



State of California – Natural Resources Agency  
 DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE  
 Northern Region  
 601 Locust Street  
 Redding, CA 96001  
[www.wildlife.ca.gov](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov)

**GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor**  
**CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director**



Governor's Office of Planning & Research

November 30, 2020

**Nov 30 2020**

## STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

Gabriel Edwards, Environmental Scientist  
 California State Water Resources Control Board  
 Division of Financial Assistance  
 1001 I Street  
 Sacramento, CA 95814

**Subject: Review of the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Starlite Pines Mutual Water Company Storage Capacity Improvements Project, State Clearinghouse Number 2020100563, Shingletown, Shasta County**

Dear Gabriel Edwards:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) has reviewed the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) dated October 28, 2020, for the above-referenced project (Project). As a trustee for the State's fish and wildlife resources, the Department has jurisdiction over the conservation, protection, and management of fish, wildlife, native plants, and their habitat. As a responsible agency, the Department administers the California Endangered Species Act and other provisions of the Fish and Game Code that conserve the State's fish and wildlife public trust resources. The Department offers the following comments and recommendations on this Project in our role as a trustee and responsible agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), California Public Resources Code section 21000 et seq.

### Project Description

The Project proposes to *“construct a new 236,000-gallon welded steel water storage tank and a block building pump station at Well Site 1. Construction of the tank and pump station would require the removal of approximately 44 trees ranging in size from 8 to 24 inches in diameter. Three vertically mounted pumps and a motor control center would be built inside the pump station and an emergency power generator would be located outside, adjacent to the building under the roof extension. At both well sites 1 and 2, 40-foot tall radio tower antennas would be constructed to facilitate communication between the two pump stations. The foundations for the radio towers will be concrete and installed to a depth of 4 feet and measure 4 feet wide by 4 feet long. Construction of the radio tower antenna at Well Site 2 would occur in a previously disturbed area, and no tree removal will be required at Well Site 2. The project also includes replacing five 4-inch dry barrel fire hydrants with five full-size 6-inch hydrants located on Starlite Pines Road and Constellation Drive to provide better flow for fire suppression.”* The existing in-ground reservoir and pump station at Well Site 1 will be demolished once the new tank and pump station are operational.

The Project is located on Starlite Pine Road at Constellation Drive and Ritts Mill Road on Assessor's Parcel Numbers 700-190-024, 700-190-023 and 700-150-008.

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## **Comments and Recommendations**

The Department has the following comments and recommendations:

The Department reviewed both the Biological Resource Assessment dated February 20, 2020 and the Botanical Survey Report dated July 1, 2020, prepared by Stantec Consulting Services Inc.

### Bat Surveys

Bats were not mentioned in the Biological Resource Assessment or in the MND but could occur within the Project area. Existing trees in the Project's disturbance area could support cavities or other structures that could be used by a variety of bat species. Removal or disturbance of a roost structure during the maternity season or hibernacula could cause significant impacts to bats, as a colony could consist of the entire local population of a species and impacts may lead to high mortality. The availability of suitable roosting habitat is considered a limiting factor for western bat populations. Roost site suitability is often based on a narrow range of suitable temperatures, relative humidity, physical dimensions, etc., and many species exhibit high roost site fidelity. Any vegetation removal or construction on the property should occur between September 1 – October 15 and between March 1 – March 31 to avoid the bat maternity season as well as the winter season when bats are in torpor and cannot escape. A two-day vegetation removal process should be followed by a qualified bat biologist as provided below:

- Day 1: Identify potential habitat trees. Remove non-habitat vegetation including shrubs and small diameter trees as well as specific small limbs and branches of habitat trees.
- Day 2: Remove the remaining large tree branches on the habitat tree and then removal of the main tree trunk.

This 2-day process works best as bats choose their roosts based on thermal properties. When the thermal properties are disturbed, the bats may leave to find other trees, snags, rock cracks, crevices, buildings, and/or bridges. Essentially, they self-evacuate the area.

If tree removal cannot occur within the time periods above, additional mitigation measures may be necessary as provided below:

If construction (including the removal of large trees) occurs during the bat breeding season (April 1 through August 15), a qualified bat biologist shall conduct a pre-construction survey of the study area to locate maternity colonies and identify measures to protect colonies from disturbance. The preconstruction survey will be performed no more than seven (7) days prior to the implementation of construction activities. If a maternity colony is located within or adjacent to the study area, a disturbance free buffer shall be established by a qualified bat biologist to ensure the colony is protected from all project construction activities.

### Survey Results

All survey results should be sent to the Department either electronically at [R1CEQARedding@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:R1CEQARedding@wildlife.ca.gov) or by mail at California Department of Fish and Wildlife, ATTN: CEQA, 601 Locust Street, Redding, California 96001.

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California Natural Diversity Database

If special status species are observed, the Department would appreciate the observation be put into the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB). Instructions for providing data to the CNDDDB can be found at: <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDDB/Submitting-Data>.

If you have any questions, please contact Amy Henderson, Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist), at (530) 225-2779, or by e-mail at [Amy.Henderson@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:Amy.Henderson@wildlife.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:  
*Curt Babcock*  
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**Curt Babcock**  
Habitat Conservation Program Manager

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