Operation

As discussed further in Section 4.11 Land Use and Planning, the Project site is zoned Public, PD Combining District, and SC Combining District by Nevada City. Mining is not listed as a permitted use within Public zoning or as an intended use in the Nevada City General Plan. Therefore, there would be no impact.

3.12.4 MITIGATION MEASURES

No mitigation measures required.

3.13 Noise

NOISE Would the project result in:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels.	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan, or where such a plan has not been adopted within 2 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.13.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Noise is typically defined as unwanted sound in the environment. This definition conveys a subjective reaction to the characteristics of the physical phenomenon of noise. Individuals perceive the relative magnitude of sound sensation in subjective terms, such as “noisiness” or “loudness.” While elevated noise levels can cause physiological harm, environmental noise more commonly affects overall well-being by contributing to psychological stress and irritation. These health impacts often arise when noise disrupts routine activities, such as sleep, talking, recreation, relaxation, and tasks requiring concentration. Noise may be considered objectionable when it is perceived as disturbing or annoying, whether due to its pitch or loudness.

The overall noise level within a given noise environment is referred to as the "ambient” noise level. Ambient noise can originate from several of sources, including mobile sources, such as automobiles, trucks, trains, and airplanes, and stationary sources, such as construction sites, machinery, and industrial operations. Other contributing noise sources, often referred to as “background” sources, may include the sound of birds, people talking, vehicles passing, or audio from televisions and radios.

Sound pressure magnitude is measured and quantified using a logarithmic scale which gives the level of sound in decibels (dB). Environmental sound levels are typically measured in A-weighted decibels, or dBA, which takes into account the sensitivity of human hearing to various frequencies in the sound spectrum. Generally, a difference of 3 dB is barely perceptible to the human ear, while a difference of 10 dB is perceived as a doubling of loudness. Table 19 lists

several examples of sound levels associated with common situations. A commonly used statistical tool to measure the ambient noise level is the average, or equivalent, sound level, which is the sound level corresponding to a steady-state, A-weighted sound level containing the same total energy as a time-varying signal over a given period (usually one hour) (Federal Transit Authority 2018).

Factors that affect the transmission of noise between the noise source and the receptor include:

- Line of Sight. Physical barriers, such as topography, sound walls, and other structures, between a noise source and recipient can provide varying degrees of noise attenuation, especially when placed near the noise source.
- Distance. A reduction in noise level of roughly 6 dBA with each doubling of distance from a noise source, depending on the hardness of intervening surfaces.

Table 19. Typical Noise Levels

Common Outdoor Activities	Noise Level (dBA)	Common Indoor Activities
	110	Rock Band
Jet Fly-over at 300 m (1,000 feet)	100	
Gas Lawn Mower at 1 m (3 feet)	90	
Diesel Truck at 15 m (50 feet), at 80 km/hr (50 mph)	80	Food Blender at 1 m (3 feet) Garbage Disposal at 1 m (3 feet)
Noisy Urban Area, Daytime Gas Lawn Mower, 30 m (100 feet)	70	Vacuum Cleaner at 3 m (10 feet)
Commercial Area Heavy Traffic at 90 m (300 feet)	60	Normal Speech at 1 m (3 feet)
Quiet Urban Daytime	50	Large Business Office Dishwasher in Next Room
Quiet Urban Nighttime	40	Theater, Large Conference Room (Background)
Quiet Suburban Nighttime	30	Library
Quiet Rural Nighttime	20	Bedroom at Night, Concert Hall (Background)
	10	Broadcast/Recording Studio

Common Outdoor Activities	Noise Level (dBA)	Common Indoor Activities
Lowest Threshold of Human Hearing	0	Lowest Threshold of Human Hearing

Source: Caltrans 2013.
Key:
dBA = A weighted decibel
km/hr =kilometers per hour
m = meter
mph = miles per hour

A discharging firearm can produce at peak between 150 to 165 decibels (unweighted), while the average daily operational noise levels at an indoor shooting range vary between 124 and 128 dBA (National Shooting Sports Foundation n.d.)

3.13.1.1 Existing Project Setting

The Project site is located within an existing public service complex off Kahele Court It is bordered to the west by County-owned open space, to the north by SR-49, to the east by the Nevada City Elks Lodge, and to the south by residential parcels along American Hill Road. The site's existing vegetation provide natural and sound screening from surrounding properties. The design of the indoor range and its supporting infrastructure emphasizes minimizing disturbance and noise both during construction and ongoing operations.

Soundscapes in the area include noise from passing vehicles, wildlife noises, and nearby residents. The nearest sensitive receptors would include the residences along American Hill Road, located approximately 200 feet south.

An Acoustical Design Plan was designed in October 2025 for the proposed Project which intends to meet the 75 dBA limit at 25 feet around the Range building envelope and provide options to reduce the peak noise from the gunshots to be similar to traffic noise at the nearest residences. Noise monitor locations were taken approximately 500 feet south from and with a clear line of sight of SR-49, and approximately 600 south feet from the highway in a small valley behind a mound

The daytime noise code limit is 75 dBA 25 feet from the building envelope, which equates to 52 dBA line-of-sight at the nearest property line 200 feet south. The measurement results showed that with the topography at this location, approximately 2,700 feet msl, the mounds and hills reduce the noise by about 8 to 10 dB from traffic noise. This same level of noise reduction is anticipated for the Project and other operations. The average daytime traffic noise level at the red monitoring location was 40 dBA (Tenor Engineering Group 2025). Ambient noise generated by roadway traffic is generally characterized as continuous and non-impulsive. Although traffic volumes rise and fall throughout the day, these changes occur gradually, with a relatively steady hum that blends into the existing acoustic environment. In contrast, noise from the proposed indoor shooting range would be intermittent, high-intensity, and impulsive. Although the

proposed Project would be located indoors, firearm discharge produces short, abrupt, high-energy events that differ fundamentally from the continuous nature of traffic noise. Any exterior noise that escapes the building would occur only during active training sessions and would be temporally limited rather than continuous.

3.13.2 REGULATORY SETTING

3.13.2.1 Federal

There are no federal plans, policies, regulations, or ordinances related to noise that apply to the Project.

3.13.2.2 State

There are no State plans, policies, regulations, or ordinances related to noise that apply to the Project.

3.13.2.3 Local

3.13.2.3.1 Nevada City Municipal Code

Chapter 8.20 – Noise Control

The Nevada City Noise Ordinance notes the following limits:

A. Nighttime (9:00 PM – 7:00 AM) noise levels cannot exceed 60 dBA from Nonresidential source to Residential receivers to the south and 70 dBA to the Nonresidential receiver (undeveloped to the west) when measured at the receiver's property line.

B. Daytime noise levels cannot exceed 75 dBA when measured at 25-feet from the source. This has been interpreted to be at distance of 25 feet from the building envelope on the south and west sides of the proposed building envelope.

3.13.2.4 International Green Construction Code

Based on design guidelines adopted by the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design v4.1 and the International Green Construction Code, the background noise in the Classroom and office should not exceed 35 dBA / 60 C-weighted decibels (dBC) from HVAC systems or 45 dBA / 70 dBC from the firing range activities (USGBC 2015, IgCC 2021). These rooms should also have reverberation time less than 0.6 seconds at speech frequencies.

3.13.3 IMPACT ANALYSIS

Based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, a Project could have a significant impact related to noise if the Project would:

a) Generate a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies;

b) Generate excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels; or

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 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport, expose people residing or working on the Project site to excessive noise levels.

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?

Construction

The construction phase represents the worst-case condition for short-term construction noise levels that may occur at the Project site. Project construction will include site preparation, grading, utility installation, foundation work, building erection, interior build-out, and finish work. The various construction operations would change the character of the noise generated at the Project site and therefore, the noise level as construction progresses. However, construction noise would be temporary, intermittent, and would vary depending on the nature of the construction activities being performed. Additionally, working hours will be 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday, with no weekend or holiday work unless specifically approved by NCSO and/or Nevada City, which would further reduce potential noise impacts to the surrounding area. Generation of temporary noise would be less than significant.

Operation

As noted above, the site's existing vegetation provides natural, visual, and acoustic screening from surrounding properties. After tree removal within the Project site footprint, overall noise levels would not be expected to change substantially due to the setback distance from surrounding properties and remaining vegetation. Additionally, the design of the indoor range and its supporting infrastructure is intended to minimize disturbance and noise during both construction and ongoing operations. Typical hours of operation are weekdays from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM, which are not expected to result in significant disruption to the surrounding area. Given the extensive acoustical design plan (Tenor Engineering Group 2025), permanent ambient noise generation detectable from the nearest sensitive receptors is not anticipated for the proposed Project's operations. Impacts would be less than significant.

Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Heavy construction equipment will be used during Project construction activities including site preparation, grading, utility installation, foundation work, building erection, interior build-out, and finish work. Although surrounding residential uses at the Project site could be sensitive to

intermittent and temporary noise generated during construction, construction noises and construction-related vibration are not operational, ongoing, or permanent to the immediate area. Impacts from the Project related to excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels would be less than significant.

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 2 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?

The Project site is not located within the vicinity of a private airstrip, within an airport land use plan, or within 2 miles of a public airport and would therefore not expose people residing or working in the Project area to excessive noise levels. Therefore, there is no impact from the Project.

3.13.4 MITIGATION MEASURES

No mitigation measures required.

3.14 Population and Housing

POPULATION AND HOUSING Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.14.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Nevada City represents about 3.3% of Nevada County's population, with 3,347 residents out of 100,177 in 2024. Its population growth has been gradual, reflecting the County's overall trend of steady but modest increases. Seniors aged 65 and older make up 29% of the County's population, and veterans account for 7%; these proportions are reflected in Nevada City's population as well, given its integration within the County (Nevada County 2025a). The County saw its highest growth between the 1950s and 1990s, and preliminary data indicates that the population will remain stable. The incorporated areas of the County are home to 33% of the population, with 17% in Truckee, 13% in Grass Valley, and 3% in Nevada City. The remaining 67% of Nevada County residents live in outlying unincorporated areas (Nevada County 2021).

Nevada City's population is economically diverse, and residents prioritize preserving the community's unique character, including its mix of housing, businesses, and high quality of life. Historic preservation is a top priority and ordinances protect not only the downtown district, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, but homes in the residential areas as well. This commitment to preservation, combined with geographic, topographic and infrastructure constraints, has kept growth slow and manageable. Over the past 25 years, Nevada City has added about 351 residents, and due to limited vacant land, growth is expected to continue at a similar pace through 2027 (Nevada City 2019).

3.14.2 REGULATORY SETTING

3.14.2.1 Federal

There are no federal plans, policies, regulations, or ordinances related to population and housing that apply to the Project.

3.14.2.2 State

State law requires every jurisdiction to adopt a Housing Element as part of its General Plan. The Nevada City Housing Element is discussed below.

3.14.2.3 Local

Nevada City General Plan – Housing Element

The Housing Element of Nevada City's General Plan includes objectives, policies and programs focused on local housing needs. The following statistics are extracted from the City of Nevada's General Plan – Housing Element, most recently updated in December 2019 (Nevada City 2019).

- Nevada City's population is evenly distributed between males and females with a median age of 47.6 years old. The age group 65-74 was the largest age cohort, representing 18% of the population in 2017, which experienced over a doubling of population since 2000. The population is primarily white, with over 88% representing themselves as having a white ethnic origin. However, Nevada City did experience growth in other races, such as slight increases in Hispanic and Asian and Other race categories that have created greater ethnic diversity from the 95% white identified for 2000.
- Between 2010-2020, Nevada City's median income dropped by $11,578. The highest income level ($50,000 to $74,999) comprises 21.4% of the population. Nevada City income levels continued to be higher than neighboring cities (Grass Valley and Colfax) and lower than Nevada County, Truckee and Auburn. Approximately 58% of Nevada City's population was employed when this data was collected. Education, health and social services continue to be the largest employment sectors involving 21.9% of the local workforce, the second

largest employment area continues to be in retail trade at 12.4%, and agricultural jobs accounted for 2.5%.

- As compared to Nevada County and the State of California, there is a significantly reduced number of family households in Nevada City and a relatively greater number of non-family households (persons living alone). Approximately 24.4% of Nevada City's households had incomes of less than $25,000 in 2017. A greater number of renter households (46.9%) had incomes less than $25,000, as compared to the 12.2% for ownership households. About 49.7% of all households paid in excess of 30% of their income for shelter. About 23.8% of these households pay more than 50% towards shelter. The median house price rose by 13% between 2000 and 2010. In sharp contrast, rental prices increased by 64% over the same period.

- The latest data indicate that Nevada City had a 7.3% vacancy rate. Of the 106 units that were counted as vacant in 2017, over 56% were used for seasonal, recreational or for occasional use. However, 43% or 46 units were vacant rental units. In 2017, over 74% of the housing units in Nevada City consisted of single-family dwellings, while 17% of the housing units were multi-family units with 1.4% being mobile homes. About 52% of the dwelling units in Nevada City were built prior to 1939. This would generally indicate a need for significant housing rehabilitation. However, based on a housing conditions survey of over 500 dwellings in 2013, Nevada City's overall housing was in good condition.

- Between 2010 and 2016, the senior population in Nevada City increased by 30% from 413 to 538 persons. However, senior households comprise a smaller proportion of the total households within Nevada City. The latest state data indicates there were 538 senior households in Nevada City, constituting about 40% of the total 1,351 Nevada City households. There were approximately 205 family households with children 18 years old and under in Nevada City. Of these households, 133 or 9.8% are headed by single females. Of the 954 households reported to be at poverty levels in Nevada City in 2017, 481 were families (68.8%). Of these, 133 were female-headed households.

3.14.3 IMPACT ANALYSIS

Based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, a Project could have a significant impact related to population and housing if the Project would:

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); or,

b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

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)?

The purpose of the Proposed Project is to provide a dedicated indoor firearms training facility for the NCSO and partner agencies. Operations will be overseen by NCSO training officers and range staff, supported by administrative personnel. The building will not be permanently staffed; instead, Sheriff's Office personnel will be onsite intermittently during scheduled training sessions. The number of employees working within the NCSO will not change or increase. No direct or indirect mechanisms for substantial unplanned population growth are present in any phase of the Project. Therefore, there would be no impact.

Would the project displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

The SORDTF is primarily an already developed site with existing buildings, paved parking, maintained open space, and ornamental landscaping. Construction activities are confined to the non-residential SORDTF property, with no impact on existing housing units or residents. Construction would occur on land that is not currently used for residential purposes, and the Project site does not extend into adjacent neighborhoods. Operation of the site would not require removal or conversion of housing, nor would it necessitate the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. The Project does not affect affordable housing stock or displace vulnerable populations. Therefore, there would be no impact.

3.14.4 MITIGATION MEASURES

No mitigation measures required.

3.15 Public Services

PUBLIC SERVICES Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
i. Fire protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
ii. Police protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
iii. Schools?	☐	☐	☐	☒
iv. Parks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
v. Other Public Facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.15.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Refer to Figure 11 – Public Services and Recreation for the locations of public services surrounding the Project.

3.15.1.1 Fire Department

The Nevada City Fire Department has a partnership with the City of Grass Valley Fire Department and the Nevada County Consolidated Fire District to form a "Joint Operational Area." The crews from the agencies work and train together and have common operations and policies. Firefighters from each of these departments are able to work at all seven stations maintaining staffing and service to the communities they serve.

The Nevada County Consolidated Fire District is a consolidated agency which consists of five separate fire districts in western Nevada County. The agencies work as one full-service emergency response agency with full-time paid staff. Their service area covers 143 square miles which is broken into 5 service areas and four fully staffed stations and a repair shop. The Project site is located approximately 0.8 miles southwest from the Nevada County Consolidated Fire District Station 84.

The City of Grass Valley Fire Department, located at 125 E Main St, Grass Valley, CA, is a neighboring municipal fire agency that provides emergency response services for more than 12,000 permanent residents and responds to more than 4,500 calls for service per year. The Grass Valley Fire Department provides contract staffing for the Nevada City Fire Department.

3.15.1.2 Nevada City Police Department

The Nevada City Police Department located in City Hall at 317 Broad Street, Nevada City, CA provides services to the entire Nevada City community. The department consists of a Chief of Police, one Lieutenant, two Sergeants, six Officers, one K9, one Records Coordinator, one Code Compliance Officer, one Parking Enforcement Officer, and three Reserve Police Officers. Officers and Civilian staff patrol Nevada City in vehicles as well as on foot and bicycle (Nevada City 2025c). Dispatch and detention facilities are provided under contract by the NCSO.

3.15.1.3 Nevada County Sheriff's Department

NCSO, located at 950 Maidu Avenue, Suite 280, Nevada City, CA, provides law enforcement to all the unincorporated areas of Nevada County, including areas within the General Plan area that fall outside Nevada City's jurisdictional boundaries (Nevada City 1986). Sheriff's services include patrol, dispatch, investigations, search and rescue, boat patrol, correctional facilities, coroner, and court security services. The department is comprised of four divisions, the Administrative Support Division, the Corrections Division, Finance Units, and Operations Division. Together, these divisions provide support services in units including civil, communications/dispatch, evidence, personnel/training, and records; manage the operations

and services within the County Jail; and oversee contract management, grant funding, budget development and reports, and public administration (Nevada County 2025b).

3.15.1.4 California Highway Patrol

The California Highway Patrol provides statewide traffic and emergency services to Nevada City. The local office is located in nearby Grass Valley which serves Nevada City and the Sierra Foothills, an area of approximately 85,000 residents. The California Highway Patrol coordinates with both Nevada City's Police and Fire Departments for public safety services (California Highway Patrol 2025).

3.15.1.5 Schools

The Nevada City School District is composed of Deer Creek Elementary School and Seven Hills Middle School. Deer Creek Elementary School has approximately 300 students and is located at 805 Lindley Avenue, approximately one mile southeast of the Project site. Seven Hills Middle School is located at 700 Hoover Lane, approximately 0.6 mile south of the Project site (Nevada City School District 2025).

3.15.1.6 Nevada City Parks

Nevada City has three parks: Pioneer Park, Calanan Park, and Robinson Plaza. Pioneer Park is 16-acres and is the only active park with amenities and facilities that can be rented to the public, including Seaman's Lodge a rental facility. All are located within a mile southeast of the Project site (Nevada City 2025d).

3.15.1.7 Other Public Facilities

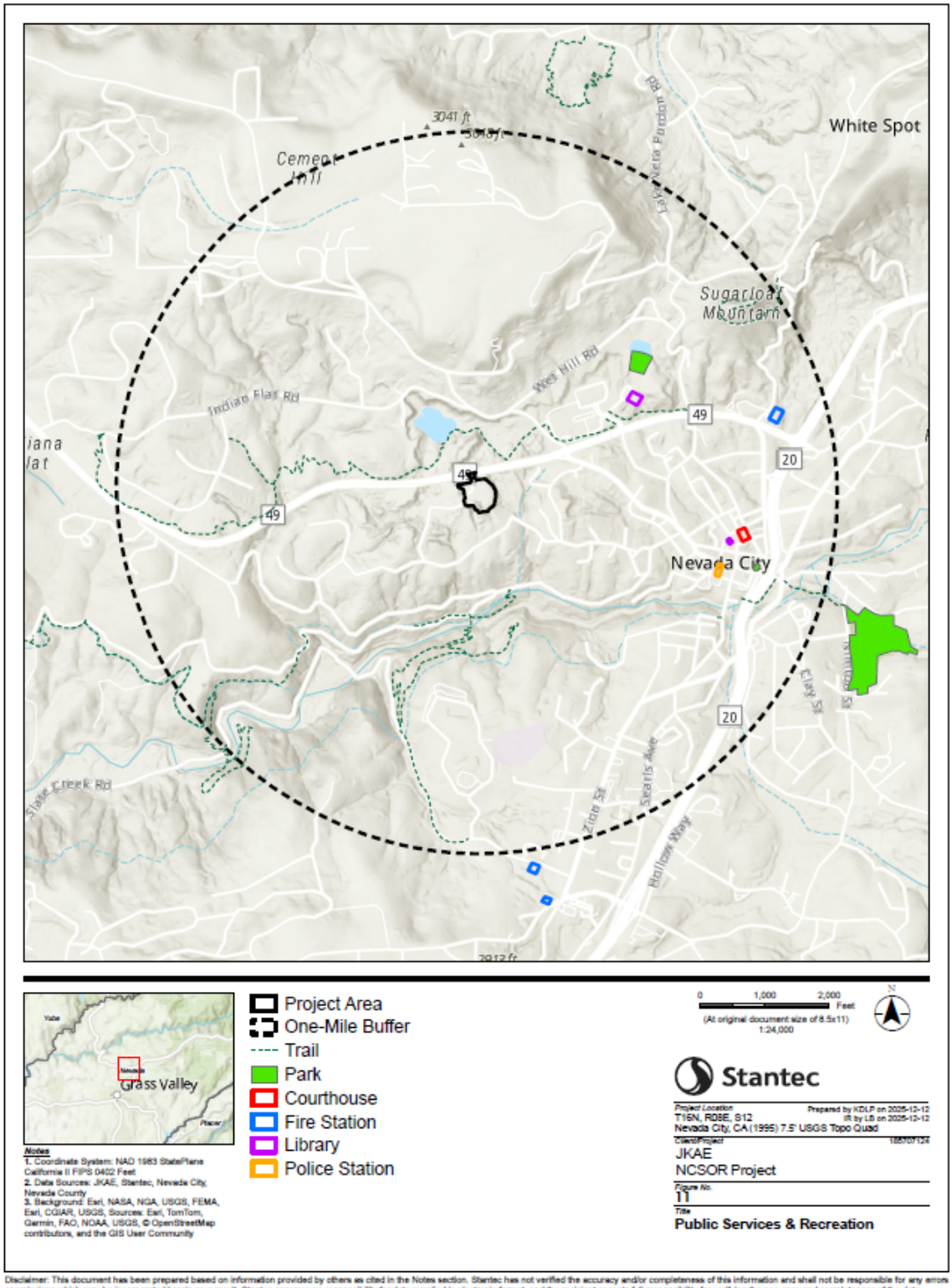
The Project site is serviced by public water from the Nevada Irrigation District, and by the Nevada City Sewer District for wastewater.

Nevada City owns two museums that are operated by the Nevada County Historical Society: the Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railroad Museum and the Firehouse Number 1 Museum.

The Madelyn Helling Library is the main branch of the Nevada County Library system, located at 980 Helling Way. The Library includes a Collaborative Technology Center, a community room, study rooms, and an outdoor Amphitheater (Nevada County Library 2025).

The Recreation Hub, or "Rec Hub," is a small building located across from Seaman's Lodge at Pioneer Park. The Rec Hub has sports/play equipment that the public can visit and use while at Pioneer Park. It includes a small community garden and posting boards for city and public recreation events. The Rec Hub also serves as the Wildfire Preparedness Demonstration House.

Figure 11. Public Services and Recreation



Disclaimer: This document has been prepared based on information provided by others as cited in the Notes section. Stantec has not verified the accuracy and/or completeness of this information and shall not be responsible for any errors or omissions which may be incorporated herein as a result. Stantec assumes no responsibility for data supplied in electronic format, and the recipient accepts full responsibility for verifying the accuracy and completeness of the data.

3.15.2 REGULATORY SETTING

3.15.2.1 Federal

There are no federal plans, policies, regulations, or ordinances related to public services that apply to the Project.

3.15.2.2 State

There are no state plans, policies, regulations, or ordinances related to public services that apply to the Project.

3.15.2.3 Local

3.15.2.3.1 Nevada County General Plan

The Nevada County General Plan includes the following specific objectives and policies that are applicable to the proposed Project as it relates to Public Services. The Public Facilities and Services Element addresses the changing public facility and service needs of Nevada County and provides guidance for their logical and timely extension to keep pace with County growth. These elements contain the following objectives:

Objective 3.2: Ensure that the capacity, availability, financing, and capability of public services and facilities are sufficient to meet levels of service requirements for development.

Objective 3.4: Develop and operate public facilities in an environmentally sound way (Nevada County, 1995d).

3.15.2.3.2 City of Nevada City General Plan

The City of Nevada City General Plan includes the following specific objective and policy within Land Use and Economic Development Policies that are applicable to the proposed Project as it relates to Public Services:

Public Service/Fiscal Objective: Encourage a rate of growth which does not exceed Nevada City's ability to provide necessary public services or the ability of the local economy to such growth.

Policy: Encourage commercial and employment-generating uses which provide tax revenues and employment to help support planned residential growth, including auxiliary public facilities and services (Nevada City 1986).

3.15.3 IMPACT ANALYSIS

Based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, a Project could have a significant impact related to noise if the Project would:

a) Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

   i. Fire protection;

   ii. Polic protection;

   iii. Schools;

   iv. Parks; or

   v. Other public facilities.

3.15.3.1 Fire

The Project would comply with all applicable Nevada City Fire Department standards and policies and would not result in the need for any new facilities to maintain performance objectives for fire protection. Therefore, the Project would have no impact.

3.15.3.2 Police

Existing law enforcement services in the area would adequately meet the demand for police protection services under the Project and would not require additional services beyond those currently provided. The Project would result in beneficial impacts on police services by providing a dedicated indoor firearms training facility for the NCSO and parter agencies. Currently, the Sheriff's Office relies on external facilities approximately 45 minutes away, which limits availability and increases logistical challenges. By establishing a local facility, the Project would enhance officer training efficiency and safety, reduce travel time and costs, and provide an indoor, controlled environment. Therefore, the Project would have no impact.

3.15.3.3 Schools

The Project would not result in any population increases, or an increase in housing. Therefore, there would be no impact.

3.15.3.4 Parks

The Project would not remove any parks during construction or operation. The Project would not entail the construction of residential or commercial uses that would result in an increase in housing or park usage. No new employees would be generated. Therefore, there would be no impact.

3.15.3.5 Other Public Facilities

The Project is not anticipated to adversely affect Nevada City's overall ability to provide services citywide, nor would it create any significant increase in demand for such services. Therefore, the Project would have no impact.

3.15.4 MITIGATION MEASURES

No mitigation measures required.

3.16 Recreation

RECREATION Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.16.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The Project site does not have any public or private trails onsite. The nearest trail, Hirschman's Pond Trail, is approximately 600 feet north of the Project site and across SR-49. Hirschman Trail is a 2.1-mile natural pedestrian hiking trail maintained by the Bear Yuba Land Trust (Nevada County 2025c). The nearest park, Calanan Park, is 0.83 miles southeast of the Project in downtown Nevada City. Recreation resources are identified in Figure 11, Public Services and Recreation.

3.16.2 REGULATORY SETTING

3.16.2.1 Federal

There are no federal plans, policies, regulations, or ordinances related to recreation that apply to the Project.

3.16.2.2 State

There are no state plans, policies, regulations, or ordinances related to recreation that apply to the Project.

3.16.2.3 Local

3.16.2.3.1 Nevada City General Plan

The Nevada City General Plan establishes goals to address the needs of both residents and non-residents when planning park areas. It also promotes the acquisition, dedication, and conservation of potential open space preserves, public park sites, and trail easements (Nevada City 1986). The following goals are applicable to Recreation:

- Consider allocating part of the cost of maintaining and improving the city park system to non-residents.
- Require new development to contribute to improvement of the open space system by park dedication or in-lieu fees as a condition of approval.
- Investigate opportunities for extension of public trails along Deer Creek and Little Deer Creek, especially in connection with features of historic importance.
- Ensure preservation of important natural areas by reclassifying to "Public" or "Open Space Preserve" use. "Public" classification is appropriate if the area is being considered for parks and recreational use, whereas "Open Space Preserve" enables conservation of areas with natural resource value, without requiring outright acquisition.
- Consider amending the zoning ordinance to require mandatory open space areas and/or site coverage limitations.

3.16.3 IMPACT ANALYSIS

Based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, a Project could have a significant impact related to recreation if the Project would:

a) 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; or

b) Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

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?

Construction and Operation

The proposed Project involves the construction and operation of a new Regional Law Enforcement Indoor Shooting Range on County-owned property at the existing SORDTF. The new facility would provide a secure, indoor firearms range to support the NCSO and other law

enforcement agencies in meeting required firearms training and certification standards. As stated above, the Project site does not have any trails or recreation resources onsite. Construction would not shut down or restrict access to the Hirschman's Pond Trail and is unlikely to permanently increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities to the extent that substantial physical deterioration would occur or be accelerated. Therefore, there would be no impact, and no mitigation measures are required.

Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

Construction and Operation

The proposed Project involves the construction and operation of a new Regional Law Enforcement Indoor Shooting Range on County-owned property at the existing SORDTF. The new facility would provide a secure, indoor firearms range to support the NCSO and other law enforcement agencies in meeting required firearms training and certification standards. As stated above, the Project site does not have any trails or recreation resources onsite nor does the Project require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities. In addition, all construction work would be conducted in compliance with applicable local, state, and federal environmental regulations. Therefore, there would be no impact, and no mitigation measures are required.

3.16.4 MITIGATION MEASURES

No mitigation measures required.

3.17 Transportation

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

3.17.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The Project site is located within the existing SORDTF complex at 434 Kahele Court in Nevada City. Site access is provided via an existing driveway on SR-49 approximately 0.25 mile west of the SR-49 and West Broad Street intersection, which is controlled by a stop sign on the driveway approach. SR-49 contains one lane in each direction and carries approximately 2,500 ADT.

Vehicle trip generation estimates were prepared for the Project using the expected daily occupancy information provided above and assumes conservatively that all users drive alone or are dropped off, 75% of vehicles arrive during the AM and PM peak hours and 50% of vehicles leave during midday for lunch etc. (Stantec 2025c). Table 20 below summarizes the trip generation estimates of the Project. As shown, the Project is expected to generate 75 ADT, with 23 trips occurring during the AM peak hour and 23 trips during the PM peak hour.

Table 20. Trip Generation Summary

# of				AM Peak Hour			PM Peak Hour		
Land Use	Occupants		ADT	In	Out	Total	In	Out	Total
Project site	30 persons	Trip rate Trips	2.5 75	0.75 [a] 23	0.15 [b] 5	0,90 28	0.15 5	0.75 23	0.90 23

Notes:
[a] 75% of trips arrive during the AM peak hour and 75% of trips depart during the PM peak hour.
[b] 20% of arrivals are drop-off (20% of 75% = 15%).
Key:
ADT = Average Daily Traffic

3.17.1.1 Roadway System

SR-49 is a north-south highway that extends the length of California's Sierra Nevada foothills from Sierra County in the north to Madera County in the south. SR-49 is a four-lane freeway from Grass Valley south of Nevada City to the SR-49/SR-20 split at the north end of Nevada City. SR-49 is a two-lane highway west of the split with SR-20. SR-49 serves as the commute corridor between Nevada City and the cities of Grass Valley and Auburn. SR-49 also serves as the main connection to most of the state by providing access to Interstate 80 in Auburn. The speed limit adjacent to the Project site is 50 mph.

SR-20 is an east-west highway that extends from SR-1 next to the Pacific Coast near Fort Brag to Interstate 80 just west of the Sierra Nevada crest at Donner Pass. SR-20 is a four-lane highway from Grass Valley south of Nevada City to the SR-49/SR-20 split at the north end of Nevada City. SR-20 is a two-lane highway north of the split with SR-49, located approximately 0.9 miles east of the Project. SR-49/SR-20 serves as the commute corridor between Nevada City and the City of Grass Valley.

3.17.1.2 Active Transportation

Active transportation refers to non-motorized means of travel such as walking or biking. No sidewalks or dedicated bike lanes are currently provided in the vicinity of the Project site, except for the SR-49 shoulders which may be used by bicyclists.

3.17.1.3 Transit Facilities

Nevada County Connects provides local and regional fixed-route bus service to the cities, towns, and unincorporated areas of Western Nevada County. Route 1 provides a connection between Nevada City and Grass Valley, and the nearest bus stops to the Project are located on the Rood Government Center, located at 950 Maidu Avenue, and at the Broad Street/Chief Kelly Drive intersection (approximately 0.5 mile northeast and 0.3 mile east from the Project, respectively) (Nevada County Connects 2025).

3.17.2 REGULATORY SETTING

3.17.2.1 Federal

There are no federal plans, policies, regulations, or ordinances related to transportation that apply to the Project.

3.17.2.2 State

3.17.2.2.1 California Department of Transportation

Caltrans is responsible for planning, designing, constructing, operating, and maintaining all state-owned roadways. The state highways in the vicinity of the Site are SR-20 and SR-49.

3.17.2.2.2 Senate Bill (SB 743)

CEQA guidelines (Section 15064.3) recommend the use of Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as the primary metric to identify a transportation impact for land use and transportation projects. Generally, SB 743 moves away from using delay-based level of service as the primary metric for identifying a project's significant impact within CEQA, to instead use VMT.

SB 743 required the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI, formerly the Office of Planning and Research [OPR]) to establish recommendations for identifying and mitigating transportation impacts within CEQA. In response, LCI prepared a document referred to in its Environmental Impact Report as OPR's Technical Advisory. LCI's Technical Advisory recommends methodologies for quantifying VMT, significance thresholds for identifying a transportation impact, and screening criteria to quickly identify if a project can be presumed to have a less than significant impact. Lead agencies can adopt local guidelines appropriate for their jurisdiction. This analysis has been prepared in accordance with the LCI guidelines.

VMT screening criteria is used to identify if a project is expected to have a less-than-significant impact without conducting a project-level VMT analysis. The screening criteria outlined in the OPR guidelines is based on factors such as project size, project type and project location. More specifically, categories include small project screening, neighborhood-serving retail screening, affordable housing screening, and transit supportive projects screening. The criteria and threshold used for each category, as adopted by Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC), is summarized in Table 21.

Table 21. VMT Screening Threshold

VMT Screening
The project is consistent with the General Plan.
The project is consistent with the RTP.
The project fulfills one of the following: • The project is a local-serving retail project, 50,000 square feet or less • The project is a residential or work-related land use located in a TAZ with similar land uses, and the project is in a TAZ with total VMT per service population equal to or less than 14.3% below the subarea mean • The project is residential-related land use located in a TAZ with home-based VMT per resident equal to or less than 14.3% below the subarea mean • The project is work-related land use located in a TAZ with home-based work VMT per employee equal to or less than 14.3% below the subarea mean? • The project is located in the western Nevada County travel forecasting model area and generates less than 630 VMT per day

Key:
RTP = Regional Transportation Plan
VMT = vehicle miles traveled

3.17.2.3 Local

3.17.2.3.1 Nevada County Transportation Commission

The NCTC is a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Agency for Nevada County. NCTC coordinates transportation planning with the citizens and decision-makers of Grass Valley, Nevada City, Nevada County, the Town of Truckee and Caltrans. NCTC identifies transportation needs, proposes solutions, and assists in implementing projects to create a balanced regional transportation system while protecting the rural qualities and historic character of Nevada County. The RTP documents the transportation policy, actions, and funding recommendations that will meet the short- and long-term access and mobility needs of Nevada County residents over the next twenty years (Nevada County Regional Transportation Plan 2025). This document is designed to guide the systematic development of a comprehensive multi-modal transportation system for Nevada County. This 2025 update of the Nevada County RTP reflects the latest project funding and planning assumptions, updates regional issues and policies, and revises performance measures for tracking plan progress.

3.17.2.3.2 Nevada City General Plan

The General Plan Circulation Element provides a strategy to address infrastructure needs for the circulation of people and goods. Nevada City's prime circulation goal is to emphasize the importance of preserving the "eccentricities" of the road network as an integral part of the special character of the city and to coordinate with the County in fulfilling the current RTP. The existing policy is that County Regional Transportation Plan should be used as a basis for Nevada City Circulation Element, since it draws on a database and funding far beyond Nevada City's resources.

3.17.3 IMPACT ANALYSIS

Based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, a Project could have a significant impact related to transportation if the Project would:

a) Conflict with a program plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation systems, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities;

b) Conflict with or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b);

c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersection(s) or incompatible uses (e.g. farm equipment)); or

d) Result in inadequate emergency access.

Conflict with a program plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation systems, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?

Construction and Operation

The proposed Project does not conflict with the General Plan, any program plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system. The Project does not propose to amend or adjust roadway classifications, the roadway network, transit routes, or bicycle networks as identified in the RTP or General Plan.

Sidewalks or dedicated bike lanes are currently not provided in the vicinity of the Site, except for the SR-49 shoulders which may be used by bicyclists. The NCTC RTP includes a project for the SR-49 that would provide Class II bike lanes on SR-49 from Old Downieville Highway (County) to the SR-49/SR-20 intersection, and construct a roundabout at the SR-49/W (Nevada County Transportation Commission). Broad Street intersection located 0.25 miles east of the Project site. The anticipated construction year cycle is 2026-2027.

In regard to access, Project improvements will not cause any conflicts with other improvements planned for the area, such as the SR-49 multimodal corridor improvements, as the Project is located off SR-49 on Kahele Court The SC overlay requires projects to provide high overall performance standards of circulation to be a harmonious, integrated addition to the historic

character of Nevada City. The Project would not cause any conflict with this regulation as access and circulation would not be permanently altered post construction. Additionally, the Project's limited footprint minimizes the potential for any conflict within the area. The construction and operation phases of the Project would not permanently obstruct access for Kahele Court or residential parcels along American Hill Road post construction. The Project would not create hazards or barriers for pedestrians, bicyclists, or local transit service.

During construction, existing and future pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the Project site would not be affected by Project-related construction activity. Therefore, the Project would not cause a conflict with a program plan, ordinance, or policy related to the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities, and there is no impact.

Conflict with or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?

Construction and Operation

According to CEQA Guidelines §15064.3 Subdivision (b)(1), VMT exceeding an applicable threshold of significance may indicate a significant impact. As previously discussed, LCI (Formerly OPR) guidelines provide screening criteria that are used to identify if a project is expected to have a less than significant impact without conducting a full VMT analysis.

The purpose of the proposed Project is to provide a dedicated indoor firearms training facility for the NCSO and partner agencies. The Sheriff's Office currently relies on external facilities approximately 45 minutes away. The Project will consolidate services and reduce travel time. The Project would therefore not result in a substantial VMT impact. The Project is screened out from further VMT analysis as it satisfies the NCTC screening thresholds. The Project is consistent with the General Plan, the RTP and is located in the western Nevada County travel forecasting model area generating less than 630 VMT per day. Therefore, there is no impact.

Construction-related VMT is addressed in the context of air quality and greenhouse gas as part of a separate study. Construction VMT is temporary and is not applicable to the transportation thresholds of significance recommended in the LCI (OPR) Technical Advisory, which are based on a measurement of the operational average VMT per capita.

Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersection(s) or incompatible uses (e.g. farm equipment))?

Access to the Project is provided via an existing driveway on SR-49 at 434 Kahele Court, which is controlled by a stop sign on the driveway approach. SR-49 contains one lane in each direction and carries approximately 2,500 ADT (Stantec 2025c). Corner sight distance requirements were evaluated based on the criteria contained in the Highway Design Manual for 50 MPH speeds (Caltrans 2022). The sight distance analysis found that the corner sight distance requirements from the driveway approach to approaching vehicles on SR-49 are satisfied.

Construction

The Project is estimated to have an overall 613-day construction schedule beginning with Notice to Proceed (anticipated May 2026) and concluding with occupancy in October 2027. Construction sequencing will include site preparation, grading, utility installation, foundation work, building erection, interior build-out, and finish work. The peak workforce is anticipated to include approximately 25 to 35 persons during the structural and mechanical/electrical/ plumbing phases. All on-site utilities will tie into existing SORDTF infrastructure, therefore no work activities would occur on SR-49.

Preliminary earthwork quantities indicate that a net export of approximately 16,000 CY could occur, or approximately 1,100 truckloads during the 12- to 16-month construction period. The construction traffic route would be via SR-49 to northbound SR-20 or southbound SR-20/SR-49. All construction activity and material storage will occur within the existing SORDTF parcel to avoid off-site disturbance and to maintain uninterrupted dispatch and training operations. Impacts from the Project during construction would be less than significant.

Operation

Once built and in operation, the Project would not incorporate any hazardous geometric design features. Therefore, there would be no impact.

Result in inadequate emergency access?

Construction and Operation

The proposed Project would require review by the California State Fire Marshal involving a plan review and approval, followed by periodic field inspections, and concluding with issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy to provide for adequate emergency access and building safety features. Similarly, design and construction documents would need to be reviewed and approved for adequate emergency access by the local agency building and fire departments. With implementation of local agency approval process, the Project would provide adequate emergency access and there would be less than significant impacts.

3.17.4 MITIGATION MEASURES

No mitigation measures required.

3.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the Project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:				
i. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or	☐	☒	☐	☐
ii. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe?	☐	☒	☐	☐

3.18.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Per PRC 21074(a), Tribal cultural resources (TCR) are defined as sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe that are either: (1) included or determined to be eligible for inclusion in the CRHR; or (2) included in a local register of historical resources. Additionally, per PRC 21074(a)(1)(2), a TCR is a resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in PRC Section 5024.1(c).

Section 3.5 of this document, Cultural Resources, describes the regional and local cultural setting for the proposed Project. More specifically, refer to Section 3.5.1.1 for a summary of the geographic setting of the Project area; and Sections 3.5.1.2, 3.5.1.3, and 3.5.1.4, for discussions of the ethnographic context, ethnohistory, and historical context of the Project area.

Two Tribes were found to be traditionally and culturally affiliated with the Project site: United Auburn Indian Community (UAIC) and the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California (the Washoe Tribe).

UAIC is a federally recognized Tribe comprised of both Miwok and Maidu (Nisenan) Tribal members who are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the Project site. The Tribe has a deep spiritual, cultural, and physical ties to their ancestral land and are contemporary stewards of their culture and landscapes. The UAIC Tribal community represents the continuity and endurance of their ancestors by maintaining their connection to their history and culture. It is the UAIC Tribe's goal to ensure the preservation and continuance of their cultural heritage for current and future generations.

The Washoe Tribe is a federally recognized tribe comprised of several Washoe communities in California and Nevada. The Oostemah of the Washoe Tribe is one of the native tribes in the Project site, with current members of the Washoe Tribe having familial and ethnographic ties to the Project site. The Washoe Tribe knows items of cultural patrimony on site and within close proximity to the Project site and are experts on the TCRs tied to the Washoe Tribe in the project vicinity.

3.18.1.1 Affected Environment

UAIC conducted a background search for the identification of TCRs for this project, which included a review of pertinent literature, historic maps, and a records search using UAIC's Tribal Historic Information System (THRIS). UAIC's THRIS database is composed of UAIC's areas of oral history, ethnographic history, and places of cultural and religious significance, including UAIC Sacred Lands that are submitted to the NAHC. The THRIS resources shown in this region also include previously recorded indigenous resources identified through the CHRIS as well as historic resources and survey data. According to THRIS data, there are nine TCRs less than a mile radius from the Project site, including bedrock mortar sites, lithic scatters, and habitation areas. Due to the Project site being built-up and landscaped, UAIC opted to forego a tribal survey and instead recommend having a paid tribal monitor present for the initial ground disturbing activities.

The Washoe Tribe conducted background searches for the identification of TCRs for this project, which included a review of pertinent literature, historic maps, and a records search of files on record with the Washoe Tribe which includes information about oral histories, ethnographic histories, and places of cultural and religious significance. Additionally, the Washoe Tribe conducted a site walk of the Project site with the project applicant and contracted archaeologist. According to the consultation with the Washoe Tribe, there is one TCR within the Project site.

No evidence of other historic buildings, sites, structures, or objects that would likely be an indigenous resource were revealed from the records search at the North Central Information Center (see Section 3.5, Cultural Resources, for additional information).

3.18.1.2 Native American Consultation

In Accordance with AB 52, the project application was distributed to respective tribal agencies for tribal cultural resource review and comment. On December 22, 2025, the Nevada County

Sheriff's Department mailed AB 52 consultation letters. Refer to Appendix C for correspondences with UAIC and the Washoe Tribe. The letters described the proposed Project and requested information about TCRs that may be located along the Project alignment or in the Project area.

3.18.1.2.1 Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California (the Washoe Tribe)

On December 29, 2025, William Enos, the Washoe Tribe Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO), responded via email requesting to have a monitor with the Washoe Tribe conduct a pre-construction job walk and be on site for ground disturbing activities due to the Washoe Tribe's cultural ties to the Project site. After email and phone call correspondences in January and February 2026, representatives of the Washoe Tribe, a Stantec archaeologist, and the project applicant conducted a site walk of the project on March 2, 2026. During the site walk, one TCR was identified by the Washoe Tribe: White Rocks. The portions of the project that overlapped the TCR and that were in close proximity to the TCR were mapped on FieldMaps Collector by the archaeologist in order to help avoid them and mitigate affects to them during the project. Additionally, the Washoe Tribe acknowledged that some portions of White Rocks in the eastern portion of the Project by the proposed detention pond and parking area may be removed, though the Washoe Tribe wants as much of the feature avoided as possible and all other components of the identified TCR to the southeast and south to be completely avoided. On March 6, 2026, Stantec, on behalf of the Nevada County Sheriff's Department, provided a draft of the TCR mitigation language via email to the Washoe Tribe to review and provide feedback on, and followed up with the Washoe Tribe via phone and email on March 16, 2026.

3.18.1.2.2 Wilton Rancheria

On January 6, 2026, the Wilton Rancheria Cultural Preservation Department responded via email that they are not interested in consulting on the project unless there are any changes to the proposed project.

3.18.1.2.3 United Auburn Indian Community

On January 14, 2026, Anna M. Starkey, the UAIC THPO, responded via email confirming that there are no known TCRs in the Project site, and requested to conduct a post-ground disturbance site inspection and have a UAIC monitor on site for initial ground disturbing activities. On February 11, 2026, Stantec reached out to the UAIC THPO on behalf of the Nevada County Sheriff's Department to request specific mitigation language to include in the TCR section of the ISMND. Anna Starkey provided this mitigation language on February 11, 2026,. On March 6, 2026, Stantec, on behalf of the Nevada County Sheriff's Department provided a draft of the TCR mitigation language to UAIC to review and provide feedback on. On March 12, 2026, Anna Starkey provided additional mitigation language to include in the TCR section of the ISMND.

3.18.2 REGULATORY SETTING

3.18.2.1 Federal

3.18.2.2 State

3.18.2.2.1 Assembly Bill 52

AB 52 established a consultation process with California Native American tribes and requires that projects be evaluated for potential TCRs during the CEQA environmental review process.

3.18.2.3 Local

3.18.3 IMPACT ANALYSIS

Based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, a Project could have a significant impact related to TCR if the Project would:

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

    i. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or

    ii. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

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, or object with cultural value to the California Native American tribe and that is 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)?

And

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, or object with cultural value to the California Native American tribe and that is 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 Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

Construction and Operation

United Auburn Indian Community

The UAIC requested consultation with the Nevada County Planning Department regarding the proposed project. UAIC has requested three mitigation measures to be required to address potential TCR impacts. MM TCR-1 requires the applicant/contractor to provide tribal cultural awareness and sensitivity training for all personnel involved in project construction. MM TCR-3 requires the applicant to retain the services of a contracted Tribal Monitor who shall monitor the site during the initial ground disturbing project activities within the first five days of groundbreaking activities. MM TCR-4 provides guidance for stopping work in the event there are unanticipated discoveries of TCRs. With the described mitigation measures in place, impacts to these TCRs will be less than significant with mitigation.

Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California

The Washoe Tribe requested consultation with the Nevada County Planning Department regarding the proposed project. On March 2, 2026, representatives of the Washoe Tribe, a Stantec archaeologist, and the applicant conducted a site walk of the project. During the site walk, one TCR was identified by the Washoe Tribe: White Rocks. Based on these findings, the Washoe Tribe has requested four mitigation measures to be required to address potential TCR impacts. MM TCR-1 requires the applicant/contractor to provide tribal cultural awareness and sensitivity training for all personnel involved in project construction. MM TCR-2 requires the applicant avoid the TCR White Rocks in the southeast portion of the project and just south of the project, and to avoid the TCR White Rocks when where possible where the proposed detention pond and parking area will be constructed. MM TCR-3 requires the applicant to retain the services of a contracted Tribal Monitor who shall monitor the site during the initial ground disturbing project activities and vegetation removal activities that will result in ground disturbance. MM TCR-4 provides guidance for stopping work in the event there are unanticipated discoveries of TCRs. With the described mitigation measures in place, impacts to this TCR will be less than significant with mitigation.

3.18.4 MITIGATION MEASURES

3.18.4.1 Mitigation Measure TCR-1: Cultural Resource Worker Awareness Training

The applicant/contractor shall provide a tribal cultural awareness and sensitivity training program (Worker Environmental Awareness Program) for all personnel involved in project construction, including field consultants and construction workers, at their own expense. The Worker Environmental Awareness Program training shall be conducted by either a qualified archaeologist for cultural resources or a tribal representative for TCRs. The Worker Environmental Awareness Program shall be developed in coordination with interested Native American Tribes. The Worker Environmental Awareness Program shall be conducted before any project-related construction activities begin at the project site. The Worker Environmental Awareness Program will include relevant information regarding sensitive cultural resources and TCRs, including applicable regulations, protocols for avoidance, and consequences of violating State laws and regulations. The Worker Environmental Awareness Program will also describe appropriate avoidance and impact minimization measures for cultural resources and TCRs that could be located at the project site and will outline what to do and who to contact if any potential cultural resources or TCRs are encountered. The Worker Environmental Awareness Program will emphasize the requirement for confidentiality and culturally appropriate treatment of any discovery of significance to Native Americans and will discuss appropriate behaviors and responsive actions, consistent with Native American tribal values. The training may be done in coordination with the project archaeologist. All ground-disturbing equipment operators shall be required to receive the training and sign a form that acknowledges receipt of the training.

3.18.4.1.1 Mitigation Measure TCR-1 Implementation:

Responsible Party: The NCSO shall ensure workers receive the pre-construction TCR awareness training.

Timing: Prior to the initiation of Project-related grading or construction.

Monitoring and Reporting Program: It will be noted on improvement plans. The Project proponent/contractor is responsible for notifying the Planning Department when training is scheduled/completed.

Standards for Success: The identification of and prevention of any impacts to known or inadvertently discovered TCRs during project construction.

3.18.4.2 Mitigation Measure TCR-2: Establish an Environmentally Sensitive Area for Avoidance of White Rocks

Prior to the beginning of Project construction, NCSO will work with a Washoe Tribe Certified Tribal Monitor or Representative to designate an ESA of avoidance around TCR White Rocks. The ESA will be depicted on Project plans. Prior to construction, the approved monitor or representative will go to the resource and physically delineate the ESA. The delineation will use

temporary barrier fencing, extending 30 ft from the TCR. The fencing indicates an area where project activities are strictly forbidden.

3.18.4.2.1 Mitigation Measure TCR-2 Implementation:

Responsible Party: NCSO

Timing: The ESA will be added to Project plans during development. Delineation shall take place prior to construction. Fencing will be replaced or maintained as needed during the project and removed once project work is complete.

Monitoring and Reporting Program: Photographs of ESA with fencing set up.

Standards for Success: The prevention of any impacts to TCR: White Rocks.

3.18.4.3 Mitigation Measure TCR-3: Tribal Monitoring

The project proponent shall contact the UAIC Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) (thpo@auburnrancheria.com) at least two weeks prior to project ground-disturbing activities to retain the services of a UAIC Certified Tribal Monitor or Representative. The Tribal Monitor or Representative will inspect the project site, which may include soil piles, trenches, or other disturbed areas, within the first five days of groundbreaking activity, or as appropriate for the type and size of project.

The project proponent shall contact the Washoe Tribe THPO (William.Enos@washoetribe.us) as well as Sarina Shaw (Sarina.Shaw@washoetribe.us) and Kappa Enos (koppaenos@yahoo.com) at least two weeks prior to project ground-disturbing activities (including vegetation removal that will result in ground disturbance) to retain the services of a Washoe Tribe Certified Tribal Monitor or Representative.

In the event the Tribal Monitor does not report to the job site at the scheduled time after receiving 24-hour business day notice, construction activities may proceed without tribal monitoring. At no time, regardless of the presence or absence of a Tribal Monitor, shall suspected TCRs be mishandled or disrespected. The Nevada County Planning Department shall assist with resolution of disagreements between the project proponent/contractor and the Tribe if such occurs on the project. The Tribal Monitor(s) shall wear the appropriate safety equipment while on the construction site at all times.

If there are cultural finds, Tribes may require additional Tribal Monitoring. Tribal Monitors or Tribal Representatives shall have the authority to direct that work be temporarily paused, diverted, or slowed within 100 feet of the immediate impact area if sites, cultural soils, or objects of potential significance are identified. The temporary pause/diversion shall be of an adequate duration for the Tribal Representative to examine the resource.

To track the implementation of this measure, the Tribal Monitor(s) shall document field monitoring activities on a Tribal Monitor log and provide the log to their THPO.

3.18.4.3.1 Mitigation Measure TCR-3 Implementation:

Responsible Party: NCSO

Timing: Prior to and during initial ground disturbance of the Project site.

Monitoring and Reporting Program: Noted on improvement plans; Project proponent/contractor to notify Planning Department of contracted Certified Tribal Monitor(s); Notify Planning Department if TCRs discovered and construction work stopped.

Standards for Success: The prevention of any impacts to TCRs.

3.18.4.4 Mitigation Measure TCR-4: Unanticipated Discoveries of Tribal Cultural Resources

Appropriate treatment of TCRs or other cultural finds may include but not be limited to the Tribe consulting with the lead agency to: (1) identify the boundaries of the new TCR; (2) if feasible, identify appropriate preservation in place and avoidance measures, including redesign or adjustments to the existing construction process, and long-term management; or 3) if avoidance is infeasible, a reburial location in proximity of the find where no future disturbance is anticipated. Permanent curation of TCRs will not take place unless approved in writing by the culturally affiliated Tribe.

If any potential TCRs or resources of cultural significance, including but not limited to features, anthropogenic/cultural soils, cultural belongings or objects (artifacts), shell, bone, shaped stones or bone, or ash/charcoal deposits are discovered by any person during construction activities including ground disturbing activities, all work shall pause immediately within 100 feet of the find, or an agreed upon distance based on the Project site and nature of the find. Work shall cease in and within the immediate vicinity of the find regardless of whether the construction is being actively monitored by a Tribal Monitor, cultural resources specialist, or professional archaeologist. A Tribal Representative and the Nevada County Planning Department shall be immediately notified, and the Tribal Representative in coordination with the Planning Department shall determine if the find is a TCR (PRC §21074) and the Tribal Representative shall make recommendations for further evaluation and treatment as necessary.

The culturally affiliated Tribe shall consult with the Nevada County Planning Department to (1) identify the boundaries of the new TCR and (2) if feasible, identify appropriate preservation in place and avoidance measures, including redesign or adjustments to the existing construction process, and long-term management, or 3) if avoidance is infeasible, a reburial location in proximity of the find where no future disturbance is anticipated. Permanent curation of TCRs will not take place unless approved in writing by the culturally affiliated Tribe. The construction contractor(s) shall provide secure, on-site storage for culturally sensitive soils or objects that are components of TCRs that are found or recovered during construction. Only Tribal Representatives shall have access to the storage. Storage size shall be determined by the nature of the TCR and can range from a small lock box to a conex box (shipping container). A

secure (locked), fenced area can also provide adequate on-site storage if larger amounts of material must be stored. The construction contractor(s) and the Nevada County Planning Department shall facilitate the respectful reburial of the culturally sensitive soils or objects. This includes providing a reburial location that is consistent with the Tribe's preferences, excavation of the reburial location, and assisting with the reburial, upon request. Any discoveries shall be documented on a Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) 523 form within two weeks of the discovery and submitted to the appropriate CHRIS center. Work at the TCR discovery location shall not resume until authorization is granted by the Nevada County Planning Department in coordination with the culturally affiliated Tribe. If articulated or disarticulated human remains, or human remains in any state of decomposition or skeletal completeness are discovered during construction activities, the County Coroner and the culturally affiliated Tribe shall be contacted immediately. Upon determination by the County Coroner that the find is Native American in origin, the Native American Heritage Commission will assign the Most Likely Descendent who will work with the project proponent to define appropriate treatment and disposition of the burials.

3.18.4.4.1 *Mitigation Measure TCR-4 Implementation:*

Responsible Party: Nevada County Planning Department

Timing: During Project-related grading or construction.

Monitoring and Reporting Program: Noted on improvement plans; Project proponent/contractor to notify Planning Department of contracted Certified Tribal Monitor(s); Notify Planning Department if TCRs discovered and construction work stopped.

Standards for Success: The prevention of any impacts to TCRs.

3.19 Utilities and Service Systems

UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment, or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Have sufficient water supply available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	☐	☐	☒	☐

c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves tor may serve the project that is has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.19.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Nevada City, Nevada County, and special districts provide many services to residents and businesses such as water, wastewater, solid waste removal, utilities, and communications.

3.19.1.1 Water and Wastewater

Water is provided by the Nevada Irrigation District (NID) and wastewater is serviced through the Nevada City Sewer District. Nevada City sources its water from Little Deer Creek and supplements its water supply with water from NID in months of high usage (June through September) (Nevada City 2025e). Nevada City is responsible for collecting, treating, and discharging treated wastewater within the NID's service area. NID utilizes recycled sewage effluent from the Nevada City sewage treatment plant, which is diverted from Deer Creek. The Nevada City Water Treatment Facility (WTF), which is within NID's service territory, provides sewerage services for the City of Nevada City, serving a population of approximately 3,150. The WTF provides treatment for an average dry weather flow of 0.69 million gallons per day of domestic and industrial wastewater. The WTF discharges tertiary treated wastewater to Deer Creek, a water of the U.S. The Central Valley RWQCB and the USEPA classify the Facility as a minor facility (CRWQCB 2022). The Nevada City treatment plant has a 2-million-gallon-per-day capacity, which services 1,252 connections (approximately 3,148 people) (Nevada Irrigation District 2025).

3.19.1.2 Solid Waste

According to the 2023-2024 Nevada County Progress Report, the McCourtney Road Transfer Station provides solid waste and recycling transfer services for Nevada City (Nevada County 2024b). Solid waste collection is provided by Waste Management and deposited at the McCourtney Road Transfer Station, approximately 7.6 miles southwest of the Project site. As of January 2025, the new scales are open and operational with the majority of the Project substantially complete (Nevada County 2025d). In Nevada City, Solid waste is ultimately transported to the Anderson Landfill, located in Shasta County (Raney Planning & Management,

Inc. 2021), approximately 106 miles northwest of the proposed Project. Anderson Landfill has a maximum permitted capacity of 19,028,500 with approximately 9.48 million cubic yards of capacity remaining as of 2024, and an estimated closure date of January 1, 2075 (CalRecycle 2025).

3.19.1.3 Electricity and Gas Utilities

PG&E currently supplies electricity to the existing facility at which the proposed Project would be located. PG&E is a large utility company which provides natural gas and electric service to approximately 16 million people throughout a 70,000-square-mile service area in northern and central California.

3.19.1.4 Telephone and Data Service

AT&T provides fiber-optic communications coverage at the proposed Project site. AT&T is the largest telecommunications company in the nation that provides integrated communications and entertainment services, including Internet Protocol -based network capabilities that integrate voice, data, and video.

3.19.2 REGULATORY SETTING

3.19.2.1 Federal

3.19.2.1.1 Environmental Protection Agency

The USEPA established primary drinking water standards in CWA Section 304 and states are required to ensure that potable water for the public meets these standards. Standards for 81 individual constituents have been established under the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974, as amended in 1986. Under the CWA, stormwater discharges are regulated through NPDES municipal stormwater permits. In California, the SWRCB and its nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards RWQCBs oversee implementation of the Clean Water Act, and the Central Valley RWQCB issues and enforces NPDES stormwater permits within the Central Valley of California.

3.19.2.2 State

3.19.2.2.1 Statewide General Waste Discharge Requirements

The Statewide General Waste Discharge Requirements for Sanitary Sewer Systems (Order No. 2006-0003-DWQ), as administered by the SWRCB, remain applicable to state agencies that own and operate more than one mile of pipe conveying untreated or partially treated wastewater to publicly owned treatment facilities. Agencies are required to develop, implement, and periodically update a Sewer System Management Plan, with sections submitted electronically to the SWRCB via the California Integrated Water Quality System.

3.19.2.2.2 Drinking Water Quality

The State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water, is responsible for implementing the federal Safe Drinking Water Act and California statutes and regulations related to drinking water. The Division of Drinking Water inspects and provides regulatory oversight for public water systems throughout California. RWQCBs retain responsibility for protecting beneficial uses of the state's waters, including groundwater and municipal drinking water supplies, as well as other designated uses.

3.19.2.2.3 California Integrated Waste Management Act

The California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (AB 939) established statewide goals for solid waste diversion. Since 2016, Senate Bill 1383 has set more ambitious targets, requiring jurisdictions to divert 75% of organic waste from landfills by 2025 and implement programs for edible food recovery. Cities and counties must maintain and annually update solid waste, recycling, and household hazardous waste plans, prioritizing source reduction, recycling, composting, and environmentally safe disposal. Compliance is monitored by CalRecycle through annual reporting and enforcement actions.

3.19.2.2.4 Energy Efficiency Standards

Title 24, Part 6 of the California Building Code establishes energy efficiency standards for new construction, additions, alterations, and repairs. The standards are updated triennially; the current 2025 Building Energy Efficiency Standards became effective January 1, 2026. These standards require higher energy performance, electrification readiness, and integration of renewable energy and battery storage systems. California's climate legislation, including Senate Bill 32 and Senate Bill 100, mandates continued reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, with a statewide goal of carbon neutrality by 2045. Building permit applications within California jurisdictions must comply with the latest adopted standards at the time of submittal.

3.19.2.3 Local

3.19.2.3.1 Nevada City Municipal Code

The Nevada City Municipal Code includes development regulations to address elements such as water line extensions and sewer main extensions.

Section 13.04.190 – Water Main Extensions

Section 13.04.190 – Water main extensions requires that when an application is filed for a service connection where there is no water main adjacent to the applicant's property – and no immediate provision has been made by the City for the extension of any existing main to such property – the City will require an extension of sufficient size to provide for all intervening properties along the new line. All mains shall be of cast iron construction, shall extend the full length of the applicant's property, and shall belong to the City.

Section 13.08.050 – Sewer Main Extensions

Section 13.08.050 – Sewer main extensions requires that when an application is filed for a service connection where there is no sewer main adjacent to the applicant's property – and no immediate provision has been made by the City for the extension of any existing main to such property – the City will require an extension of sufficient size to provide for all intervening properties along the new line, as well as any additional properties within the City that may in the future be served by the further extension of the main.

3.19.3 IMPACT ANALYSIS

Based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, a Project could have a significant impact related to utilities and service systems if the Project would:

a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment, or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?

b) Have sufficient water supply available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?

c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?

d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?

e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment, or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?

Construction

The facility will be constructed of reinforced-masonry block walls on a polished and sealed concrete floor. All construction activity and material storage will occur within the existing SORDTF parcel to avoid offsite disturbance and to maintain uninterrupted dispatch and training operations. Construction would generate temporary impacts such as (ground disturbance, short-term traffic control, noise, and dust. These impacts are typical of construction activities and would occur only during the site grading and construction periods. No expansion of a wastewater treatment plant is proposed or required. The scope and footprint of utility work

would remain within existing corridors, roads, and the existing Project site parcel, and does not introduce new permanent disturbance to sensitive areas. With standard construction BMPs required under the State Construction General Permit and applicable city specifications, temporary effects would remain less than significant.

Operation

Long-term operations would result in energy and water usage and would generate wastewater. Operational energy consumption would be associated with electricity required to run various appliances and equipment, including space and water heaters, air conditioners, ventilation equipment, lights, and other electronic devices. No natural gas equipment or appliances would be used for the proposed Project. Stormwater management will utilize onsite detention basins and vegetated drainage swales, consistent with County Low-Impact-Development standards and stormwater permit provisions. No expansion of off-site utility facilities would be required during operations. Routine utility demands would not trigger new off-site capital projects.

Impacts would be less than significant.

Have sufficient water supply available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?

Construction

Water use during construction would consist of dust control, soil conditioning, and equipment needs. Volumes are temporary and relatively small compared to available municipal supplies and would be coordinated through standard construction water service procedures. Temporary construction demand would not affect supply reliability.

Operation

Operational potable water demand is estimated at approximately 170 gallons per day for building uses and landscape irrigation, or approximately 44,200 gallons per year assuming 260 working days. This estimate is conservatively based on an assumed occupancy of up to 25 to 30 people at any one time. Per the NID's Urban Water Management Plan, the projected water supply during normal year conditions in 2040 would be 151,279 acre-feet per year in excess of the projected demand (Nevada Irrigation District 2016). At a conversion rate of 1 acre-foot ≈ 325,851 gallons, this would equate to 49.3 billion gallons per year, whereas the proposed Project would only consume approximately 0.14 acre-feet per year. Even after three dry years, the NID would still have a sufficient surplus of water as compared to the proposed Project's projected demand.

The Project's demand represents a very small fraction of regional supplies and does not alter dry-year reliability conclusions. No new water rights or major supply facilities would be required. Impacts would be less than significant.

Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that is has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?

Construction

Sanitary wastewater during construction would be limited to portable facilities serviced off-site. Construction dewatering, if required, would be managed under applicable permits separate from sanitary flows.

Operation

Operational potable water demand is estimated at approximately 170 gallons per day for building uses and landscape irrigation, or approximately 44,200 gallons per year assuming 260 working days. Onsite sewer is anticipated to connect into the existing system on the site and utilize the existing piping that ultimately connects to the public system. Easements and agreements may be necessary to utilize the existing sewer system onsite. Nevada City's wastewater treatment facility has a 2.0 million gallons per day capacity and treats an average dry-weather flow of approximately 0.69 million gallons per day. No plant expansion is required, and the provider would be able to accommodate project flows with existing commitments.

Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

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?

Construction

Construction activities would generate construction debris, including materials such as concrete, asphalt, wood, and metals. Anderson Landfill, which receives Nevada City's solid waste receives construction/demolition waste as well as other waste types including wood waste, BioSolids, mixed municipal, industrial and Asbestos waste. Anderson Landfill has approximately 9.48 million cubic yards of remaining capacity as of 2024 and an estimated closure date of 2075 (CalRecycle 2025). The volume of waste generated by the Project would represent a small fraction of available landfill capacity and would not exceed local infrastructure limits. State law requires diversion of certain waste materials, and compliance with applicable regulations would be required.

Operation

Daily occupancy is expected to average about 30 users, with short-term peaks of 40 to 45 participants during multi-agency training events. Operations will be overseen by NCSO training officers and range staff, supported by administrative personnel. The building will not be permanently staffed; instead, Sheriff's Office personnel will be onsite intermittently during scheduled training sessions. Typical use will occur several days per week, with average daily

occupancy of approximately 25-30 users and occasional multi-agency training events resulting in short-term peaks of 40-45 users a few times per year. During operations, the facility would generate municipal solid waste typical of public service building uses. Waste Management would collect and transport solid waste to the McCourtney Road Transfer Station, with ultimate disposal at the Anderson Landfill. The projected waste generation from operations would not exceed the capacity of local infrastructure or conflict with state or local solid waste reduction goals. The Project would be subject to the requirements of AB 939 and Senate Bill 1383, which mandates the diversion of organic waste and recycling. Compliance with these statutes would be required as a condition of service.

Impacts would be less than significant.

Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

Construction

Construction activities would be subject to AB 939 requirements, as well as applicable local ordinances and CalRecycle regulations. Contractors would be required to separate and properly dispose of construction debris, including hazardous materials if encountered, at permitted facilities. State law mandates diversion of certain materials from landfill, and local infrastructure supports compliance with these requirements. No aspect of the Project would conflict with or prevent adherence to federal, State, or local solid waste management statutes.

Operation

During operations, the Project would participate in Nevada City's solid waste collection program, which is managed by Waste Management and regulated by Nevada City and Nevada County. The Project would be subject to ongoing requirements under AB 939 and Senate Bill 1383, which mandate diversion of recyclables and organic waste. Service providers and local ordinances require compliance with these statutes as a condition of service. Spent ammunition and lead waste will be collected and recycled through licensed hazardous-materials vendors. All waste will be securely stored in sealed containers within the armory or designated maintenance area until transported for disposal or recycling. No component of the Project would interfere with or prevent compliance with applicable solid waste management and reduction regulations.

Impacts would be less than significant.

3.19.4 MITIGATION MEASURES

No mitigation measures required.

3.20 Wildfire

WILDFIRE Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones;				
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines, or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.20.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

3.20.1.1 Environmental Setting

As shown in Figure 12 – Fire Hazard Severity, CAL FIRE designates the subject area as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ), indicating the highest level of wildfire risk based on fuels, topography, and weather (CAL FIRE 2025a). Fuels in the Project site include dead tree leaves, twigs, and branches; live trees; brush; and cured grass; the existing office building and other structures. The existing topography slopes gently from southwest to northeast with no steep, unstable slopes. The Project site is located south of Hirschman's Pond and sits northwest of Nevada City's downtown, which is at a lower elevation. The site in a Mediterranean climate with hot, dry summers and cool, wet winters. Winds typically come from the southwest but shift north to northeast with changing weather systems. Fire conditions are often critical from late July through October (Nevada City 2025a). The Project site is within a conifer forest dominated by ponderosa pine with a mix of other coniferous trees like Douglas fir and white fir, manzanita shrubs, and grasses in the understory (Nevada City 2025a). These fire-adapted ecosystems typically experience low-intensity surface fires every 13 years (USDA Forest Service 2024). The site is within the wildland urban intermix and wildland-urban interface influence zone, where

wildland vegetation is continuous, and more than half of the land area is vegetated with combustible fuels, increasing risks to fire fighter safety and delayed emergency equipment response.

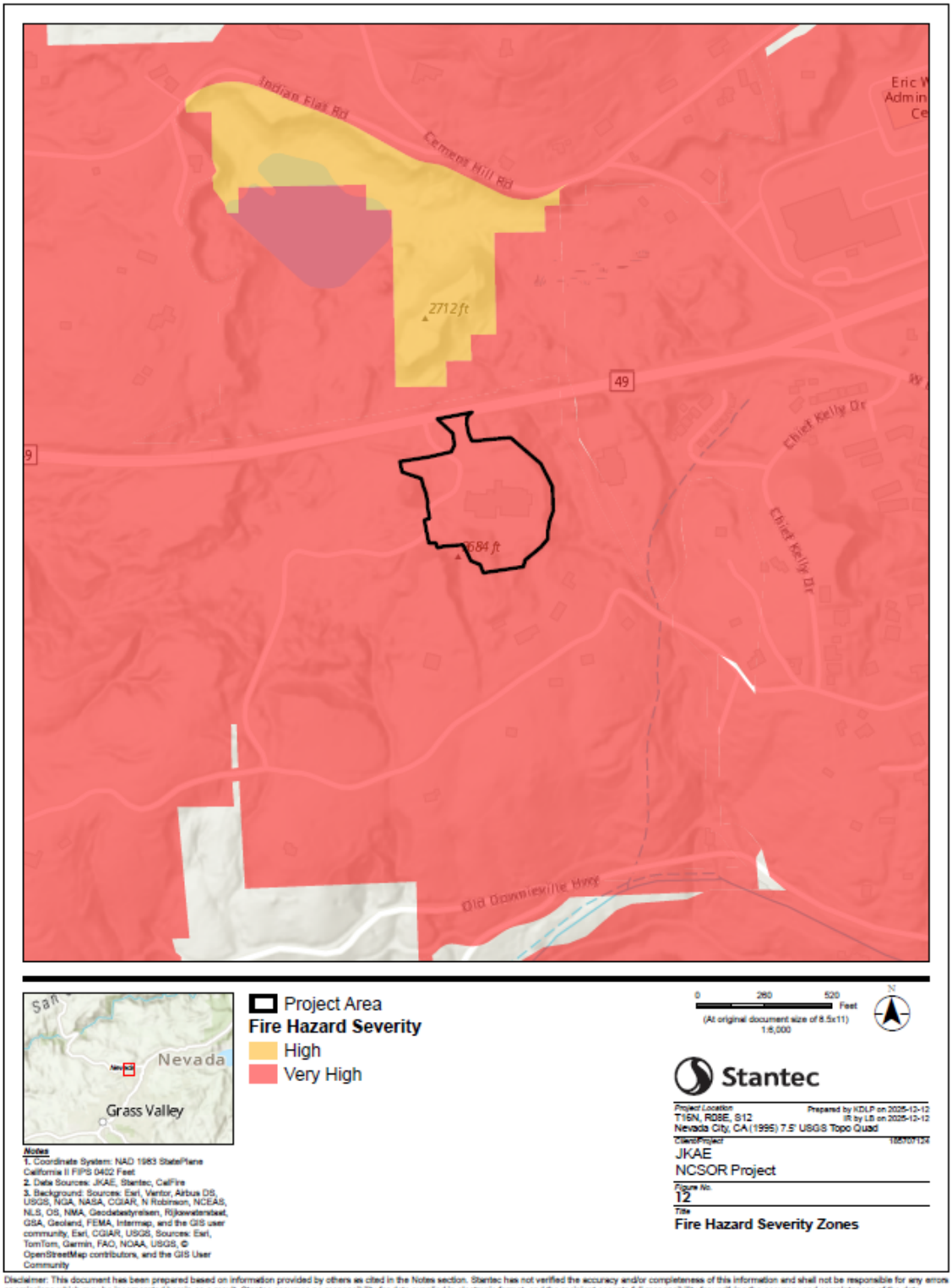
3.20.1.2 Fire History

No wildfires over ten acres have occurred onsite, according to CAL FIRE's Fire and Resource Assessment Program. The nearest recorded fire was 2.5 miles northeast in 1910. Between 1992 and 2023, the Project site was immediately adjacent to three to four ignition events (Nevada City 2025a, CAL FIRE 2025b).

3.20.1.3 Fire Protection

The Project site is within a Local Responsibility Area, meaning fire protection falls under local jurisdiction of the Nevada City Fire District. The Nevada City Fire District has an agreement with CAL FIRE's Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit, allowing CAL FIRE to respond immediately to any fire within city limits, including the Project site (Nevada City 2025f). The entire city is designated a Mutual Threat Zone, ensuring automatic CAL FIRE response to wildland fires. Fire protection is also provided through a Joint Operational Area agreement among the Nevada County Consolidated Fire District, Nevada City Fire Department, and Grass Valley Fire Department (Nevada City 2025f). Firefighters from all three agencies operate across seven stations. The nearest station is Nevada County Consolidated Fire District Station 84 and is located 0.8 miles east of the Project site at 10135 Coyote Street, Nevada City, CA 95959.

Figure 12. Fire Hazard Severity



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3.20.2 REGULATORY SETTING

3.20.2.1 Federal

3.20.2.1.1 National Fire Protection Association Standards

The National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) is a global, non-profit organization that promotes safety standards, education, training, and advocacy on fire and electrical-related hazards. NFPA codes, standards, recommended practices, and guides are developed through a consensus standards development process approved by the American National Standards Institute (NFPA 2024). NFPA standards are recommended guidelines in fire protection but are not laws or "codes" unless adopted or referenced as such by the CFC or local fire agency. Specific standards applicable to wildland fire hazards include, but are not limited to:

- NFPA 1 - Fire Code 2024
- NFPA 1141 - Fire Protection Infrastructure for Land Development in Wildlands
- NFPA 1142 - Water Supplies for Suburban and Rural Fire Fighting
- NFPA 1143 - Wildland Fire Management
- NFPA 1144 - Reducing Structure Ignition Hazards from Wildland Fire
- NFPA 1710 - Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations

3.20.2.2 State

3.20.2.2.1 Fire Safety During Construction and Demolition (CFC Chapter 33)

CFC Chapter 33 outlines general fire safety precautions for all structures and all occupancies during construction and demolition operations. In general, these requirements seek to maintain required levels of fire protection, limit fire spread, establish the appropriate operation of equipment, and promote prompt response to fire emergencies. There is an emphasis on owner responsibility and the need to create and implement a site safety plan. Features regulated include fire protection systems, fire fighter access to the site and building, water supply, means of egress, hazardous materials storage and use, and temporary heating equipment and other ignition sources.

3.20.2.2.2 2025 California Building and Fire Code

The newly updated 2025 California Building and Fire Code (Title 24, Part 9 of the California Code of Regulations) establishes regulations to safeguard against hazards of fire, explosion, or dangerous conditions in new and existing buildings, structures, and premises. The Fire Code also establishes requirements intended to provide safety and assistance to firefighters and

emergency responders during emergency operations. The provisions of the Fire Code apply to the construction, alteration, movement, enlargement, replacement, repair, equipment, use and occupancy, location, maintenance, removal, and demolition of every building or structure throughout the State of California (California Building Standards Commission 2025). The updated Part 7 (California Wildland-Urban Interface Code) replaces the previous Chapter 7A and imposes stricter wildfire-resistance requirements (such as fire-rated, ember-resistant vents) for buildings in wildland urban interface zones.

3.20.2.2.3 California Health and Safety Code

Additional state fire regulations are set forth in Section 13000 et seq. of the California Health and Safety Code. They include regulations for building standards as set forth in the California Building Code, fire protection and notification systems, fire protection devices such as extinguishers, smoke alarms, high-rise buildings, childcare facility standards, and fire suppression training.

3.20.2.2.4 California Public Resource Code Sections 4290 and 4291

California Public Resource Code Sections 4290 and 4291 require property owners to conduct maintenance to reduce fire danger. Required fire maintenance includes, but is not limited to, maintaining 100 feet of defensible space along all sides of a structure or up to the property line; removing dead or dying vegetative materials, trees, and/or shrubs; constructing fire breaks or other appropriate vegetation management techniques around fire-sensitive land uses (i.e., hospitals, adult residential care facilities, schools, storage tanks, and hazardous materials facilities); and maintaining vegetative clearings near electrical transmission or distribution lines.

3.20.2.2.5 CAL FIRE Strategic Plan

The 2024 Strategic Fire Plan for California focuses on fire prevention, suppression, and natural resource management to reduce wildfire hazards and protect lives, property, and ecosystems (CAL FIRE 2024b).

3.20.2.3 Local

3.20.2.3.1 Nevada County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024 Update

The 2024 Nevada County LHMP Update aims to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property from hazards. Nevada County and seven participating jurisdictions (including Nevada City) developed the LHMP to update the 2017 Federal Emergency Management Agency-approved Nevada County LHMP. The LHMP provides a risk assessment that identifies and profiled hazards that pose a risk to the County and participating jurisdictions (i.e., Nevada City), assesses the vulnerability of Nevada City to these hazards, and examines the existing capabilities to mitigate them. The Nevada City LHMP Annex details the hazard mitigation planning elements specific to the City of Nevada City. The Nevada City LHMP Annex determined the most vulnerable structures are those located within the flood prone areas,

Wildland Urban Interface areas, unreinforced masonry buildings, and buildings built prior to the introduction of modern building codes. The Nevada City LHMP Annex also determined Wildland fire as a hazard has a High Likelihood of Future Occurrence and Nevada City has a High Vulnerability. Overall, the wildfire risk exposure for Nevada City has remained relatively stable since 2017, as most new developments are not in high-risk areas. Nevada City has not undertaken any mitigation efforts since the 2017 LHMP other than the mitigation actions from the 2017 LHMP.

3.20.2.3.2 Nevada County General Plan

The Nevada County General Plan Chapter 10: Safety addresses the potential and existing hazards (such as Flood Hazards, Hazardous Materials and Mining Hazards, Public Safety Services and Facilities, Fire Hazards and Protection, Severe Weather Hazards, and Climate Change Resiliency and Mitigation) recognized and experienced in Nevada County (Nevada County 2020). Chapter 10 includes the following policies applicable to the Project:

- **Policy 10.1.4.** Provide for adequate evacuation routes in areas of high fire hazard, high potential for dam failure, earthquake, seiches, avalanche, flooding or other natural disaster.
- **Policy 10.1.11.** Mitigate development in areas of High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones by incorporating into conditions of approval the most current data in order to assure appropriate fuel modification around the development and emergency ingress and egress for residents, visitors and emergency services.
- **Policy 10.2.1.** Ensure that new construction meets current structural and safety standards.
- **Policy 10.6.1.** The County shall inventory and identify public and private facilities that provide or can be improved to provide temporary safety zones in times of emergencies.
- **Policy 10.7.6.** Locate new critical facilities outside of High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, unless alternatives are not available or feasible. (Refer to Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map and Critical Facilities in Section 4.3.15 in the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan).
- **Policy 10.8.4.** New development and subdivisions shall include adequate emergency infrastructure that includes but is not limited to, emergency water facilities to assist and support wildfire suppression, and adequate ingress and egress routes to facilitate emergency responders' access and the evacuation of inhabitants. Provisions shall be made on applicable projects to require the maintenance of emergency infrastructure and facilities.
- **Policy 10.8.5.** Land use patterns and development standards shall minimize fire hazards, and shall be reviewed and revised, as needed, consistent with the 5-year update of the Safety Element.
- **Policy 10.10.4.** The County shall support fuel modification across public and private forestlands to reduce the potential for catastrophic wildfires, with the highest priority directed

toward reducing hazardous fuel levels in the Wildland Urban Interface. The County shall, in coordination with other agencies, identify, create and maintain fuel breaks, such as the Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone.

3.20.2.3.3 Nevada City General Plan

The Nevada City General Plan Section 6 – Public Safety examines hazards to the public safety, including fire. The General Plan categorizes fire into two types: fire in developed areas and wildland fire. The General Plan designates the local fire districts as responsible for fire in developed areas. The General Plan designates CAL FIRE as responsible for "wildland fire hazard" and are noted to only provide protection during the "fire season" and are "not legally responsible for structural fires" (Nevada City 1986). The following objectives and policies are applicable to wildfire:

- Objective: Ensure safety for life and property in both wildlands and developed areas.
- Policy: The Nevada City Fire Department, in cooperation with CAL FIRE and the relevant Fire Districts, shall maintain high fire protection levels by requiring adequate access and water flow, based on established standards.

3.20.2.3.4 Nevada City Community Wildfire Protection Plan

The Nevada City CWPP highlights and ranks locations for hazardous fuels reduction treatments, covers community readiness, and suggests steps for homeowners and Nevada City to decrease the risk of structure ignition (Nevada City 2021). The CWPP includes an Action Plan that presents a series of recommendations intended to guide implementation of the CWPP. The CWPP identifies that the proposed Project site is within evacuation zone NEV-E244, as identified by Genasys Protect (Nevada City 2021). The recommendations included in the CWPP are intended to achieve the following goals:

- Reduce wildfire hazards to enhance community and firefighter safety.
- Enhance protection of values at risk from wildfire.
- Improve public awareness of wildfire risk.
- Encourage communication and coordination of wildfire risk reduction actions across land ownerships and jurisdictions.

3.20.2.3.5 Nevada City Climate Adaptation and Public Safety Element

The Climate Adaptation and Public Safety Element outline the goals, policies, and programs aimed at enhancing public safety, focusing on protecting the community from unreasonable risks such as wildfires, flooding, climate change, and dam failure (Nevada City 2023a). Specific goals of the Climate Adaptation and Public Safety Element related to fire hazards include:

- **GOAL FP-1**: Ensure safety for life and property in both wildlands and developed areas.

- **GOAL FP-2**: Enhance fire safety and improve fire protection effectiveness through infrastructure and service improvements.
- **GOAL FP-3**: Reduce fire risk to life and property through land use planning, ordinances, and compliance programs.
- **GOAL FP-4**: Encourage fire safety education and support programs to promote participation, voluntary compliance, and community awareness of fire safety issues.
- **GOAL FP-5**: Reduce fire severity and intensity through fuels management.

3.20.2.3.6 Nevada City Defensible Space and Vegetation Management Ordinance

This ordinance amended Chapter 8.10 ("Vegetation Management, Debris Removal and Abatement") of Title 8 ("Health and Safety") of the City of Nevada City Municipal Code, relating to fire control, defensible space, burning, and fireworks regulations, and includes the following regarding defensible space and vegetation management (Nevada City 2023b):

- Requirements and standards for maintaining vegetation in defensible space areas, consistent with California Public Resources Code 4291.
- Definitions of defensible space zones and maintenance standards within these zones.
- Standards for management of firewood, chimney spark arrestors, and non-vegetative fuels (e.g., propane tanks).
- Providing for firefighter access along all sides of a structure.
- Provisions for additional vegetation management, where determined necessary by Nevada City.
- Requirements associated with roadside vegetation management to not interfere with emergency vehicle access.

3.20.2.3.7 Nevada City Wildfire Prevention and Mitigation Plan

The Nevada City Wildfire Prevention and Mitigation Plan was developed by the Nevada City Fire Safety Advisory Committee and outlines a comprehensive plan to enhance Nevada City's resilience in the face of wildfires and draws on research and past planning documents (Nevada City 2023c). The plan centers on three strategic areas:

- Public Safety
- Vegetation Management and Home Hardening (Fuels)
- Community Engagement and Education

3.20.2.3.8 City of Nevada City Disaster Plan, 2011

Nevada City has a comprehensive Disaster plan in place to address hazard responses within Nevada City (Nevada City 2011). It describes the roles and responsibilities of Nevada City and outlines the requirements to respond to a disaster in California. The Disaster Plan identifies wildfire risk as predominantly associated with Wildland-Urban Interface areas. The Disaster Plan also states many of the roadways in Nevada City are not city-maintained roads and are not to current standards for city-maintained roads. The Project site is within city limits.

3.20.3 IMPACT ANALYSIS

Based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, a Project could have a significant impact related to wildfire if the Project would:

a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan;

b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire;

c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts on the environment; or

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.

Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Construction and Operation

While Nevada County has an adopted LHMP and Nevada City has a Community Wildfire Protection Plan, Wildfire Prevention and Mitigation Plan and City Disaster Plan, which are all intended to provide emergency resources and plans in response to local hazards, such as wildfires, neither the County nor Nevada City have an adopted emergency evacuation plan. However, emergency evacuation and access are considered feasible given the Project site's proximity to the Nevada County Consolidated Fire District State. Nearby emergency responders (including NCSO personnel) have measures that can be deployed to aid in the movement of the demolition/construction personnel from danger. For instance, during evacuation events, State and/or local emergency responders provide active traffic control at intersections, close roads, provide detours for through traffic, and actively manage available travel lanes to facilitate evacuation away from the emergency. Such measures would be initiated in the event an evacuation is deemed necessary.

Regional emergency access and evacuation is via SR-49. Kahele Court serves as a fire turnaround access driveway/easement. Prior to issuance of a building permit (during the construction phase), the Project would need to demonstrate that the building's features (e.g., roofing, eaves, exterior wall surfaces, overhangs, sprinkler systems, defensible space) are in conformance with the CFC 2025 California Wildland-Urban Interface Code (Title 24, Chapter 7). Since the Project is located within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, the Project will need to comply with wildfire-resistant construction and site-design provisions in Part 7, including utilizing ignition-resistant construction, vegetation and fuel modification zones, and wildfire-adapted building materials such as ember-resistant vents, fire-rated roofing, and appropriate exterior wall systems. These requirements also include defensible space and access provisions that facilitate firefighting operations, consistent with the risk-reduction intent of Part 7. Compliance with the 2025 California Building and Fire Code, now including Part 7, Conformance with the 2025 California Building and Fire Code would reduce potential fire risk impacts to acceptable levels. Project demolition and construction activities, such as relocating and undergrounding electrical infrastructure, are expected to be addressed in a Transportation Management Plan, which is to be developed prior to construction. Therefore, potential impacts regarding conflicts with emergency response plans during demolition and construction would be less than significant.

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?

Construction and Operation

According to the Nevada City CWPP, due to its weather, topography, and native vegetation, the majority of Nevada City is at risk from wildland fires (Nevada City 2021). The extended droughts characteristic of California's Mediterranean climate result in large areas of dry vegetation that provide fuel for wildland fires. The natural, undeveloped slopes of the hillside areas surrounding Nevada City support vegetation habitats (such as conifer forests) that are susceptible to wildfires common to the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The Project site is designated as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone within the wildland urban intermix and is generally surrounded by vegetation.

Natural vegetation (conifer trees) and disturbed ground cover is present within the Project site. The new building within the Project site would be constructed per the CFC standard and would comply with the enhanced ignition-resistant construction standards of the 2025 California Building and Fire Code Chapter 7A. The Project would be reviewed by the Nevada County Building Department to ensure that building construction meets the minimum standards for fire safety as defined in the 2025 California Building and Fire Code. These reviews will provide oversight on the proper installation and maintenance of fire access roadways, placement of hydrants, adequate water supply, access to structures, and appropriate use of building materials and practices. Compliance with standard conditions and jurisdictional oversight review

processes would reduce potential fire risk impacts to acceptable levels and the impact would be less than significant.

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 on the environment?

Construction and Operation

The Project would install and tie new utilities into existing SORDTF infrastructure. No explicit fuel breaks or aboveground power lines are proposed. The LHMP Annex for Nevada City lists ongoing wildfire mitigation efforts and states brushing and debris chipping and ladder fuel reduction on public lands (i.e., the Project site) and street rights-of-way are currently ongoing (Nevada County 2024a). The Project would not interfere with these ongoing efforts and thus, not exacerbate wildfire risk.

The Project does not include the installation of roads or access to the Project site. Access is currently provided via a single roadway connection to Kahele Court Kahele Court serves as a fire turnaround access driveway. Prior to issuance of a building permit, the Project would need to demonstrate that the building's features (e.g., roofing, eaves, exterior wall surfaces, overhangs, sprinkler systems, defensible space) are in conformance with the 2025 California Wildland-Urban Interface Code (Title 24, Part 7) Conformance with the 2025 California Building and Fire Code as overseen by the Nevada County Building Department would reduce potential fire risk impacts to acceptable levels; and therefore, be less than significant. No mitigation is required.

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?

Construction and Operation

As previously discussed, CAL FIRE identifies the Project site as within a Very High FHSZ in a Local Responsibility Area. The Very High FHSZ designation does not indicate that development cannot occur safely within this zone, but it does indicate that a higher level of ignition resistant materials must be used, and a higher level of design accommodations must be implemented. Such practices would be required by the CFC, California Health and Safety Code, and Nevada City's Defensible Space and Vegetation Management Ordinance as previously discussed above. In addition, there have been no disaster declarations associated with landslides in Nevada City and potential for future damaging landslide events remains in the sloped areas of Nevada City (Nevada County 2024a), which does not include the Project site. No adverse impacts associated with flood flows are anticipated. Based on the analysis above, both potential onsite and offsite risks associated with runoff, post-fire slope instability, and drainage changes are considered less than significant.

3.20.4 MITIGATION MEASURES

No mitigation measures required.

3.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have the potential to 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, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulative considerable? ("Cumulative considerable" means that the incremental effects of a Project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past Projects, the effects of other current Projects, and the effects of probable future Projects)?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☒	☐	☐

3.21.1 IMPACT ANALYSIS

Based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, a Project could have additional significant impacts if the Project would:

a) Have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory;

b) 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.); or

c) Have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly.

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?

The information in Section 3.4, Biological Resources, of this IS/MND analyzes the potential effects of the proposed Project on biological resources, including habitats, special status plant species, and special status wildlife species. Section 3.4, Biological Resources, requires the implementation of mitigation measures. The impacts would be less than significant with the incorporation of mitigation measures. The information in Section 3.5, Cultural Resources, and Section 3.18, Tribal Cultural Resources, of this study analyzes possible proposed Project effects on cultural and tribal cultural resources including the possibility of human remains. Section 3.5, Cultural Resources, and Section 3.18, Tribal Cultural Resources, require the implementation of mitigation measures. The impacts would be less than significant with the incorporation of mitigation measures. Therefore, with the incorporation of mitigation measures identified in Sections 4.1 through 4.20, above, the potential to substantially degrade the environment is less than significant.

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?

The Project involves the construction and operation of a new Regional Law Enforcement Indoor Shooting Range on County-owned property at the existing SORDTF. This IS/MND has identified potential impacts in the areas of biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazard and hazardous materials, tribal cultural resources, that are individually limited and require mitigation to ensure that the impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level both incrementally and cumulatively. Each resource within this IS/MND evaluates the proposed Project impacts as well as the proposed Project's incremental effects on cumulative impacts. The proposed Project approval is conditioned upon implementation of these mitigation measures that avoid incremental effects. Therefore, with the incorporation of mitigation measures identified in Sections 4.1 through 4.20, above, cumulative impacts are less than significant.

Have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

The proposed Project would not cause substantial adverse effects on human beings. As discussed in Sections 4.1 through 4.20, above, and specifically regarding public services, the

potential impacts to human beings would be less than significant with the incorporation of mitigation measures, identified in Sections 4.1 through 4.20, above.

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APPENDIX A

Air Quality, Greenhouse, and Energy Memorandum for the Nevada County Regional Law Enforcement Indoor Shooting Range Project

APPENDIX B

CDFW CNDDB, USFWS IPaC, and CNPS Search Results