

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

TO:

Office of Planning and Research
PO Box 3044
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

Plumas County Clerk
520 Main St., Room 102
Quincy, CA 95971

FROM:

American Valley CSD
900 Spanish Creek Rd.
Quincy, CA 95971

Project Title: American Valley CSD Wastewater Collection System Improvement Project

Project Location:

The Project is located in an unincorporated area of Plumas County in the community of Quincy in Sections 13, 14, 23, and 24 of Township 24 North, Range 9 East, of the U.S. Geological Survey Quincy quadrangle. The proposed sewer line improvements would occur at multiple locations within the American Valley CSD (AVCSD) sewer service area (see **Figure 1**).

City: Quincy (unincorporated)

County: Plumas

Project Description:

The Project includes replacement of deficient wastewater collection lines to ensure the health and safety of the community and the environment. The majority of the pipe replacements would occur within paved road rights-of-way (ROW). Work would occur outside of paved ROWs along Nugget Lane and immediately west of the Quincy Junior-Senior High School. At Nugget Lane, work would be conducted in the gravel road shoulder. A drainage ditch parallels Nugget Lane on the north side of the street. An existing sewer lateral extends under the ditch. The new lateral would be installed using a trenchless method (e.g., pipe-bursting, directional drilling, etc.), and no impacts to the ditch would occur.

Three alternatives are being considered for pipeline improvements near the High School; one would relocate most of the sewer main to a paved public road and paved bike path while others would include up to about 250 lineal feet of pipeline installation on residential parcels. One of the alternatives would require that the replacement sewer line cross a ditch paralleling the bike path. The sewer line would likely be extended under an existing 15-inch culvert in the ditch using a trenchless method, and no impacts to the ditch would occur.

Some of the sewer lines are undersized and not able to adequately handle existing wastewater flows. These undersized lines would be upsized to 8 inches in accordance with *Recommended Standards for Wastewater Facilities, 2014 Edition*. Upsizing the lines would not result in a significant increase in capacity.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: American Valley Community Services District

Name of Agency Carrying out the Project: American Valley Community Services District

Local Agency Contact Person: Jim Doohan, General Manager

Exempt Status: Categorical Exemption:

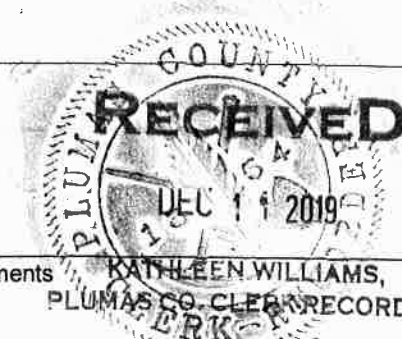
California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3 (CEQA Guidelines):

Class 1, §15301 (Existing Facilities)

Class 4, §15304 (Minor Alterations to Land)

Doc. # 2019-047

Rec. # 32-12/11/2019-0047



Notice of Exemption: American Valley CSD - Wastewater Collection System Improvements

I hereby certify that from 12/11/19 to 11/10/20 (30 days), I posted

this NOE in the office of the Plumas County Clerk -

KATHLEEN WILLIAMS,
PLUMAS CO. CLERK-RECORDER

See Cert / Deputy


Reason Why Project Is Exempt:

Class 1 includes the repair, maintenance, or minor alteration of existing public structures, facilities, and mechanical equipment, involving negligible or no expansion of use. Class 4 includes minor trenching and backfilling, provided that the surface is restored following construction.

The Project is consistent with the categorical exemptions noted above because work would consist of minor alterations to the AVCSD's public sewer system that are needed to accommodate existing wastewater flows, and negligible expansion of use would occur. In addition, following installation of the sewer line, the ground surfaces would be restored.

As documented in Attachment A, the proposed Project would not have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances; would not result in damage to scenic resources within a Scenic Highway; is not located on a hazardous waste site pursuant to §65962.5 of the Government Code; would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource; and would not result in cumulative impacts.

Signature:  Date: 12-11-19
Jim Doohan
General Manager

Date Received for Filing at OPR: 12/11/19 

Attachments:

- Figure 1: Vicinity Map
- Attachment A: Documentation in Support of a Categorical Exemption

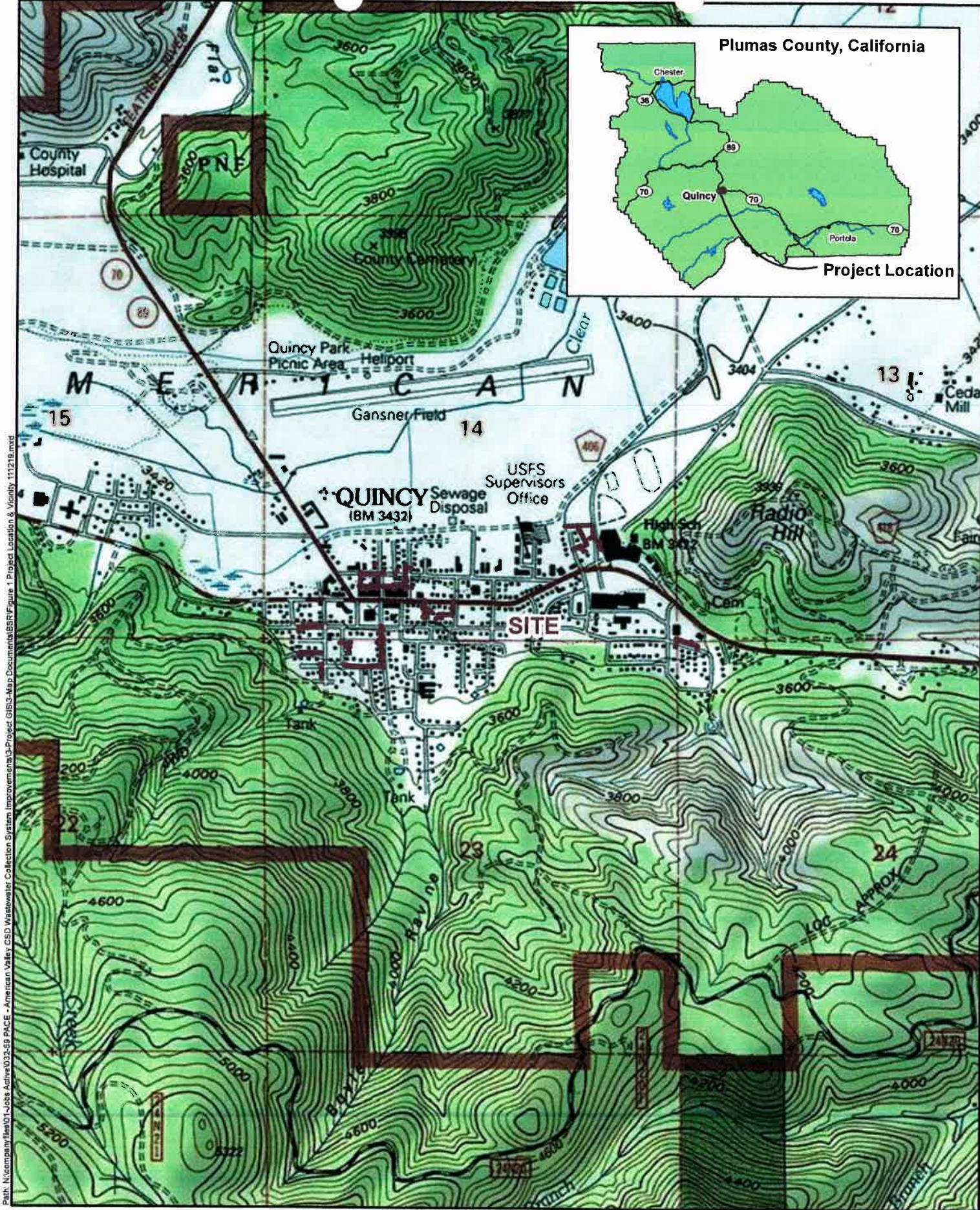


Figure 1
Project Location and Vicinity

All depictions are approximate. Not a survey product. 11.12.19

ATTACHMENT A

Documentation in Support of a Categorical Exemption

American Valley CSD Wastewater Collection System Improvements

As described in the Notice of Exemption (NOE), the proposed Project is categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to §15301 (Class 1-Existing Facilities) and §15304 (Class 4-Minor Alterations to Land) of the CEQA Guidelines. CEQA Guidelines §15300.2 identifies exceptions that override a lead agency's ability to use a categorical exemption. These exceptions are listed below, followed by documentation of why each exception does not apply to the proposed Project.

- 1. Cumulative Impact.** *All exemptions are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time, is significant.*

The Project involves improvements to existing components of the American Valley Community Services District's (District) wastewater collection system that are required in order to ensure the health and safety of the community and the environment. There are no other closely related past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future projects in the Project area that would cause related impacts. Impacts from the proposed Project would be temporary and cease at completion of the Project. Therefore, the proposed Project's impacts would not be cumulatively considerable.

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

An "unusual circumstance" exists if the project's circumstances differ from the general circumstances of projects covered by the applicable exemption, and, if so, whether there is a reasonable possibility of a significant effect on the environment *due to* the unusual circumstances. As documented below, there are no unusual circumstances that would preclude a categorical exemption for the proposed Project.

Aesthetics:

The proposed Project does not include construction of any new above-ground structures. Temporary visual impacts due to construction and staging activities would cease at the completion of the improvements. Paved areas that are disturbed during construction would be repaved following installation of the pipes. Only minor woody vegetation would be removed to accommodate the proposed improvements, and no trees would be removed.

Agriculture and Forestry Resources:

According to the California Department of Conservation, the Project site is not designated as prime, unique, or important farmland and is not under a Williamson Act contract. No trees would be directly or indirectly impacted by the Project; thus, no impacts to forestland would occur.

Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions:

The proposed Project would result in the temporary generation of ROG, NO_x, PM₁₀, and other regulated pollutants during construction. ROG and NO_x emissions are associated with employee vehicle trips, delivery of materials, and construction equipment exhaust. PM₁₀ would be generated during site preparation, excavation, road paving, and from exhaust associated with construction equipment. The Project does not include any other components that would result in a long-term increase in emissions. There are no unusual circumstances associated with air quality that would preclude a categorical exemption for the proposed Project.

Biological Resources:

Special-Status Species

A Biological Study Report (BSR) was prepared for the Project in December 2019 by ENPLAN. The evaluation of potential impacts to special-status species and sensitive habitats was based on a records search and field observations. Records reviewed for the evaluation consisted of California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDB) records for special-status plants, animals, and natural communities; the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) records for federally listed, proposed, and Candidate plant and animal species under jurisdiction of the USFWS; USFWS records for migratory birds of conservation concern; National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) records for anadromous fish species under the jurisdiction of the NMFS; soils records maintained by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service; and National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) maps.

To determine the presence/absence of special-status plant and animal species, botanical and wildlife screening evaluations were completed by an ENPLAN biologist on October 12, 2019. Some of the special-status species potentially occurring in the Project area would not have been evident at the time the fieldwork was conducted. However, determination of their potential presence could readily be made based on observed habitat characteristics. As documented in the BSR, no special-status plant or wildlife species were observed during the field survey, nor are any expected to be present.

Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be implemented throughout construction to control erosion and sedimentation and prevent damage to streams, watercourses and aquatic habitats. With implementation of BMPs, the potential for indirect effects on special-status species in downstream waters is less than significant.

Natural Communities

As documented in the BSR, no sensitive natural communities would be impacted by the proposed Project. Although ditches qualifying as waters of the U.S./State are present adjacent to two work areas, they would not be adversely affected.

Nesting Migratory Birds

Construction activities are not expected to directly affect nesting migratory birds because nearly all work would be completed in surfaced roadways, and minimal woody vegetation would be removed. Indirect effects, such as nest abandonment by adults in response to loud noise levels, are likewise not expected given the urban character of the work area. Any birds that may nest adjacent to the work area would be accustomed to periodic loud noises and other human-induced disturbances. There are no unusual circumstances associated with nesting migratory birds that would preclude a categorical exemption for the proposed Project.

Energy:

The proposed Project does not include any components that would result in environmental impacts due to the wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources. There are no unique circumstances related to energy use during construction or operation of the proposed Project that would result in more significant impacts than other similar projects.

Geology and Soils:

According to the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map, there are no Alquist-Priolo Special Study Zones in the Project area. The nearest Alquist-Priolo Special Study Zones occur approximately 33 miles northeast of the Project area. The 2010 Fault Activity Map, prepared by the California Geological Survey, indicates that there are potentially active faults north, east, and west of Quincy; however, this is not unique to the Project site.

According to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), one soil type, Forgay-Urban land complex, 0 to 5 percent slopes, (18), is mapped on the Project site. This soil type is found throughout the community of Quincy and is not unique to the Project site.

Hydrology and Water Quality:

Construction activities would result in the temporary disturbance of soil and would expose disturbed areas to potential storm events, which could generate accelerated runoff, localized erosion, and sedimentation. However, this is a temporary impact during construction activities, and no long-term impacts would occur. In addition, BMPs for spill prevention and erosion/sediment control would be implemented to prevent indirect impacts to streams, watercourses, and aquatic habitats. There is nothing unique about this property that would result in significant impacts to water quality.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map (Panels 06063C0904E, -0912E, and 0916E, effective March 2, 2005), improvements on Nugget Lane and west of the High School would occur in areas designated AE (100-year special flood hazard area with base flood elevations determined) and shaded Zone X (0.2 percent annual chance flood area). Some of the waterlines on Railway Avenue, Fillmore Street, and Church Street would be installed in areas designated as a 0.2 percent annual chance flood area. However, all improvements would be subsurface, and Project implementation would not impede or redirect flood flows or otherwise adversely affect the natural value and functions of the floodplain.

Land Use and Planning:

The proposed Project would not conflict with the County's General Plan, applicable County Codes, or standard construction measures, and does not include any components that would physically divide an established community.

Mineral Resources:

The California Geological Survey has not designated any Mineral Resource Zones in the Project area and the Project site is not zoned for mining activities.

Noise:

Construction activities would generate noise and would temporarily increase noise levels in the area. However, there is nothing unique to the Project that would result in more significant impacts than other construction projects in the area. The Project does not include any components that would result in a permanent increase in noise levels.

Population and Housing:

The purpose of the Project is to ensure the health and safety of the community and the environment. Because the Project would not increase capacity in the District's wastewater collection system, the Project would not induce population growth in the area beyond that currently projected in the County's General Plan.

Public Services:

Because the Project does not include any components that would significantly increase capacity in the District's wastewater collection system, the Project would not induce population growth in the area beyond that currently projected in the County's General Plan. Therefore, the Project would not generate a demand for additional fire protection, police protection, schools, parks, or other public services.

Recreation:

There are no unique recreational facilities or resources in or adjacent to the Project site. In addition, because the Project would not induce population growth, the Project would not indirectly impact recreational facilities or result in the need for additional recreational facilities.

Transportation:

Because the Project would not induce population growth, the Project would not directly or indirectly result in a permanent increase in traffic. There would be short-term increases in traffic in the area associated with construction workers and equipment; however, this is a temporary impact and would cease at completion of the improvements.

Utilities and Service Systems:

As documented herein, the proposed replacement/installation of sewer lines would not result in adverse environmental effects. Because the Project would not induce substantial population growth in the area there would be no increased demand for water supply, wastewater treatment, or solid waste disposal.

Wildfire:

The proposed Project does not include any development or improvements that would increase the long-term risk of wildland fires or expose people or structures to wildland fires. There are no unique circumstances associated with the proposed Project that would result in more significant impacts than other projects in the area.

3. Scenic Highways. *A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a State Scenic Highway.*

According to the California Scenic Highway Mapping System, there are no officially designated State Scenic Highways in the Project area; therefore, there would be no impact.

4. Hazardous Waste Sites. *A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to §65962.5 of the Government Code.*

The following databases were reviewed to locate "Cortese List" sites.

- List of Hazardous Waste and Substances sites from the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) EnviroStor database.
- SWRCB GeoTracker Database.
- List of solid waste disposal sites identified by SWRCB with waste constituents above hazardous waste levels outside the waste management unit.
- List of active Cease and Desist Orders and Clean-Up and Abatement Orders from the SWRCB.

The records search identified the following active clean-up sites in proximity to areas in which improvements would occur:

Fuel Star 76

The Fuel Star 76 clean-up site is located on Crescent Street, ±250 feet northwest of proposed improvements on Lawrence Street. This case was opened in September 2017 when discolored soil with a strong petroleum odor was observed following removal of an underground storage tank. Contaminated soil was excavated and removed from the site in 2017, and groundwater monitoring has been ongoing since the end of 2018.

According to Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVRWQCB) records, the nearest monitoring well associated with this clean-up site is ±250 feet northwest of proposed improvements on Lawrence Street. This well is located in the southeastern area of the property, ±15 to 20 feet from back of sidewalk. There is another monitoring well ±300 feet northwest of the proposed improvements, immediately behind the sidewalk. No monitoring wells are located within the road ROW or in any areas where work is proposed. Groundwater monitoring reports indicate that the depth to groundwater in this area has ranged between ±6 feet and ±11 feet below the ground surface. Because excavations associated with the proposed Project are not anticipated to exceed six feet in this location, the Project would not affect or be affected by the clean-up site.

Tom's Sierra

The Tom's Sierra clean-up site is located on Crescent Street, ±500 feet northwest of proposed improvements on Lawrence Street. There are two active clean-up sites on the property. The first was associated with Tom's Sierra Company Bulk Plant No. 43 and was opened in 2000. The bulk plant was used mainly to store waste oil, and accidental releases of small quantities of waste oil and other petroleum products have occurred.

The second case was opened in 2002 following release of 80 cubic yards of petroleum-impacted soil on the property. In 2014, soil and groundwater samples indicated significant diesel and gasoline contamination in the soil and groundwater. Groundwater monitoring has been ongoing. According to CVRWQCB records, the nearest monitoring well is ±450 feet northwest of proposed improvements on Lawrence Street. Due to the distance from the Project site, the Project would not affect or be affected by the Tom's Sierra clean-up site. There are no other active clean-up sites that could potentially be affected by the proposed Project.

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

A Cultural Resources Inventory Report (CRI) was completed for the proposed Project by ENPLAN in December 2019. The study included a records search, Native American consultation, and field evaluation. The records search included review of records at the Northeast Information Center of the California Historical Resources Information System (NE/CHRIS), a review of historic maps, the *National Register of Historic Places*, *California Register of Historic Resources*, *California Historical Landmarks*, *California Inventory of Historic Resources*, *California Points of Historic Interest*, the directory of properties in the Historic Property Data File for Plumas County, Plumas County Museum, and Historic Spots in California. Archaeological fieldwork took place on September 23, 2019, during which the Area of Potential Effects (APE) was intensively surveyed to identify cultural resources that could potentially be affected by the proposed Project.

A records search was conducted on August 13, 2019, to identify potential cultural resources in the Project area, and covered an approximate half-mile radius around the APE for previously recorded archaeological sites and for previously conducted surveys. The records search revealed that eleven archaeological surveys have been conducted within a half-mile radius of the APE, two of which encompassed the APE. There are seven previously recorded historic resources within a half-mile radius of the APE. No cultural resources have been previously recorded within the Project APE.

ENPLAN sent a request for a Sacred Lands Search and Native American contact list to the Native American Heritage Commission on August 5, 2019. The NAHC responded by email on August 13, 2019, indicating their files did not identify the presence of Native American sacred sites or cultural resources in the APE. Comment solicitation letters were sent on August 20, 2019, to tribal representatives; no responses specific to the proposed Project were received.

The CRI concluded that the Project would have no effect on any known cultural resources. Because there is always some potential for previously unknown cultural resources to be encountered during site excavation, the following standard construction measures would be included in construction contracts for the Project to address the inadvertent discovery of cultural resources and human remains:

1. In the event of any inadvertent discovery of cultural resources (i.e., burnt animal bone, midden soils, projectile points or other humanly-modified lithics, historic artifacts, etc.), all work within 50 feet of the find shall be halted until a professional archaeologist can evaluate the significance of the find in accordance with PRC §21083.2(g) and §21084.1, and CEQA Guidelines §15064.5(a). If any find is determined to be significant by the archaeologist, the District shall meet with the archaeologist to determine the appropriate course of action. If necessary, a Treatment Plan prepared by an archeologist outlining recovery of the resource, analysis, and reporting of the find shall be prepared. The Treatment Plan shall be reviewed and approved by the District prior to resuming construction.
2. In the event that human remains are encountered during construction activities, the District shall comply with §15064.5(e)(1) of the CEQA Guidelines and Public Resources Code §7050.5. All project-related ground disturbance within 100 feet of the find shall be halted until the County coroner has been notified. If the coroner determines that the remains are Native American, the coroner will notify the NAHC to identify the most likely descendants of the deceased Native Americans. Project-related ground disturbance in the vicinity of the find shall not resume until the process detailed in §15064.5(e) of the CEQA Guidelines has been completed.

DOCUMENTATION:

- California Department of Transportation.** 2019. California State Scenic Highway Mapping System. Plumas County. <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/design/lap-landscape-architecture-and-community-livability/lap-liv-i-scenic-highways>. Accessed October 2019.
- California Environmental Protection Agency.** 2019. Cortese List Data Resources. <http://www.calepa.ca.gov/sitecleanup/corteselist/>. Accessed December 2019.
- California Natural Diversity Database.** December 2019.
- Plumas County.** 2013. Plumas County General Plan. <http://www.plumascounty.us/index.aspx?NID=2116>. Accessed October 2019.
- _____. 2019. Plumas County Code of Ordinances. https://library.municode.com/ca/plumas_county/codes/code_of_ordinances. Accessed October 2019.
- Federal Emergency Management Agency.** National Flood Hazard Maps. <https://hazards-fema.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=8b0adb51996444d4879338b5529aa9cd>. Accessed October 2019.
- State of California, Department of Conservation.** California Geological Survey. 2019. SMARA Mineral Land Classification Maps. <http://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/informationwarehouse/index.html?map=mlc>. Accessed October 2019.
- _____. Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. 2019. California Important Farmland Maps. <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/ciff/>. Accessed October 2019.
- _____. California Geological Survey. 2019. Earthquake Zones of Required Investigation. <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/EQZApp/app/>. Accessed December 2019.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service.** 2019. Web Soil Survey. <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/WebSoilSurvey.aspx>. Accessed October 2019.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.** List of Threatened and Endangered Species. December 2019.
- U.S. Geological Survey.** 2010. Interactive Fault Map. <http://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/fam/>. Accessed December 2019.