

CEQA Environmental Checklist

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND

Project Title: Granite Basin OHV Trail Development Project

Lead agency name: Butte County Resource Conservation District (BCRCD)

Address: 150 Chuck Yeager Way, Suite A, Oroville, CA 95965

Contact person: Tim Keeseey

Phone number: (530) 693-3173

Project sponsor's name: Butte County Public Works

Address: Oroville-Quincy Hwy, Granite Basin, Plumas National Forest, Plumas County.

Project Location: Plumas National Forest, Feather River Ranger District, Granite Basin, MDBM Township 22N, Range 06E, Section 12; T22N, R07E, Sections 5-7; T23N, 06E Sections 11-15, 21-28, 34; and 23N, 07E, Sections 18-23, 27, 29, 30, and 32 (*See Figure 1*)

General plan description: Timber Resource Land

Zoning: General Forest (GF)

Description of project:

This project involves three components: 1) development of a single track motorized trail; 2) road reclassification; and 3) road decommissioning.

- 1) Single Track Motorized Trail: This component of the project involves construction and/or reconstruction of approximately 14.23 miles of new and existing non-system OHV routes for single lane motorcycle use, and, in certain locations, for all-terrain vehicles (ATV) (*See Figure 2*). The trails are designed to match the character of the existing system trails, while keeping trail and construction impacts low and increasing recreational value by providing connectivity and all-day riding options.

This alternative was designed to accomplish the project purpose of improving connectivity and rider experience for single-track OHV users in the Granite Basin. Under this alternative, the Forest Service proposes to construct about 12.70 miles of new OHV track. Along new trail corridors, a corridor 8'-10' wide would be cleared of vegetation by hand crews using lop-and-scatter methods, which is a total of 12.31-15.39 acres to be cleared. The Forest Service also proposes to add about 1.53 miles of existing OHV single-track non-system trail to the official trail system. A 0.36-mile section of non-system, user-maintained trail that utilizes the historic Swayne Railroad Grade would be closed to users (by placing boulders and felling trees across the trail).

The project is primarily designed for use by motorcycles, but includes locations for ATV that are 50 inches or less in width. Specifically, the 0.30-mile section of proposed trail that connects Forest Service Road 23N60X to the existing OHV route 6M34 would have a designated use for ATV that are 50 inches or less in width. This route would also allow for motorcycle use.

Figure 1: Project Location

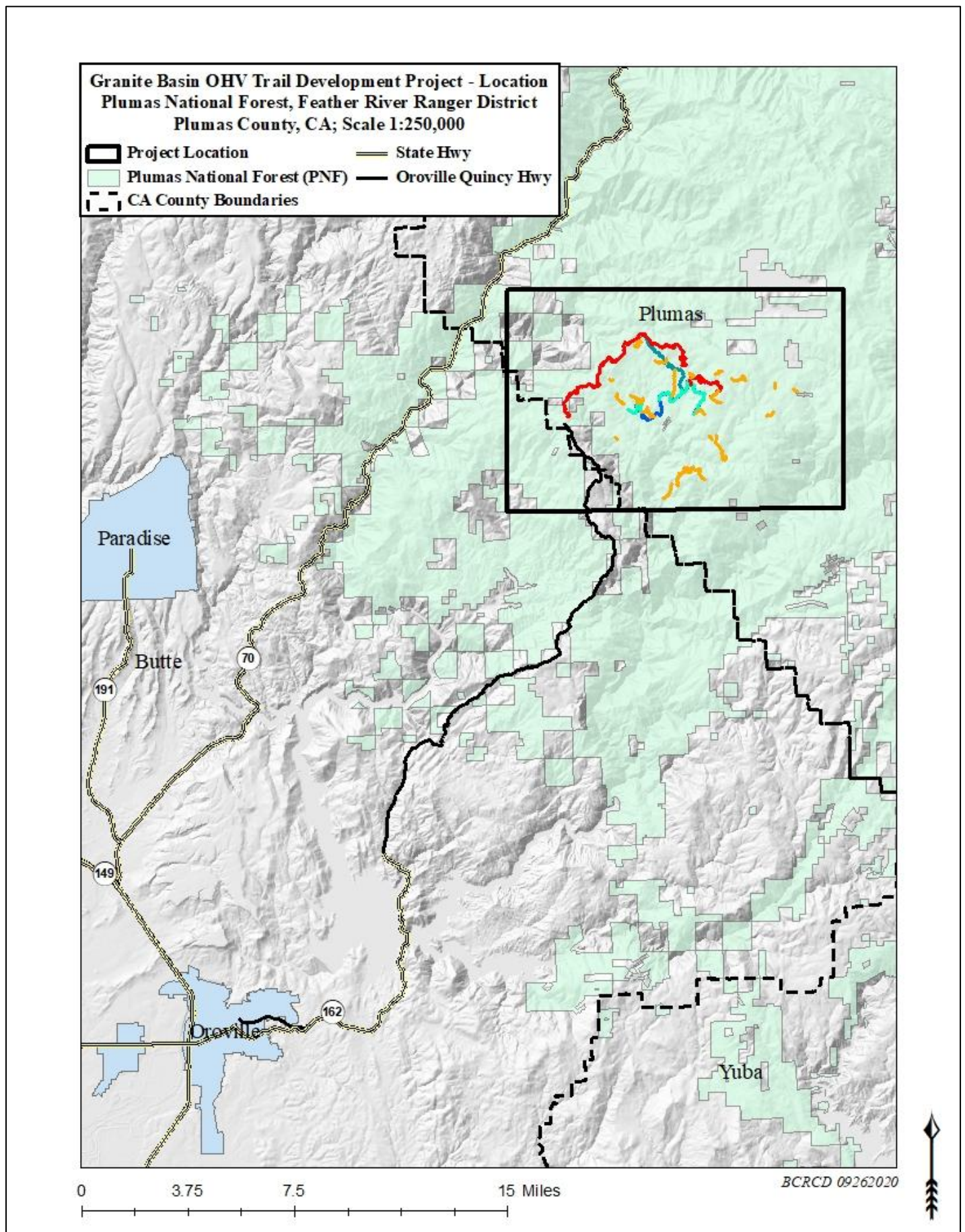
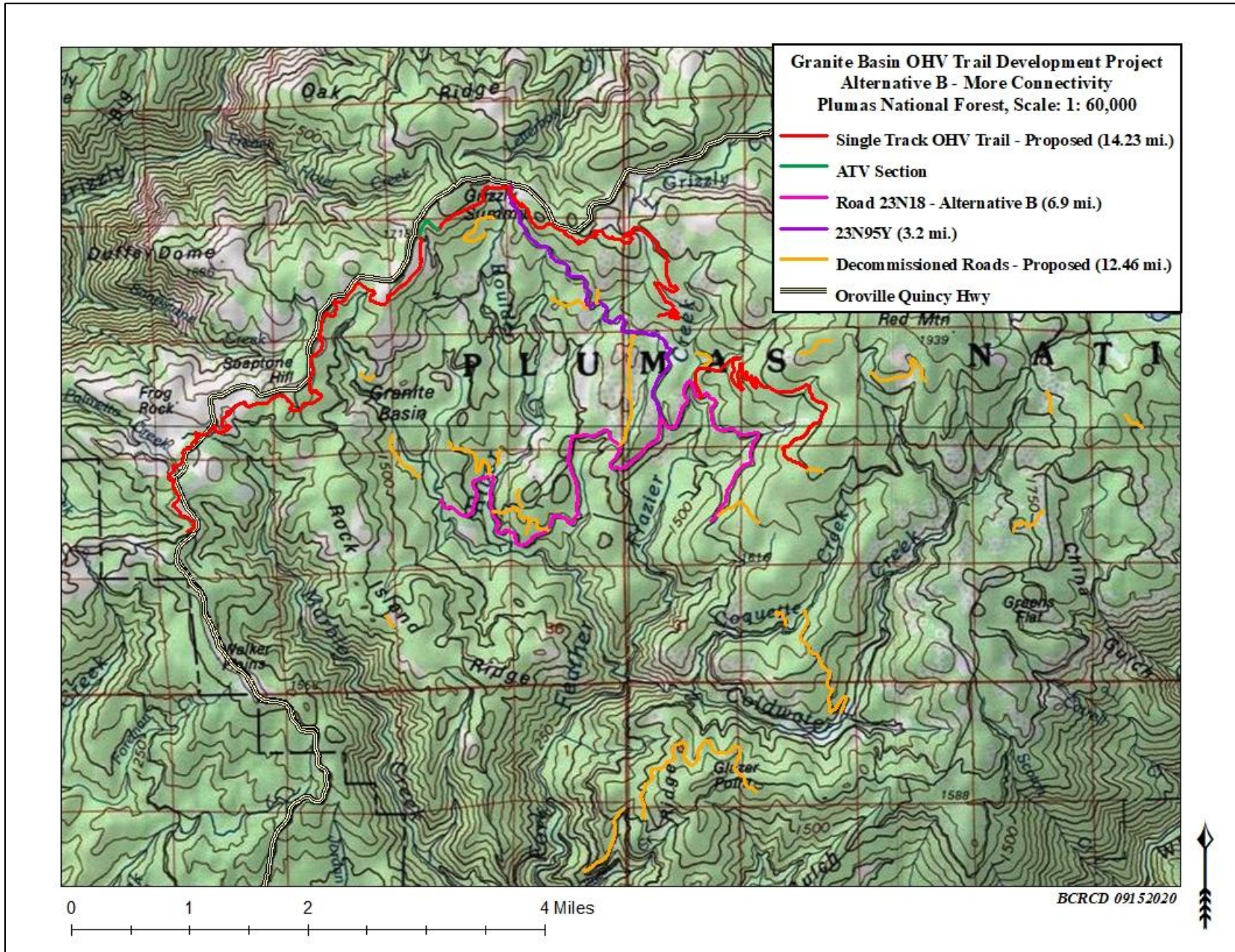


Figure 2: Proposed Project



The new proposed routes would be a combination of hand and machine built trail. The construction method would be based on terrain and soil conditions as determined by the contractor. The recommended equipment to be used by the contractor would be a mini-skid steer with a 6-way blade and/or a mini excavator (< 4 feet width). Sections of trail that are dense rock would likely be hand built. The section of trail north of Forest Service Road 23N85Y would be hand built.

Construction of new trail and the incorporation of non-system trail would be under USFS Class 2 specifications for single lane motorcycle trails (8-24 inches wide) and for ATV (48-60 inches wide) (FSH 2309.18 – TRAILS MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK 2008). Trails built by machine would have a maximum 4 feet wide construction corridor to accommodate for the machine passage. Tree felling deemed essential to the construction and function of the trail, or trees that pose a potential hazard to trail users, would be felled away from the trail by chainsaw. The felled trees would be bucked and then lopped and scattered. Deadfall would be cleared from the proposed trail corridor by chainsaw. A goal of the project is to match the character of the existing system trails while keeping trail and construction impacts low.

The placement of the project creates OHV-legal access with the Plumas National Forest Four Trees OHV Recreation Staging Area, located near the south end of the project at Four Trees. The staging area includes facilities and parking for recreational OHV use. The proposed project crosses the Oroville Quincy Highway in one location without construction changes. One proposed OHV route at the eastern end of the project is not connected to the other routes and is designed for access from Forest Service Road 23N18 or other system roads and trails.

Certain existing routes that are non-system would become system trails and added to the Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM). The trails would fall under the specifications and maintenance of Class 2 trails and be signed accordingly. These trails would be reviewed by the contractor and possible drainage features added to increase trail resiliency and reduce natural resources impacts.

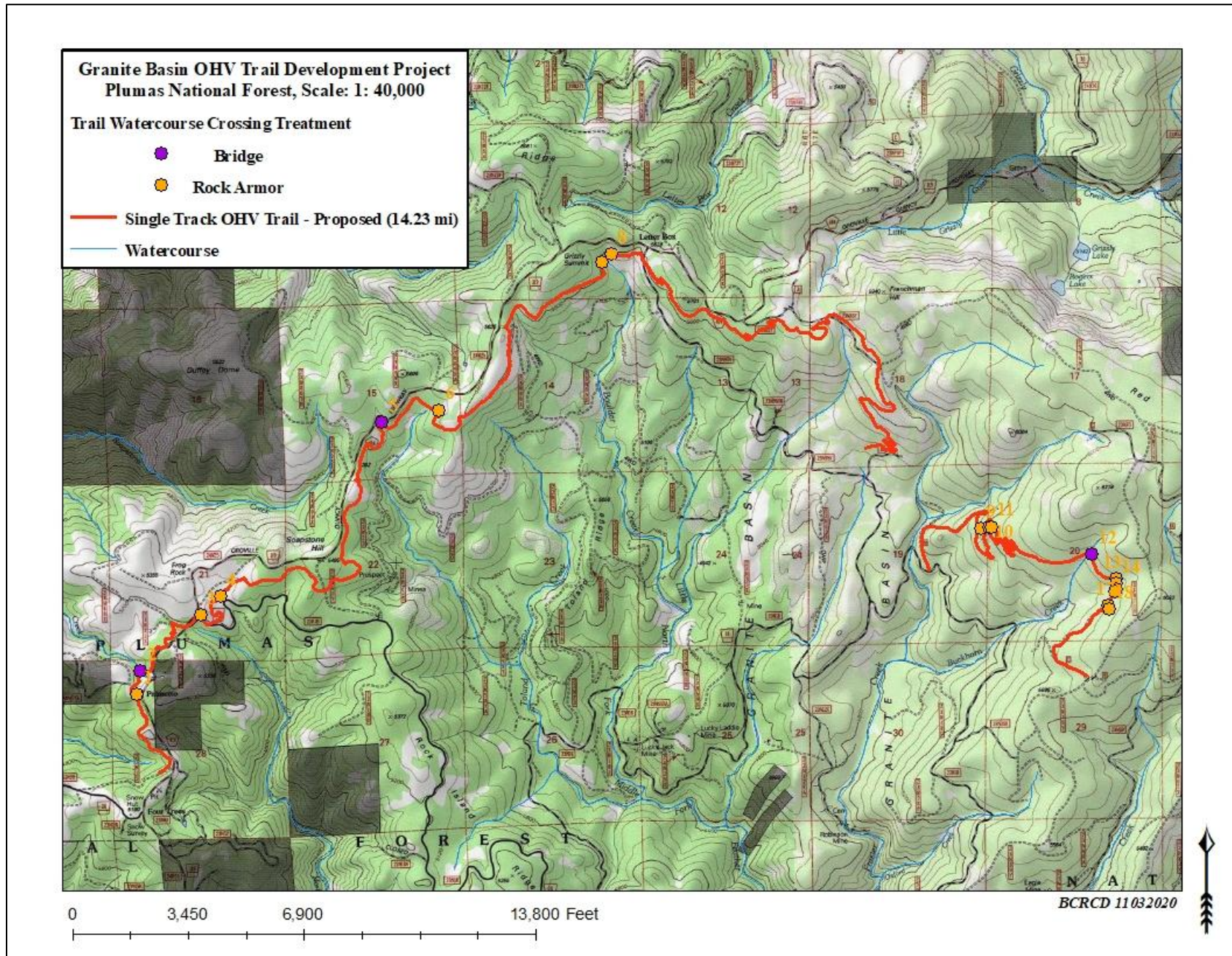
Trail stream crossings will be required in 18 locations along the proposed route (*See* Table 1 and Figure 3). Ten of these locations cross intermittent streams. Of these, three will require bridges in order to eliminate hydrologic connectivity between the trail and the watercourse. Rock armored crossings will be adequate to remove connectivity at the other seven smaller intermittent stream crossings. The other eight locations cross ephemeral drainages and rock armored crossings will be used to address hydrologic connectivity.

Table 1: Granite Basin OHV Trail – Stream crossings and proposed treatment.

Crossing #	Stream Type	Crossing Type	Size of Bridge or Rocked Armored Crossing
1	Ephemeral	Rock Armored Crossing	8'x4'
2	Intermittent	Bridge, critical armored dip and 20'armor from each approach	16'x4'
3	Ephemeral	Rock Armored Crossing	15'x4'
4	Intermittent	Rock Armored Crossing	15'x4'
5	Intermittent	Bridge	10'x4'
6	Intermittent	Rock Armored Crossing	8'x4'
7	Intermittent	Rock Armored Crossing	15'x4'
8	Ephemeral	Rock Armored Crossing	5'x4'
9	Ephemeral	Rock Armored Crossing	4'x4'
10	Ephemeral	Rock Armored Crossing	4'x4'
11	Ephemeral	Rock Armored Crossing	4'x4'
12	Intermittent	Bridge	28'x4'
13	Intermittent	Rock Armored Crossing	12'x4'
14	Intermittent	Rock Armored Crossing	25'x4'
15	Ephemeral	Rock Armored Crossing	5'x4'
16	Intermittent	Rock Armored Crossing	20'x4'
17	Ephemeral	Rock Armored Crossing	4'x4'
18	Intermittent	Rock Armored Crossing	25'x4'

Design authority for the proposed bridges falls under the responsibility of the Forest Engineer, who would review specifications for the three bridges and their abutments. Some sections of the trail would include abandoned road templates which would reduce new disturbance. Outsloping and armored rolling dips would be constructed on sections of trail where grades and down slopes could potentially create erosion patterns. Disturbance alongside the tread base would be minimized. Disturbed areas would be mulched with native materials, such as pine needles, where needed. Parking for trail access would use existing pullouts near Four Trees, along Oro-Quincy Hwy, and spurs off other system roads.

Figure 3: Location of stream crossings and proposed treatment.



- 2) Road Reclassification: This component of the project involves the evaluation of Maintenance Level 3 (ML3) roads for potential to reclassify as Maintenance Level 2 (ML2) or mixed use to increase OHV recreational value by providing connectivity and all-day riding. Roads 23N18 and 23N95Y within the project area are currently designated as Maintenance Level (ML3) roads. ML3 is defined in the FSH 7709.58, 10, 12.3. It is assigned to roads open and maintained for travel by prudent drivers in a standard passenger car. User comfort and convenience are low priorities. Roads in this maintenance level are typically low speed, single lane with turnouts, and spot surfacing. Some roads may be fully surfaced with either native or processed material.

These roads have the following attributes:

- Subject to the requirements of Highway Safety Act and MUTCD.
- Roads have low- to moderate-traffic volume.
- Typically connect to arterial and collectors roads.
- A combination of dips and culverts provide drainage.
- May include some dispersed recreation roads.
- Potholing or washboarding may occur.

As such, OHV vehicles are not able to use these roads and when encountered the OHV user must turn around and go back the way they came, limiting trail connectivity and riding opportunities. The proposed alternatives would change portions of these two roads from ML3 to ML 2 or Mixed Use. ML2 roads are defined in the FSH 7709.58, 10, 12.3 and are assigned to roads open for use by high-clearance vehicles. Passenger car traffic is not a consideration. Traffic is normally minor, usually consisting of one or a combination of administrative, permitted, dispersed recreation, or other specialized uses. Log haul may occur at this level.

These roads have the following attributes:

- Roads have low traffic volume and low speed.
- Typically local roads.
- Typically connect collectors or other local roads.
- Dips are the preferred drainage treatment.
- Not subject to the requirements of the Highway Safety Act.
- Surface smoothness is not a consideration.
- Not suitable for passenger cars.

For the purposes of this document, motorized mixed use is defined as the designation of a Forest Service road for use by both highway legal and non-highway legal motor vehicles. Designating Forest Service roads for mixed use involves safety and engineering considerations. Forest Service guidelines state that reclassification to ML 2 must be considered before mixed use ML3 is considered. Approval of mixed use is granted by the Regional Forester based on adequate analysis provided by a qualified engineer.

Under this alternative, 6.9 miles of 23N18 from the end of the chipped sealed road to the eastern end of the new proposed single track OHV routes would be reclassified from ML3 to ML2 or mixed use. In addition, the entire length of 23N95Y (3.2 miles) would be reclassified from ML3 to ML2 or mixed use (*See Figure 2*).

Any proposed modifications to the National Forest Transportation System (NFTS) that would result in changes to public access would amend the Plumas National Forest Public Motorized Travel Management Project (Travel Management Rule – Subpart B) (2010).

- 3) **Road Decommissioning:** The following road segments within the Granite Basin project area described in Table 2 would be decommissioned, removed from the Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) and the Plumas National Forest Public Motorized Travel Management Project (Travel Management Rule – Subpart B) (2010):

Table 2: Road segments, lengths, and conditions/reasons for decommissioning.

Road ID#	Road Name	Length of Road (mi.)	Condition/Reason for decommissioning
22N22X	Glazer	2.06	No evidence of use. Substantial hydrologic connectivity issues.
23N13XA	Rock Island Spur A	0.27	Overgrown, blocked, and non-existent
23N15	Gravel Range	0.68	Overgrown, blocked, and non-existent
23N15K	Gravel Range Spur K	0.19	Overgrown, blocked, and non-existent
23N15M	Gravel Range Spur M	0.19	No evidence of use. Heavily overgrown.
23N18G	Coldwater Spur G	0.11	Decommission road after dispersed campsite access (first 400 ft. from 23N18) due to overgrowth and deterioration of road prism.
23N23C	Gravel Source	0.14	Overgrown, blocked, and non-existent
23N25X	Baby Jack	0.40	Decommission road. Potential future trail from east half of 23N59X
23N25XA	Baby Jack Spur A	0.13	Overgrown, blocked, and non-existent
23N28X	Frenchman Hill	0.58	Keep 23N28X open from 23N95Y to intersection with trails 6M30A and 6M34A (0.37 mi). Decommission the rest of 23N28X west of this intersection. 0.36 mi of decommissioned road coincides with 6M30A. The last 0.22 mi. of the road heads east and no longer coincides with 6M30A.

Road ID#	Road Name	Length of Road (mi.)	Condition/Reason for decommissioning
23N29X	Toland	0.72	No evidence of use and no intersection with 23N23. The eastern 0.1 mile coincides with 6M29B. This segment will remain on the system as 6M29B.
23N29XA	Toland Spur A	0.14	Decommission eastern portion of road that heads north.
23N39X	Zanella	0.47	Decommission the west segment due to blockage.
23N58B	Upper China Gulch Spur B	0.38	Overgrown, blocked, and non-existent
23N58YA	South Granite Spur A	0.48	Overgrown, blocked, and non-existent
23N59X	Lucky Jack	0.20	Decommission the west portion due to erosion and resource concerns.
23N59XA	Lucky Jack Spur A	0.18	Overgrown, blocked, and non-existent
23N63X	Red Sky	1.02	Access issues, hydrologic connectivity issues, portions with non-existent road prism
23N66X	Biggy	1.36	Overgrown and impassible; hydrologic connectivity issues
23N68X	OnTop A OnTop	0.20	Keep first .54 miles from 23N15, but decommission rest of road due to lack of use and hydrologic connectivity issues.
23N70B	Grizzly Mtn. Spur B	0.76	No evidence of use. Heavily overgrown. Hydrologic connectivity issues.
23N71YA	Coquette Creek Spur A	0.31	Overgrown, blocked, and non-existent
23N71YB	Coquette Creek Spur B	0.12	Overgrown, blocked, and non-existent
23N71YC	Coquette Creek Spur C	0.68	Decommission road and maintain motorized trail.
23N89B	Upper Coquette Cr. Spur B	0.20	No evidence of use. Sensitive resources.
23N95YB	Dina Spur B	0.12	No evidence of use. Dead-end spur and redundant with 6M33 trail.
23N95YC		0.37	Overgrown, blocked, and non-existent; sensitive resource issues.
	TOTAL	12.46	

Surrounding land uses and setting:

The project is surrounded by Plumas National Forest lands managed for watershed, wildlife, timber, fire protection, and recreation.

Other public agencies whose approval is required (e.g. permits, financial approval, or participation agreements):

Plumas National Forest - NEPA

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – ESA (Sierra Nevada Yellow-Legged Frog) Consultation

CA Dept. of Fish and Game – 1600 permits

NATIVE AMERICAN CONSULTATION

Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code (PRC) section 21080.3.1? Yes No

If yes, ensure that consultation and heritage resource confidentiality follow PRC sections 21080.3.1 and 21080.3.2 and California Government Code 65352.4

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project. Please see the checklist beginning on page 4 for additional information.


- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture and Forestry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geology/Soils | <input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hazards and Hazardous Materials | <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology/Water Quality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use/Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noise | <input type="checkbox"/> Population/Housing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal Cultural Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Service Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildfire |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None with Mitigation Incorporated |

DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation (choose one):

- I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

David Lee, Chairman



Signature

11-5-2020
Date

CEQA Environmental Checklist

This checklist identifies physical, biological, social and economic factors that might be affected by the proposed project. In many cases, background studies performed in connection with the projects indicate no impacts. A NO IMPACT answer in the last column reflects this determination. Where there is a need for clarifying discussion, the discussion is included either following the applicable section of the checklist or is within the body of the environmental document itself. The words "significant" and "significance" used throughout the following checklist are related to CEQA, not NEPA, impacts. The questions in this form are intended to encourage the thoughtful assessment of impacts and do not represent thresholds of significance.

1.1 AESTHETICS

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	No Impact
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	No Impact
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, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	No Impact
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	No Impact

Discussion

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

No impact. The area surrounding the project site is forested. Views are of native vegetation. Trail development will have minimal impacts on vegetation around the perimeter of the site. Therefore, the project will not substantially interfere with any scenic views, or otherwise, have a substantive negative aesthetic impact.

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

No impact. The proposed project does not include new construction that would disturb features such as trees, rock outcroppings and historic buildings within a state scenic highway. Further, the project site is not adjacent to 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 publicly accessible vantage points.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

No Impact. The trail is intended to assist the public in viewing the existing visual character and quality of public views of Granite Basin on the Plumas National Forest.

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

No impact. The proposed project will not result a new source of light.

1.2 AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES

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

Question	CEQA Determination
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?	No Impact
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	No Impact
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))?	No Impact

Question	CEQA Determination
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	No Impact
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?	No Impact

Regulatory Setting

Williamson Act/Land Conservation Act (LCA) Contracts

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, commonly known as the Williamson Act, was established based on numerous State legislative findings regarding the importance of agricultural lands in an urbanizing society. Policies emanating from those findings include those that discourage premature and unnecessary conversion of agricultural land to urban uses and discourage discontinuous urban development patterns, which unnecessarily increase the costs of community services to community residents. The Williamson Act authorizes each County to establish an agricultural preserve. Land that is within the agricultural preserve is eligible to be placed under a contract between the property owner and County that would restrict the use of the land to agriculture in exchange for a tax assessment that is based on the yearly production yield. The contracts have a 9-year term that is automatically renewed each year unless the property owner or county requests a non-renewal or the contract is canceled

Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program

The California Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) develops statistical data for analyzing impacts on California’s agricultural resources. The FMMP program characterizes “Prime Farmland” as land with the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics that are able to sustain long-term production of agricultural crops. “Farmland of Statewide Importance” is characterized as land with a good combination of physical and chemical characteristics for agricultural production, but with less ability to store soil moisture than prime farmland. “Unique Farmland” is used for the production of the state’s major crops on soils not qualifying as prime farmland or of statewide importance. The FMMP also identifies “Grazing Land”, “Urban and Built-up Land”, “Other Land”, and “Water” that is not included in any other mapping category.

California Public Resources Code Section 4526

"Timberland" means 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 a commercial species used to produce lumber and other forest products, including Christmas trees. Commercial species shall be determined by the board on a district basis.

California Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)

"Forest land" is land that can support 10-percent 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.

Discussion

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?

No impact. The project is not located in an area identified as prime, unique or farmland of statewide importance.

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

No impact. The project site is not under an existing Williamson Act Contract. All improvements would be confined to the project site. The project will not conflict with existing zoning or agricultural use of a parcel under 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))?

No impact. The site is classified as forestland and is zoned General Forest. However, the proposed project does not conflict with the existing zoning and will not cause rezoning of forest land.

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

No impact. The proposed project will not result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. It will allow the public to access and commune with forest resources.

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?

No impact. The project is not located in an area with Farmland and will not preclude the Forest Service from continuing to operate the area as forest land.

1.3 AIR QUALITY

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

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	No Impact

Question	CEQA Determination
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?	No Impact
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	No Impact
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	No Impact

Environmental Setting

Plumas County is located within the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD) jurisdiction. The NSAQMD was formed in 1986 by the merging of the Air Pollution Control Districts of Nevada, Plumas and Sierra Counties. The NSAQMD includes areas characterized by mountain ranges and valleys on the north eastern side of the Sacramento Valley and covers an area of approximately 4,549 square miles. The NSAQMD is part of the Mountain Counties Air Basin which includes Plumas, Sierra, Nevada, Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, Mariposa and portions of Placer and Eldorado Counties.

Plumas County is in attainment or unclassified for all Federal Ambient Air Quality Standards (AAQS). Plumas County is currently designated as nonattainment for PM10 based on state standards administered by the ARB.

Recorded trends are likely to continue because the primary causes of PM10 (road dust, wildfires) are not expected to decrease. These designations are based on annually collected data from three air quality monitoring stations located in the County. The primary activities contributing to these pollutant emissions include wildfires, use of woodstoves, forestry management burns, residential open burning, vehicle traffic on unpaved roads and windblown dust. The varying topography of the air basin also contributes to localized air quality issues within valley areas. For example, the Portola Valley area consistently has high levels of PM2.5 primarily due to the use of woodstoves and residential and prescribed burning.

Ozone is also a concern in the County. Ozone is formed when reactive organic gases (ROG) and nitrogen oxides (NOx) react in the presence of sunlight. Industrial processes (i.e., lumber mills) account for the majority of emissions in the County.

Weather patterns can transport pollutants from neighboring air basins. For example, ozone generated in the more populated Sacramento Valley Air Basin can contribute to air pollutant concentrations in surrounding areas.

The ARB provides information relative to the State and Federal status of all recorded air quality pollutants. According to recent records, Plumas County is in State “Attainment” status for all other recorded pollutants (including carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, sulfates and lead) and in Federal “Attainment/Unclassified” status for carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, and sulfur dioxide.

Discussion

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

No impact. A project is deemed inconsistent with an air quality plan if it would result in population or employment growth that exceeds the growth estimates in the applicable air quality plan (i.e., generating emissions not accounted for in the applicable air quality plan emissions budget). Therefore, proposed projects need to be evaluated to determine whether they would generate population and employment growth and, if so, whether that growth would exceed the growth rate included in the applicable air quality plan. The proposed project would not result in population growth in the County. Trail users and other Granite Basin visitors are transitory, intermittently arriving from local and regional population centers for a short duration. This would not cause relocation of populations or housing. Further, the project would not result in a substantial increase in criteria air pollutants that would cause significant impacts to regional air quality.

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?

No impact. The proposed project has the potential to impact air quality primarily from mobile sources emissions generated by the public traveling by motor vehicles to and from the area and utilizing the proposed trails. Mobile source emissions produced from motor vehicles include tailpipe and evaporative emissions. Overall, operational emissions generated by the project are not expected to be substantial and would not violate existing air quality standards because use is intermittent and short in duration.

c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

No impact. Some individuals are considered to be more sensitive than others to air pollution. Reasons for greater sensitivity can include existing health problems, duration of exposure to air pollutants, or certain peoples' increased susceptibility to pollution-related health problems due to factors such as age.

Land uses such as day care providers, primary and secondary schools, hospitals, and convalescent homes are considered to be sensitive receptors to poor air quality because the very young, the old, and the infirm are more susceptible to respiratory infections and other air quality related health problems than the general public. The project is not located near populations areas with sensitive receptors and therefore will not expose these receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.

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

No impact. No objectionable odors would be caused by the project. Any odors generated by the project would be similar to odors typically generated by recreation and forest management. Any such odors generated by the project would be temporary and limited to

the area adjacent to the project areas, thereby not impacting a substantial number of people. Since odor impacts would be temporary and limited to the area adjacent to the operations, and because the project site is located in a rural area of the county, odors would not impact a substantial number of people for an extended time.

1.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or NOAA Fisheries?	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated
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?	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated
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?	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated
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?	Less Than Significant Impact
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	No Impact
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?	No Impact

Environmental Setting

Vegetation Communities

Sierran Mixed Conifer (SMC) and Red Fir (RF)

The project area is located in a transition zone between Sierran mixed conifer and red fir communities that is characterized by mixtures of red fir, white fir, and sugar pine. The red fir is a unique feature in this zone and occurs at significantly lower elevations than typically found in other areas on the Feather River Ranger District. SMC habitat is composed of both conifer and hardwood species in a multi-layered forest structure. Shrubs are common in the understory where openings occur. Montane meadow and riparian areas are found within this habitat type. Dominant species of this habitat type are white fir, Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, sugar pine, incense-cedar, and California black oak. Shade tolerant white fir tends to be the most abundant species.

The mixed conifer forest fosters high animal diversity by providing essential foraging, nesting, and cover habitat, including habitat for several sensitive species of frog, bird, mammals, and rare plants. Common species observed within this community type include bear, deer, squirrel, raven, turkey vulture, and Stellar's jay.

Red fir habitat is characterized by even-aged groups of trees that cover relatively large blocks of land. Mature stands are usually monotypic. Heavy shade and a thick duff layer inhibit understory vegetation, especially in dense stands. This habitat type is essential to numerous species of amphibians and wildlife, including several sensitive species of frog, bird, mammal, and rare plants.

Special-Status Species

Many species of plants and animals within the State of California have low populations, limited distributions, or both. Such species may be considered "rare" and are vulnerable to extirpation as the state's human population grows and the habitats these species occupy are converted to agricultural and urban uses. A sizable number of native species and animals have been formally designated as threatened or endangered under State and Federal endangered species legislation. Others have been designated as "Candidates" for such listing and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) have designated others as "Species of Special Concern". The California Native Plant Society (CNPS) has developed its own lists of native plants considered rare, threatened or endangered. Collectively, these plants and animals are referred to as "special status species."

Various direct and indirect impacts to biological resources may result from the small amount of development enabled by the project, including the loss and/or alteration of existing undeveloped open space that may serve as habitat. Increased vehicle trips to and from the project site can result in wildlife mortality and disruption of movement patterns within and through the project vicinity.

California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15065 requires a mandatory finding of significance for projects that have the potential to substantially degrade or reduce the habitat of a threatened or endangered species, and to fully disclose and mitigate impacts to special status

resources. For the purposes of this Initial Study, the California Environmental Quality Act (Sections 21083 and 21087, Public Resources Code) defines mitigation as measure(s) that:

- Avoids the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action.
- Minimizes impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation.
- Rectifies the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the impacted environment.
- Reduces or eliminates the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the project.
- Compensates for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

To identify which federally listed, PNF-Sensitive, and CA-Rare plant species, if any, may be present in the project area, a 12-quad CNDDDB search was conducted. The central quads were the Soapstone Hill and Haskins Valley quads (See Table 3). The California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) was reviewed and a species list was requested from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Consultation Code: 08ESMF00-2020-SLI-1437) to determine if any special-status wildlife species have the potential to occur on the project site or its vicinity. Table 4 lists each special-status species identified within a three mile radius of the project site, along with regulatory status and habitat requirements for each special-status species. A total of 12 wildlife special-status species are known to inhabit areas within the vicinity of the project site. A botanical survey was conducted within the Area of Potential Effect (APE) during the 2018 – 2020 field seasons. In addition, protocol surveys were conducted during 2018 for Forest Carnivores, 2018 for California spotted owls, 2018-2019 for northern goshawks, and 2018-2019 for amphibians.

Table 3. Special-Status Plant Species in the vicinity of the project site.

Species	Status*	Determination**	Rationale:
<i>Ivesia webberi</i> (Webber's ivesia)	FT; 1B.1	Not analyzed	Habitat of Great Basin scrub and pinyon-juniper woodlands in Sierra and Dog Valleys not present in project area.
<i>Allium jepsonii</i> (Jepson's onion)	S; 1B.2	Not analyzed	Habitat of chaparral and open, serpentine or volcanic slopes and flats below 3500 feet not present in project area
<i>Balsamorhiza macrolepis</i> (big-scale balsamroot)	S; 1B.2	May affect, not likely	Habitat of open grassy or rocky slopes below 5700', sometimes on serpentinite, present in project area; habitat surveyed and species not found
<i>Boechea constancei</i> (Constance's rockcress)	S; 1B.1	May affect, not likely	Habitat of serpentine slopes and ridges from 2850' to 6250' present in project area; habitat surveyed and species not found
<i>Botrychium ascendens</i> (upswept moonwort)	S; 2B.3	May affect, not likely	Habitat of mesic to moist meadows, or open woodland near streams or seeps, from 4900' to 10,500' present in project area; habitat surveyed and species not found
<i>Botrychium crenulatum</i> (scalloped moonwort)	S; 2B.2	May affect, not likely	Habitat of saturated hard water seeps and stream margins and/or bogs and fens; meadows and seeps, marshes and swamps (freshwater); in upper and lower montane coniferous forest from 4900' to 11,800' present in project area; habitat surveyed and species not found
<i>Botrychium minganense</i> (Mingan moonwort)	S; 2B.2	May affect, not likely	Habitat of bogs and fens; meadows and seeps, meadows and seeps (edges); in upper and lower montane coniferous forest from 4900' to 10,200' present in project area; habitat surveyed and species not found
<i>Botrychium montanum</i> (western goblin)	S; 2B.1	May affect, not likely	Habitat of shady conifer woodland, especially under <i>Calocedrus</i> along streams, from 4900' to 6900' present in project area; habitat surveyed and species not found
<i>Brasenia schreberi</i> (watershield)	2B.3	Not analyzed	Aquatic habitat not present in project area nor affected by project
<i>Bruchia bolanderi</i> (Bolander's bruchia moss)	S	May affect, not likely	Habitat unclear but presumed to be present in project area; project area surveyed and species not found

Species	Status*	Determination**	Rationale:
<i>Buxbaumia viridis</i> (buxbaumia moss)	S; 2B.2	May affect, not likely	Habitat of fallen, decorticated wood or humus in lower, upper, and subalpine montane coniferous forest present in project area; habitat surveyed and species not found
<i>Calycadenia oppositifolia</i> (Butte County calycadenia)	S	Not analyzed	Habitat of sunny openings in woodland below 2700' not present in project area
<i>Cardamine pachystigma</i> <i>var. dissectifolia</i>	1B.2	Not analyzed	Habitat of shaded woodlands on serpentine under 4600' not present in project area
<i>Carex cyrtostachya</i> (Sierra arching sedge)	1B.2	Not analyzed	Habitat of wet meadows under 4500' not present in project area
<i>Carex limosa</i> (mud sedge, shore sedge)	2B.2	Not analyzed	Habitat of sphagnum bogs and swamps/fens not present in project area or affected by project area
<i>Carex scoparia</i> <i>var. scoparia</i> (pointed broom sedge)	2A	Not analyzed	Habitat of mesic Great Basin scrub not present in project area; known only from 1 1976 collection at Snake Lake near Quincy
<i>Clarkia gracilis</i> <i>ssp. albicaulis</i> (white-stemmed clarkia)	S; 1B.2	Not analyzed	Habitat of grassy foothill woodland below 3700' not present in project area
<i>Clarkia mildrediae</i> <i>ssp. mildrediae</i> (Mildred's clarkia)	S; 1B.3	May affect, not likely	Habitat of sandy, usually granitic soils in montane woodland or yellow pine forest between 1300' and 5600' present in project area; habitat surveyed and species not found
<i>Clarkia mosquinii</i> (Mosquin's clarkia)	S;1B.1	May affect, not likely	Habitat of dry, rocky places in cismontane woodland and lower montane coniferous forest from 920-5875' present in project area; habitat surveyed and species not found
<i>Corallorhiza trifida</i> (northern coralroot)	2B.1	May affect, not likely	Habitat of meadows and seeps (edges) in lower montane coniferous forest from 3700-6600' present in project area; habitat surveyed and species not found

Species	Status*	Determination**	Rationale:
<i>Cypripedium fasciculatum</i> ; clustered lady's-slipper	S	May affect, not likely	Habitat of mesic to moist, shady conifer forest, 300-6000' present in project area; habitat surveyed and species not found
<i>Epilobium luteum</i> (yellow willowherb)	2B.3	May affect, not likely	Habitat of moist streambanks, montane meadows in lower montane coniferous forest from 3900'-8200' present in project area; habitat surveyed and species not found
<i>Eremogone cliftonii</i> (Clifton's eremogone)	S; 1B.3	May affect, not likely	Habitat of decomposing granite in meadows and openings in oak/conifer woodland, chaparral, & lower and upper montane coniferous forest from 1450'-5800' present in project area; habitat surveyed and species not found
<i>Erigeron lassenianus</i> var. <i>deficiens</i> (Plumas rayless daisy)	1B.3	May affect, not likely	Habitat of open, rocky sites, barren flats, gravelly soils, sometimes serpentine, from 2700'-6900' in lower montane coniferous forest present in project area; habitat surveyed and species not found
<i>Eriogonum umbellatum</i> var. <i>ahartii</i> (Ahart's buckwheat)	S;1B.2	May affect, not likely	Habitat of serpentinite slopes, openings from 1700'-5500' in chaparral and cismontane woodland present in project area; habitat surveyed and species not found
<i>Erythranthe filicifolia</i> (fern-leaved monkeyflower)	1B.2	May affect, not likely	Habitat of usually slow-draining, ephemeral seeps among exfoliating granitic slabs in lower montane coniferous forest and chaparral; habitat surveyed and species not found
<i>Fissidens pauperculus</i> (minute pocket moss)	S; 1B.2	May affect, not likely	Habitat of North Coast coniferous forest (damp coastal soil) not present in project area but there is a record from Brush Creek quad; project area surveyed and species not found
<i>Frangula purshiana</i> ssp. <i>ultramafica</i> (Caribou coffeeberry)	S; 1B.2	May affect, not likely	Habitat of serpentinite in chaparral, meadows and seeps, lower and upper montane coniferous forest, from 2700'-6400' present in project area; one occurrence known to occur in project area
<i>Fritillaria eastwoodiae</i> (Butte County fritillary)	S	Not analyzed	Habitat of dry benches and slopes under 4500' not present in project area
<i>Hemieva ranunculifolia</i> (buttercup-leaf suksdorfia)	2B.2	May affect, not likely	Habitat of moist rocky slopes in upper montane coniferous forest, from 3500'-8200' present in project area; habitat surveyed and species not found

Species	Status*	Determination**	Rationale:
<i>Lewisia cantelovii</i> (<i>Cantelow's lewisia</i>)	S; 1B.2	May affect, not likely	Habitat of granite cliff faces, rocky outcrops, ravines, or serpentine seeps, in chaparral, woodland, conifer forest, from 1250'-4800' present in project area; habitat surveyed and species not found
<i>Lewisia kelloggii</i> ssp. <i>hutchisonii</i> (<i>Hutchison's lewisia</i>)	S	May affect, not likely	Habitat of decomposed granite, slate, volcanic rubble, conifer forest from 5600—6400' present in project area; habitat surveyed and species not found
<i>Monardella follettii</i> (<i>Follett's monardella</i>)	S; 1B.2	May affect, not likely	Habitat of serpentinite in lower montane coniferous forest, from 2300'-6600' present in project area; habitat surveyed and species not found
<i>Oreostemma elatum</i> (<i>tall alpine-aster</i>)	S; 1B.2	May affect, not likely	Habitat of peatlands, marshy areas, wet meadows, in upper montane coniferous forest from 3250'-5950' present in project area; habitat surveyed and species not found
<i>Packera eurycephala</i> var. <i>lewisrosei</i> (<i>Lewis Rose's ragwort</i>)	S; 1B.2	May affect, not likely	Habitat of serpentinite in chaparral, cismontane woodland, lower montane coniferous forest, from 300'-5850' present in project area; habitat surveyed and species not found
<i>Peltigera gowardii</i> (<i>Goward's waterfan lichen</i>)	S	May affect, not likely	Habitat of swift running freshwater streams present in project area; habitat surveyed and species not found
<i>Penstemon personatus</i> (<i>closed-throated beardtongue</i>)	S; 1B.2	May affect, not likely	Habitat of yellow pine montane forests from 3400-6000' present in project area; one occurrence known to occur in project area
<i>Poa sierrae</i> (<i>Sierra blue grass</i>)	S; 1B.3	May affect, not likely	Habitat of openings and shady moist slopes, often on mossy rocks, in canyons, lower montane coniferous forest, from 1150'-4650' present in project area; habitat surveyed and species not found
<i>Rhamnus alnifolia</i> (<i>alder buckthorn</i>)	2B.2	May affect, not likely	Habitat of wet meadows and seeps, riparian scrub, lower and upper montane coniferous forest from 3600'-6600' present in project area; habitat surveyed and species not found
<i>Rhynchospora capitellata</i> (<i>brownish beaked-rush</i>)	2B.2	May affect, not likely	Habitat of meadows and seeps; marshes and swamps in lower and upper montane coniferous forest from 100'-6600' present in project area; habitat surveyed and species not found

Species	Status*	Determination**	Rationale:
<i>Sagittaria sanfordii</i> (Sanford's arrowhead)	1B.2	Not analyzed	Habitat of shallow freshwater below 4100' not present in project area
<i>Schoenoplectus subterminalis</i> (water bulrush)	2B.3	Not analyzed	Aquatic habitat not present in project area or affected by project
<i>Sedum albomarginatum</i> (Feather River stonecrop)	S; 1B.2	Not analyzed	Habitat of serpentine below 3000' not present in project area
<i>Stachys pilosa</i> (hairy marsh hedge-nettle)	2B.3	May affect, not likely	Habitat of mesic Great Basin scrub; meadows and seeps; between 2500' -6500', present in project area; habitat surveyed and species not found
<i>Stellaria longifolia</i> (long-leaved starwort)	2B.2	May affect, not likely	Habitat of bogs and fens; meadows and seeps in riparian woodland and upper montane coniferous forest, between 3000' and 5500' present in project area; habitat surveyed and species not found
<i>Utricularia intermedia</i> (flat-leaved bladderwort)	2B.2	Not analyzed	Aquatic habitat not present in project area or affected by project

*Status: FE= Federal Endangered; FT= Federal Threatened; S = Forest Service Sensitive; CNPR rank (e.g., "1B.1") = Considered Rare by the State of California.

Determinations: **Not Analyzed= Project would not affect the species based upon lack of suitable habitat or known occurrences within the project area; **No Effect**= Project would not affect the species based upon lack of suitable habitat or known occurrences within treatment areas; **May Affect Not Likely**= Project may affect individuals or habitat, but not likely to result in a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability for the species.

Table 4. Special-Status Wildlife Species in the vicinity of the project site.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal Status	State Status	Habitat	Habitat in the Project Area	Potential Impact
Fish						
<i>Hypomesus transpacificus</i>	Delta Smelt	Threatened		Endemic to the upper Sacramento-San Joaquin Estuary of California, it mainly inhabits the freshwater-saltwater mixing zone of the estuary, except during its spawning season, when it migrates upstream to fresh water following winter "first flush" flow events (around March to May).	No	Project area is outside the range and designated critical habitat for this species
Amphibians						
<i>Rana draytonii</i>	California red-legged frog	Threatened	Species of Special Concern (SSC)	Inhabits quiet pools of streams, marshes, and occasionally ponds. Highly aquatic. Prefers shorelines with extensive vegetation. Usually escapes to water 3 feet deep or more, at the bottom of pools. Eggs are deposited in permanent pools attached to emergent vegetation.	No	No recent documented occurrences in Plumas County. Project outside current range
<i>Rana boylei</i>	Foothill Yellow-Legged Frog	None	Endangered	Inhabit partially shaded, rocky perennial streams and their life cycle is synchronized with the seasonal timing of streamflow conditions. They breed in streams with riffles containing cobble-sized or larger rocks as substrate. These frogs need perennial water where they can forage through the summer and fall months. Usually found within a few feet of water.	Yes	None - See mitigation measures. Protocol surveys did not detect species within or adjacent to project area.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal Status	State Status	Habitat	Habitat in the Project Area	Potential Impact
<i>Rana sierrae</i>	Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog	Endangered	Threatened	Associated with streams, lakes and ponds in montane riparian, lodgepole pine, subalpine conifer, and wet meadow habitats at elevations from 4,500 - 11,980 ft. Aquatic species usually found within a few feet of water. Eggs are usually laid in shallow water attached to gravel or rocks. Tadpoles may require up to two over-wintering periods to complete their aquatic development.	Yes	None - See mitigation measures. Protocol surveys did not detect species within or adjacent to project area.
<i>Ambystoma macrodactylum sigillatum</i>	Southern Long-Toed Salamander	None	SSC	Adults spend much of their lives underground, often utilizing the tunnels of burrowing mammals such as moles and ground squirrels. Transformed adults are rarely found outside of the breeding season. They are mostly found under wood, logs, rocks, bark and other objects near breeding sites which can include ponds, lakes, and streams, or when they are breeding in the water.	Yes	None - See mitigation measures
Birds						
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Bald Eagle	Delisted	Endangered	Occupy various woodland, forest, grassland, and wetland habitats. Large nests are normally built in the upper canopy of large trees, and snags typically conifers near water sources with fish.	No	Nearest nesting site 2 miles north of project area near Grizzly Forebay.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal Status	State Status	Habitat	Habitat in the Project Area	Potential Impact
						No nesting habitat, may forage or fly over
<i>Strix occidentalis occidentalis</i>	California Spotted Owl	None	SSC	This species is closely related to the Northern spotted owl and has a similar life history utilizing mature forests for habitat.	Yes	None - See mitigation measures
<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	Northern Goshawk	None	SSC	Generally, prefer dense forests with large trees and relatively high canopy closures like late successional forest stands.	Yes	None – Protocol surveys did not detect species within the project area See mitigation measures.
Mammals						
<i>Pekania pennanti</i>	Fisher	None	SSC	High cover and structural complexity in large tracts of mature and old growth forests	N	Project outside current range. Surveys did not detect species

Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal Status	State Status	Habitat	Habitat in the Project Area	Potential Impact
						within or adjacent to project area
<i>Antrozous pallidus</i>	pallid bat	None	SSC	Wide variety of habitats is occupied, including grasslands, shrublands, woodlands, and forests from sea level up through low elevation mixed conifer forests. Most common in open, dry habitats with rocky areas for roosting. Day roosts are in caves, crevices, mines, and occasionally in hollow trees and buildings.	Marginal	No known roosting sites and no activity detected.
<i>Aplodontia rufa californica</i>	Sierra Nevada Mountain Beaver		SSC	Not related to true beavers, this nocturnal rodent prefers moist cool deciduous and coniferous forests. Burrows usually consist of a network of tunnels built in deep soil. Burrow entrances often contain clumps of wilted vegetation which the animal likely uses as a kind of food cache as well as a source of nesting material. .	No	Although this species has not been observed at BCCER, it is found nearby and could utilize the area. Based on the species preferred habitat, it is not likely to be affected by the current project
<i>Corynorhinus townsendii</i>	Townsend's big-eared bat	None	SSC	Found in all but subalpine and alpine habitats. Most abundant in mesic habitats. Requires caves, mines, tunnels, buildings, or other human-made structures for roosting and nesting.	Marginal	No known roosting sites and no activity detected.

Discussion

- a) **Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?**

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. The special-status plant species found during botanical surveys were *Frangula purshiana ssp. ultramafica* and *Penstemon personatus*. Mitigation Measures BIO-1, BIO-2, and BIO-3 are recommended during construction to protect *Frangula purshiana ssp. ultramafica*, *Penstemon personatus*, and new occurrences of TES or Special Interest plant species discovered before or during ground-disturbing activities.

The site is comprised of annual grasses, weedy/ruderal species, understory shrubs, and riparian areas that provide suitable nesting habitat for avian species protected under the MBTA. To avoid potential impacts to avian species protected under the MBTA and California Fish and Game Code (CFGC), Mitigation Measure BIO-4 is recommended prior to development on the subject parcel.

Protocol surveys for California spotted owls indicated that nesting owls to occupy the area where the project is located. Although northern goshawks were not detected during protocol surveys, they are known to nest within the watershed where the project is located. To avoid potential impacts to nesting spotted owls and goshawks from construction and recreational activities resulting from the proposed project, Mitigation Measure BIO-5 and BIO-6 are recommended.

Foothill and Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frogs were not identified during protocol amphibian surveys. However, suitable habitat does exist in three riparian areas that the proposed trail crosses. Bridges will be constructed to span the riparian areas (See Figure 3). While the final design for these bridges has not been finalized, they will be designed to avoid any impacts to riparian vegetation and suitable frog habitat. Any work within the riparian area would be subject to necessary permits from responsible governmental agencies including the Army Corps of Engineers, California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the California Water Resources Control Board. Further, construction plans and bridge design must also be approved by the Forest Service. Implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-7, BIO-8 and BIO-9 will ensure that potential impacts to riparian area and suitable frog habitat from the future construction of the bridge(s), trail construction, and recreational activities will be reduced to less than significant.

Adherence to recommended mitigation measures would reduce potential impacts to less than significant.

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

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. The proposed trail crosses three riparian areas as discussed in section (a). Bridges will be constructed to span the riparian areas. While the final design for these bridges has not been finalized, they will be designed to avoid any impacts to riparian vegetation. Any work within the riparian area would be subject to necessary permits from responsible governmental agencies including the Army Corps of Engineers, California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the California Water Resources Control Board. Further, construction plans and bridge design must also be approved by the Forest Service. Implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-8 and BIO-9 will ensure that the future construction of the bridge(s) will reduce potential impacts to riparian habitat to less than significant.

- 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?**

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. The riparian areas where bridges have been proposed may be a federally protected wetland as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. However, construction of the bridge is not expected to impact USACE jurisdictional drainages or wetland features. Impacts to jurisdictional drainages, avoidance measures and permitting requirements would be identified with implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-6.

- 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?**

Less than significant Impact. The project site is not located within the Plumas County migratory deer corridors. No major migratory routes or corridors have been designated through the project site, and the existing developed components of the project area (i.e. Oroville-Quincy Hwy, which is adjacent to the proposed trail) typically preclude use of the area as a migratory wildlife corridor for large mammals. However, the site may facilitate home range and dispersal movement of resident wildlife species, including birds, small mammals and other wildlife. The proposed improvements will occur in a small portion of the Plumas National Forest; the majority of which is preserved for use by resident and migratory wildlife species. Construction of new trail segments is not anticipated to interfere with existing migratory wildlife populations.

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

No impact. The project does not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources.

- 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?**

No impact. The project does not conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure BIO-1:

New trail planned for construction across Frenchman Hill would traverse a population of scattered *Frangula purshiana ssp. ultramafica* occurrences. All occurrences of *Frangula purshiana ssp. ultramafica* in the area have been mapped and would be displayed as control areas on contract maps. A biological monitor would be present when crews build trail through the *Frangula purshiana ssp. ultramafica* population to ensure no *Frangula purshiana ssp. ultramafica* stems are cut. Hand-thinning activities may occur within all occurrences of *Frangula purshiana ssp. ultramafica*, but piles would be placed at least 20' from occurrences. Slash would not be piled or allowed to fall on *Frangula purshiana ssp. ultramafica* occurrences and no ignitions would occur within 20' of any occurrences of *Frangula purshiana ssp. ultramafica*.

Plan Requirements: Biological monitor present when construction activities occur within identified populations of *Frangula purshiana ssp. ultramafica*.

Timing: Requirements of the condition shall be adhered to during construction activities planned within populations of *Frangula purshiana ssp. ultramafica*.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is met at the time of construction activities.

Mitigation Measure BIO-2

New trail originally planned for construction in the far northeast of the project area would have cut through a dense population of *Penstemon personatus* that is not part of a Penstemon Management Area (PMA). To avoid ground disturbance to this dense population, the trail corridor was re-routed after botanical survey. The proposed trail corridor now follows an existing system road, 23N71YC, or Coquette Creek Spur C. Although *Penstemon personatus* is also present on 23N71YC, it will not be affected by the project because no new construction or designation is needed. The road is already open to single-track OHV and other vehicles.

However, some roadbed improvement activities (e.g., placement of waterbars and correction of hydro-connected segments of road) are desirable to make 23N71YC better suited for increased traffic. To minimize impacts to *Penstemon personatus*, crews would do this work after seed set whenever possible, and would work with a biological monitor to minimize impacts to the species.

Plan Requirements: Biological monitor present when construction activities occur within identified populations of *Penstemon personatus*.

Timing: Requirements of the condition shall be adhered to during construction activities planned within populations of *Penstemon personatus*.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is met at the time of construction activities.

Mitigation Measure BIO-3

New occurrences of TES or Special Interest plant species discovered before or during ground-disturbing activities would be protected through flag and avoid methods or measures similar to those described above.

Plan Requirements: Protect new occurrences of TES or special interest plant species discovered before or during trail construction.

Timing: Requirements of the condition shall be adhered to prior to and during construction activities.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is met at the time of construction activities.

Mitigation Measure BIO-4

If project construction activities, including ground disturbance or vegetation removal occur during the nesting season for birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and California Department Fish & Game Code (CDFC) (approximately February 1 – August 31), the project proponent shall retain a qualified biologist to perform preconstruction surveys for nesting bird species. Surveys to identify active bird nests shall be conducted within and 250 feet around the footprint of the proposed trail construction site. The survey shall be conducted within 7 days prior to the initiation of construction activities. In the event that an active nest is observed, a species protection buffer shall be established. The species protection buffer will be defined by the qualified biologist based on the species, nest type and tolerance to disturbance. Construction activity shall be prohibited within the buffer zones until the young have fledged or the nest fails. Nests shall be monitored by a qualified biologist once per week and a report submitted to the Butte County Resource Conservation District

Plan Requirements: Perform protocol-level surveys for migratory birds protected by the California Department Fish & Game Code and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Timing: Requirements of the condition shall be adhered to prior to and during construction activities planned to occur during nesting seasons for CDFC and MBTA species (between February 1 and August 31).

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is met at the time of construction activities.

Mitigation Measure BIO-5

Implement Limited Operating Periods (LOPs) to avoid or minimize disturbance to breeding activities of California spotted owls and northern goshawks during construction

activities. The LOP for the spotted owl is March 1 – August 15 and the LOP for the northern goshawk is March 15 – September 15. Trail construction can proceed during the LOP if a qualified biologist determines non-presence or that project activities will not result in disturbance to these species.

Plan Requirements: Do not work within the LOP for California spotted owls (March 1 – August 15) and/or northern goshawks (February 1 – August 31) unless a qualified biologist has determined non-presence or that project activities will not result in disturbance to these species

Timing: Requirements of the condition shall be adhered to prior to and during construction activities planned to occur during nesting seasons for California spotted owls and northern goshawks (between February 1 and August 31).

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is met at the time of construction activities.

Mitigation Measure BIO-6

Seasonal designations of use will be determined in conjunction with the Plumas National Forest Feather River Ranger District and delineated on the Plumas National Forest Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM), limiting use on proposed trail segments to certain portions of the year in order to avoid disturbance within spotted owl and goshawk activity centers.

Plan Requirements: Add new trails to Plumas National Forest MVUM with seasonal designations that protect nesting spotted owls and goshawks.

Timing: Requirements of the condition shall be adhered to prior to use of the trails by the public.

Monitoring: The Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is met prior to allowing use of the new trails by the public.

Mitigation Measure BIO-7

Projects will follow all applicable protection measures identified in the US Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Opinion on Sierra Nevada Yellow Legged Frog within the Plumas National Forest.

Plan Requirements: Project will adhere to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Programmatic Biological Opinion for Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frogs on the Plumas National Forest.

Timing: Requirements of the condition shall be adhered to prior to and during construction activities.

Monitoring: The Butte County RCD and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is met prior to allowing use of the new trails by the public.

Mitigation Measure BIO-8

Prior to construction activities within riparian areas potential jurisdictional wetlands potentially impacted by proposed trail construction shall be delineated utilizing approved USACE methodologies to determine the nature and extent of jurisdictional features. The data will be compiled into a report and submitted to the USACE for a jurisdictional verification. If trail construction activities would affect the identified wetland resources project proponent shall either obtain appropriate permits from the USACE, pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, or obtain a letter from USACE that states the areas of disturbance would not impact jurisdictional features. If construction activities affect any Waters of the U.S. which include but are not limited to, interstate lakes, rivers, streams (including intermittent streams), mudflats, sand flats, "wetland", sloughs, prairie potholes, wet meadows, playa lakes, vernal pools or natural ponds, then the Project proponent will need to obtain the following:

1. Prior to any discharge or fill materials into Waters of the U.S., authorization under a Nationwide Permit or Individual Permit shall be obtained from the USACE. For fill requiring a USACE permit, a water quality certification from Regional Water Quality Control Board (Clean Water Act §401) shall also be obtained prior to discharge of dredged or fill material.
2. Prior to any activities that would obstruct the flow of or alter the bed, channel, or bank of any perennial, intermittent or ephemeral creeks, notification of Streambed Alteration Agreement (§1602) shall be obtained.

Mitigation requirements for the fill of waters of the U.S. will be implemented through an onsite restoration plan, and/or an In Lieu Fund and/or a certified conservation bank with a Service Area that covers the proposed Project area. These agreements, certifications and permits may be contingent upon successful completion of the CEQA process.

Plan Requirements: Jurisdiction wetland features shall be identified and mitigated in accordance with State and Federal regulations.

Timing: Requirements of the condition shall be satisfied prior to any development activity.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and the Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is met at the time of development and during construction activities.

Mitigation Measure BIO-9

Prior to construction activities within riparian areas a pre-construction Biological Resources Report and any necessary protocol-level surveys shall be conducted during the appropriate survey window for any identified special-status species. If any sensitive species will be impacted, as determined by a qualified biologist, the project will be redesigned to avoid the population(s).

For those populations to be fully avoided, the following measures shall be implemented:

1. During the planning stages of the project, the known populations in the project area will be included in the engineering drawings and all construction activities will be conducted so as to avoid the populations.
2. Complete avoidance will be achieved by preventing any changes to on-site drainage patterns that could dewater or introduce water to known populations.
3. Prior to the start of construction activities within the project area, temporary exclusionary fencing shall be erected around the buffer zones of the populations that will be completely avoided. If necessary, a qualified biologist shall be present to monitor construction activities. The exclusionary fencing shall be periodically inspected throughout each period of construction and be repaired as necessary. All entry into the completely avoided areas delineated by the fencing shall be prohibited during construction.

If complete avoidance of a population of the federally, state or CNPS ranked species is not feasible, then a species-specific determination will be made by CDFW for state only listed species and by CDFW and USFWS for jointly listed species and the District and CDFW for CNPS ranked species as to the appropriate mitigation measures to be employed.

Plan Requirements: The proposed construction area shall be evaluated by a qualified biologist. Identified populations of special-status species shall be delineated on engineering drawings together with the applicable avoidance buffer, as recommended by State, federal and local agencies. Temporary exclusionary fencing shall be installed around established buffer areas.

Timing: Requirements of the condition shall be satisfied prior to any trail construction activities, and shall be maintained throughout the construction periods.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is met at the time of development and during construction activities.

1.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to in §15064.5?	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Question	CEQA Determination
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

McCombs Archaeology conducted record searches and surveys of the proposed trail routes. Diane McCombs is a Registered Professional Archaeologist (RPA) and the owner of McCombs Archaeology. She meets the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Professional Qualifications (48 FR 44738-44739) in both archaeology and history. Since 2001, Diane McCombs has been Principal Investigator on 100 California projects (50,000+ acres), including on the Plumas National Forest.

Four record searches were completed for the project; two at the Northeast Information Center in Chico and two at the Feather River Ranger District Office of Plumas National Forest. The records searches identified previous survey projects and previously recorded heritage sites. The first set of record searches were done for the initially proposed project OHV routes. The second set of record searches were done for the subsequent re-routing of the project to avoid heritage sites. A records search for the initial project was completed by Diane McCombs at the Northeast Information Center, Chico on 7-9-18. A records search of the Plumas National Forest records was completed by District Archaeologist Jamie Moore with Diane McCombs on 8-9-18 at the Feather River Ranger District.

The initial survey illustrated multiple conflicts of the proposed OHV routes with heritage resources. After discussion with Plumas National Forest and McCombs Archaeology, Butte County Resource Conservation District re-routed the project to avoid the Beckwourth Trail and other heritage sites.

A records search for the project re-routes was completed by Diane McCombs at the Northeast Information Center, Chico on 10-3-18. A records search of the Plumas National Forest records was completed by District Archaeologist Jamie Moore with Diane McCombs on 10-3-18 at the Feather River Ranger District.

The 30-35 meter wide area along the trail route for the Granite Basin OHV Trail Development Project was systematically surveyed in 2018 by McCombs Archaeology. This included the re-survey of areas that had been previously surveyed in 1983, 2004, and 2008. The survey recorded 10 newly identified heritage sites and linear features. In addition, 16 previously recorded heritage sites and linear features not located within the project were re-located and GPSed. Identification of the Beckwourth Trail in the project area was assisted by Dick Waugh, president of the California-Nevada Chapter of the Oregon California Trails Association (OCTA).

At least three published sources illustrate the project area within the ethnographic lands of the Konkow, also known as the Foothill Maidu or Northwestern Maidu (Dixon 1905:Plate 38, Jones and Klar 2007:167, Riddell 1978:371). The boundary between the Konkow and the Mountain Maidu is approximately shown at Bucks Summit, placing Bucks Lake within Konkow tribal lands. Kowta (1988:9-10) included the 1978 tribal map by Riddell, but added that all known Konkow settlements, as of 1988, placed within Butte County. The project area is remote and at

high elevation. It is likely that both cultural groups utilized the area seasonally with well-established trails.

The Konkow and their lands were affected by non-native actions prior to the start of the California Gold Rush in 1848. Jedediah Smith and his band of trappers spent several months in Konkow territory in 1828, followed by brigades of Hudson's Bay Company trappers who periodically trapped fur-bearing animals there from 1828-1836 (Riddell 1978:385). In 1841, the United States Exploring Expedition sent boats up the Sacramento River to a Konkow village. The first overland immigrants passed through Konkow lands in 1843, on their way to Sutter's Fort in New Helvetia (now Sacramento). A year later, Governor Manuel Micheltoarena issued two grants to non-natives for Konkow lands near present-day Chico (Riddell 1978:385).

The proposed project is situated in a remote area that is rich in local history. Much of that history is tied to the early years of the California Gold Rush. The present-day route of the Oroville Quincy Highway is essentially a 170- year continuum of historic travel which likely began as Native American trails. The continuum included pack trails, the Beckwourth Emigrant Trail, various 'Pioneer Wagon Roads', stagecoach travel and historic hotels, a progression of county roads, and ultimately a modern two-lane highway.

Discussion

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

Less than significant with mitigation incorporated: The project was re-routed to avoid all but four heritage sites and linear features. The project re-routes were subsequently surveyed by McCombs Archaeology in 2018. One of the four sites was determined to be ineligible for listing in 2011 by a formal process conducted by the Plumas National Forest in 2011.

McCombs Archaeology has made the determination that one of the remaining three sites is ineligible for listing on the National Register and California Register due to impacts from an existing road that have ruined the integrity of the site.

McCombs recommends the other two sites as historic properties until such time that a formal evaluation of the site can be completed. Under 36 CFR 800.4 (d), the effect recommendation by McCombs for both sites is No Historic Properties Affected. The undertaking would have no effect on these historic properties, as defined in the 36 CFR 800.16 definition of Effect. Project activities at these sites would not alter the qualifications characteristics of the sites.

Under 36 CFR 800.4 (d), the effect recommendation for the Granite Basin OHV Trail Development Project is No Historic Properties Affected. The two historic properties in the APE have effect recommendations for No Historic Properties Affected. The two other sites in the project APE are recommended as ineligible or previously determined as ineligible. The project was re-routed in September 2018 to avoid other heritage sites and linear features identified in the project in 2018.

Under 14 CCR section 15064.5 (b), the CEQA effect recommendation for the project is No Substantial Adverse Change to Historical Resources. Project activities at the two sites would not result in physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resources or their immediate surroundings in such a way that their significance would be materially impaired.

McCombs Archaeology recommends mitigation measures CUL-1, CUL-2, CUL-3 and CUL-4 to protect heritage resources.

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

Less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated: Avoidance of archaeological resources as discussed in item (a) reduce the potential for significant impacts to known archaeological resources. However, as referenced, the Konkow and Mountain Maidu populations used the local region seasonally for the gathering of plants, roots, seeds, domestic materials, and hunting seasonal game. Historically, Euro-Americans utilized the region for mining, and transportation opportunities. With past use of the project area by prehistoric and historic populations, unanticipated archaeological discoveries may be encountered during ground-disturbing activities, resulting in potentially significant impacts. To avoid potential impacts to undiscovered prehistoric resources, historic resources, and human remains that may be uncovered during development activities on the project site, implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-5, below, is recommended to reduce potential impacts to cultural resources to less than significant.

c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

Less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated. Indications are that humans have occupied Plumas County for over 10,000 years and it is not always possible to predict where human remains may occur outside of formal cemeteries. Therefore, excavation and construction activities, regardless of depth, may yield human remains that may not be interred in marked, formal burials.

Under CEQA, human remains are protected under the definition of archaeological materials as being “any evidence of human activity.” Additionally, *Public Resources Code section 5097.98* has specific stop-work and notification procedures to follow in the event that human remains are inadvertently discovered during project implementation.

Implementation of the Mitigation Measure CUL-5 would ensure that all construction activities associated with this project development that inadvertently discover human remains, implement state required consultation methods to determine the disposition and historical significance of any discovered human remains. Mitigation Measure CUL-5 would reduce this impact to less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure CUL-1

Prior to project construction, the designated project manager will inform the project construction crew about heritage resource restrictions, including showing them specific locations and protective flagging. The project manager would provide oversight during the course of construction.

Plan Requirements: Pre-construction meeting between project manager and project construction crew regarding heritage resource protection.

Timing: This measure shall be implemented prior to construction activities.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is met prior to construction activities.

Mitigation Measure CUL-2

Prior to project construction a qualified archaeologist will flag site boundaries for the heritage sites and linear features recorded within 100 feet of project construction. Site boundaries would be re-flagged as needed to clearly demarcate the presence of these resources.

Plan Requirements: Heritage sites and linear features within 100 feet of project construction will be flagged prior to construction by a qualified Archaeologist.

Timing: The measure shall be implemented prior to and during construction activities.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is met prior to and during construction activities.

Mitigation Measure CUL-3

Project construction work on the dirt road between site FS No. 05-11-54-162 and FS No. 05-11-54-851 will be monitored by a qualified archaeologist.

Plan Requirements: A qualified Archaeologist will be present to monitor work between sites FS No. 05-11-54-162 and FS No. 05-11-54-851

Timing: The measure shall be implemented during construction activities between sites FS No. 05-11-54-162 and FS No. 05-11-54-851.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is met during construction activities.

Mitigation Measure CUL-4

Project construction will include removing access to a non-system trail that is impacting site FS No. 05-11-54-39 Segment 68.

Plan Requirements: Project construction will include removing access to a non-system trail that is impacting site FS No. 05-11-54-39 Segment 68.

Timing: This measure shall be implemented during construction activities.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is incorporated into project construction plans and implemented during construction activities.

Mitigation Measure CUL-5

If construction activities reveal the presence of prehistoric or historic cultural resources (i.e., artifact concentrations, including arrowheads and other stone tools or chipping debris, cans glass, etc.; structural remains; or human skeletal remains) work within 50 feet of the find shall immediately cease until a qualified professional archaeologist can be consulted to evaluate the find and implement appropriate mitigation procedures. If human skeletal remains are encountered, State law requires immediate notification of the County Coroner (530.538.7404). If the County Coroner determines that the remains are in an archaeological context, the Native American Heritage Commission in Sacramento shall be notified immediately, pursuant to State Law, to arrange for Native American participation in determining the disposition of such remains. The provisions of this mitigation shall be followed during all aspects of construction.

Plan Requirements: This note shall be shown on all trail and bridge development plans and contracts.

Timing: This measure shall be implemented during all site preparation and construction activities.

Monitoring: If potential cultural resources are discovered, the contractor shall notify the Plumas National Forest Feather Ranger District Archaeologist. The Archaeologist will coordinate with the contractor and appropriate authorities to avoid damage to cultural resources and determine appropriate action. State law requires the reporting of any human remains.

1.6 ENERGY

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	Less Than Significant Impact
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	No Impact

Discussion

- a) **Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?**

Less than significant impact. Development of the proposed project would consume energy primarily in two ways: (1) construction activities would consume energy through the operation of trail building equipment, trucks, and worker traffic, and (2) trail use would cause long-term energy consumption from motorcycle and OHV use.

Construction energy consumption would largely result from fuel consumption by equipment during trail building and transportation of materials and crews to the site. Energy consumption during construction related activities would vary depending on the level of activity, length of the construction period, specific construction operations, types of equipment and the number of personnel. Despite this variability in the construction activities, the overall scope of the construction that could be accommodated on the site is not expected to require a substantial amount of fuel to complete. The proposed project would not result in the wasteful and inefficient use of energy resources during construction and impacts would be less than significant.

Long-term energy consumption would occur during use of the trail. The project would generate additional vehicle trips by trail users traveling to and from the site. This would result in the consumption of transportation fuel. However, trail users would most likely still travel to another site, if this site is not available. State and federal regulatory requirements addressing fuel efficiency are expected to increase fuel efficiency over time as older, less fuel-efficient vehicles are retired. This would reduce vehicle fuel energy consumption rates over time. Therefore, energy impacts related to fuel consumption/efficiency during project operations would be less than significant.

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

No impact: The proposed project does not conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

1.7 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	No Impact
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	No Impact

Question	CEQA Determination
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	No Impact
iv) Landslides?	Less Than Significant Impact
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	Less Than Significant Impact
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?	No Impact
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	No Impact
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Discussion

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

- i. Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? (Refer to California Geological Survey Special Publication 42.)**

No impact. No known active faults are underlying, or adjacent to, the project site according to the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map. Because identified active faults are located a considerable distance from the project site, the likelihood of a surface rupture at the project site is very low.

- ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?**

No impact. Although the project is in a seismically active area (as is true for all of Northern California), the project does not include any blasting, heavy construction, or any other impact strong enough to influence seismic activity.

iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

No impact. Liquefaction can be found in valley floors, such as the Sacramento and Feather Rivers, and their tributaries, which have a higher potential to contain sandy and silty soils. The project site is located in a mountainous region. No sandy or silty soils are present that would present a risk of liquefaction to the proposed development.

iv. Landslides?

Less than significant impact. The project site is comprised of rolling topography with varying slopes. No steep slopes are located on the site. As a result, the landslide potential for the project site and surrounding area is less than significant.

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

Less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated. The project site has a moderate potential of soil erosion. Surface soil erosion and loss of topsoil have the potential to occur in any area of the county from disturbances associated with construction-related activities. Construction activities associated with the project would be subject to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Construction Activities Storm Water permit program if one acre or more is disturbed. Construction activities that result in a land disturbance of less than one acre, but which are part of a larger common plan of development, also require a permit. This program requires implementation of erosion control measures during and immediately after construction that are designed to avoid significant erosion during the construction period. In addition, the project operation would be subject to State Water Resources Control Board requirements for the preparation and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) to control pollution in stormwater runoff from the project site, including excessive erosion and sedimentation. The SWPPP, if required, must be obtained prior to any soil disturbance activities. Implementation of standard erosion control BMPs during construction-related activities, together with adherence to State requirements would ensure that potential erosion impacts are less than significant.

The trail layout and design approach has been developed with the following sustainable features in mind to avoid soil erosion, sedimentation, and impacts to water quality:

- contouring alignment with frequent grade reversal to eliminate any concentrated flow (5% target grade)
- frequent trail drainage features incorporated in the design.
- Trail disconnected from crossings by use of bridges, critical dips, armoring.
- No stream diversion potential at crossings
- Alignment focus on limiting the number of streams crossings

- Full bench construction and/ or compacted fill slopes.

Incorporating Mitigation Measures SOIL-1 through SOIL 9 into the trail design and construction process will reduce potential erosion impacts to less than significant.

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

Less than significant impact. According to the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) web soil survey (2020), the project site is located in an area with low to moderate potential for landslides. To date, there have been no documented incidents of subsidence in or adjacent to the project area. There is no known evidence that lateral spreading is an issue in the project area. Compliance with site specific design recommendations discussed in (b) would reduce the potential for liquefaction, lateral spreading and subsidence to less than significant.

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

No impact. There is no building construction involved with this project.

- e) **Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?**

No impact. The project does not involve the installation of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems.

- f) **Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?**

Less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated. No paleontological resources are known to occur on the project site. Implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-1 would reduce potential impacts to less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure SOIL-1

Limit timing of activities. Trail construction and reconstruction activities that involve grading or movement of more than 5 cubic yards of dirt would occur between May 1 and October 15 each year to avoid the period of highest rainfall, streamflows, and erosion potential. If grading or movement outside of this window becomes necessary (i.e. to finish BMPs, etc.) a standard grading exception may be granted from the District Hydrologist. During periods of inclement weather, operations would be shut down until streamflows are seasonably low and soil/channel conditions are sufficiently dry and stable to allow construction to continue without the threat of substantial erosion, sedimentation, or offsite sediment transport.

Plan Requirements: Project construction will be timed to avoid the periods of highest rainfall, streamflows, and erosion potential.

Timing: This measure shall be implemented during construction activities.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is followed during construction activities.

Mitigation Measure SOIL-2

Stabilize construction spoils. Earthen spoils temporarily generated during construction would be stockpiled in stable areas located 100 feet from watercourses. Straw wattles, silt fences, or hay bales would be installed around the base of temporary stockpiles to intercept runoff and sediment draining from the stockpiles. To minimize airborne transport of dust, stockpiles would be either watered or covered during periods of non-use

Plan Requirements: Temporary construction spoils will be stockpiled in stable areas away from streamcourses, and temporary erosion control will be placed around them, if necessary, to intercept runoff and sediment.

Timing: This measure shall be implemented during construction activities.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is followed during construction activities.

Mitigation Measure SOIL-3

Implement erosion and sediment control BMPs on temporarily delayed project elements. Appropriate erosion and sediment control BMPs would be applied to all disturbed ground during temporary construction delays. Mitigation measures would vary with conditions, but are likely to include (1) placement of readily available mulch materials (e.g., pine needles, branches, coarse woody debris) and/or imported mulch materials (e.g., certified weed-free rice straw) to protect disturbed surfaces from raindrop impact, reduce runoff velocity, and reduce erosion; and (2) installation of straw wattles and/or silt fences to reduce runoff velocity and intercept sediment when excavation exceeds five cubic yards at one time.

Plan Requirements: Erosion and sediment control BMPs will be temporary installed during construction delays to all disturbed areas

Timing: This measure shall be implemented during construction activities.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is followed during construction activities.

Mitigation Measure SOIL-4:

Minimize ground and vegetation disturbance. Ground and vegetation disturbance would be minimized during implementation of the proposed action. Activities are in many instances confined to existing trail or road prisms, defined as the top of the cutslope to the base of the

fillslope. Few, if any, snags or green trees would be felled, because the surveyed trail alignment corridors are wide enough to allow trail construction crews and engineers the latitude to relocate the trail to avoid trees and snags. No live trees greater than 24 inches in diameter at breast height (dbh) would be felled, and snags larger than 24 inches would be avoided unless deemed a hazard (within striking distance of and oriented toward the trail or leaning over the trail). Disturbances would also be minimized at channel crossings by locating proposed channel-crossing upgrades in approximately the same locations as any existing channel crossings and by designating construction boundaries and equipment access corridors before initiating construction.

Plan Requirements: Ground and vegetation disturbance will be minimized during trail construction.

Timing: This measure shall be implemented during construction activities.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is followed during construction activities.

Mitigation Measure SOIL-5

Recontour, decompact, incorporate organic matter, and mulch disturbed areas on either side of the new trail. Soils lacking adequate ground cover would be mulched with available forest materials, such as pine needles, tree bark, and branches (while ensuring that source areas retain sufficient cover), or with imported mulch, such as certified weed-free straw. Slash and logs from the site may also be distributed over the disturbed area to provide additional soil cover, retain sediment, provide a microclimate to speed up the soil development and revegetation process, and discourage off-trail use.

Plan Requirements: Disturbed areas on either side of the new trail will be mulched with native materials or certified weed free straw at the end of trail construction

Timing: This measure shall be implemented during trail construction activities.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is followed during construction activities.

Mitigation Measure SOIL-6:

Control concentrated runoff from trail surfaces to reduce erosion. Methods to reduce erosion and disperse drainage include properly spaced reverse grade, turns, and switchbacks (i.e. less than 164ft {50m}, with reduced intervals for approaches to watercourses and steeper terrain, drainage dips, water bars, cross drains, and outsloping.

Plan Requirements: Runoff control methods will be incorporated into the design and construction of the trail.

Timing: This measure shall be implemented during trail construction activities.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is followed during construction activities.

Mitigation Measure SOIL-7

Improve drainage on approach trails. Drainage control methods such as grade reversals, water bars, rolling dips, and outsloping would be used to improve drainage on the approaches to channel crossings of intermittent/ephemeral watercourses and thereby reduce the delivery of sediment to stream channels.

Plan Requirements: Drainage control methods will be incorporated into approaches toward intermittent/ephemeral drainages (i.e. those where bridges are not being installed).

Timing: This measure shall be implemented during trail construction activities.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is followed during construction activities.

Mitigation Measure SOIL-8

Stabilize approach trails. Where native surface approach trails exist at proposed intermittent/ephemeral watercourses, they would be surfaced with rock or paver stones or hardened (i.e., compacted) to increase their resistance to erosion and reduce the delivery of sediment to subject stream channels.

Plan Requirements: Approaches toward intermittent/ephemeral drainages (i.e. those where bridges are not being installed) will be stabilized with rock, paver stones, or hardening.

Timing: This measure shall be implemented during trail construction activities.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is followed during construction activities.

Mitigation Measure SOIL-9

Dispose of wastes and petroleum products properly. Wastes and petroleum products used during construction would be collected and removed from the project site in accordance with Resource Conservation and Recovery Act regulations and federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards.

Plan Requirements: Waste and petroleum products used during construction shall be disposed of properly.

Timing: This measure shall be implemented during trail construction activities.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is followed during construction activities.

1.8 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	Less Than Significant Impact
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	Less Than Significant Impact

Discussion

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

Less Than Significant Impact. The project would generate greenhouse gas emissions during construction and use of the proposed trail. Construction-related emissions during development may be generated from construction equipment exhaust, construction employee vehicle trips to and from the work site, and recreational use of the trail. The project’s construction GHG emissions would occur over a short duration and would consist primarily of emissions from equipment exhaust. The long-term regional emissions associated with the project would primarily occur from the creation of new vehicular trips and indirect source emissions from recreational use. These project related GHG emissions would be less than significant.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project does not conflict with any adopted applicable plan, policy or regulation for reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases.

1.9 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	Less Than Significant Impact
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?	Less Than Significant Impact

Question	CEQA Determination
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	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?	No Impact
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	No Impact
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	No Impact
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	Less Than Significant Impact

Discussion

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

Less than significant impact. The proposed use may involve the use of potentially hazardous materials, including vehicle fuels, oils, and transmission fluids. However, all potentially hazardous materials would be contained, stored, and used in accordance with manufacturers' instructions and handled in compliance with applicable standards and regulations. It is not anticipated that large quantities of hazardous materials would be permanently stored or used within the project site. It is more likely that only small quantities of publicly-available hazardous materials (e.g., fuel for equipment) may be routinely used within the project site during trail construction. However, these materials would not be used in sufficient strength or quantity to create a substantial risk of fire or explosion, or otherwise pose a substantial risk to human or environmental health associated with inadvertent spills or human contact.

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

Less than significant impact. The project would not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous materials. Small quantities of publicly-available hazardous materials would be routinely used within the project site and these materials will not be used in sufficient strength or quantity to create a substantial risk of fire or explosion, or otherwise pose a substantial risk to human or environmental health. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not create a permanent significant hazard to the public or environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.

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

No impact. No existing or proposed schools have been identified within one-quarter mile of the project site.

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

No impact. A review of regulatory agency databases, which included lists of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to California Government Code Section 65962.5, did not identify a contamination site within one-quarter mile of the project site.

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

No impact. No public use airports have been identified to be located within two miles of the project site. The proposed project is located outside the compatibility zones for the area airports, and therefore, would not result in impacts to people residing on, or visiting, the project site.

- f) **Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?**

No impact. Development of the project would not include any actions that physically interfere with emergency response or emergency evacuation plans. A small amount of traffic would be added to Oro Quincy Hwy during construction and from recreational use, however, not to the extent that operation of roadways and intersections would be adversely affected.

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

Less than significant impact. The project is located in a remote area far from people or structures and is unlikely to either directly or indirectly expose people or structures to a significant loss, injury, or death involving wildland fire.

1.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	Less Than Significant Impact
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	No Impact
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;	Less Than Significant Impact
(ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;	Less Than Significant Impact
(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	Less Than Significant Impact
(iv) impede or redirect flood flows?	Less Than Significant Impact
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	No Impact
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	No Impact

Discussion

- a) **Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?**

Less than significant impact. The soil conditions in the general project have low to moderate potential for erosion. Site preparation activities would disturb soils; thus, increasing the potential for soil erosion during precipitation or high wind events. Without

erosion control methods, erosion of on-site soils may temporarily impact surface water quality and water quality within nearby waterways. Downstream impacts from erosion may include increased turbidity and suspended sediment concentrations in waterways. Eroded soils can also contain nitrogen, phosphorous and other nutrients, that when deposited in water bodies, may trigger algal blooms that reduce water clarity, deplete oxygen, and create odors.

As referenced in Section 1.7(b), future construction activities associated with the project would be subject to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Construction Activities Storm Water permit program if one acre or more is disturbed. Construction activities that result in a land disturbance of less than one acre, but which are part of a larger common plan of development, also require a permit. This program requires implementation of erosion control measures during and immediately after construction that are designed to avoid significant erosion during the construction period. In addition, project operation would be subject to State Water Resources Control Board requirements for the preparation and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) to control pollution in stormwater runoff from the project site, including excessive erosion and sedimentation. The SWPPP, if required, must be obtained prior to any soil disturbance activities. Implementation of standard erosion control BMPs during future construction-related activities, together with adherence to State requirements regarding grading activities, would ensure that potential erosion impacts are less than significant. A less than significant impact would occur under this threshold.

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

No impact. The project does not involve groundwater supplies or affect groundwater recharge.

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 on- or offsite erosion or siltation;

Less than significant impact. During construction-related activities, specific erosion control and surface water protection methods for each construction activity would be implemented on the project site by construction personnel. The type and number of measures implemented would be based upon location-specific attributes (i.e., slope, soil type, weather conditions). These control and protection measures, or BMPs, are standard in the construction industry and are commonly used to minimize soil erosion and water quality degradation. Application of BMPs administered through the construction process would minimize the potential increase of surface runoff from erosion. See response to 1.10 (a) above. The project would not alter the course of a stream or river. Impacts would be less than significant.

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

Less than significant impact. The project will not result in an increase in impervious surface area or alter streamcourses. Stormwater from altered drainage patterns along the trail will be diverted to filter strips through trail design. The project would not result in on- or off-site flooding. Impacts would be less than significant.

- 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**

Less than significant impact. Stormwater drainage systems in the project area currently consists of roadside ditches and culverts that capture surface runoff, which ultimately infiltrate into the underground aquifer or conveyed to area waterways. Trail runoff would be diverted to native vegetation that would act as a filter strip to reduce flow and control sediment. Impacts would be less than significant.

- iv. **Impede or redirect flood flows?**

Less than significant impact. The project site is not located within a 100-year mapped flood zone. As referenced, the project would redirect on-site drainage patterns; however, it would not impede or redirect flood flows. All on-site drainage would be managed to ensure pre-construction flows off-site are maintained. The project would not expose people or structures to flood hazard from severe storm events. Impacts would be less than significant.

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

No impact. The project site is not located within a 100-year mapped flood zone. As referenced, the project would redirect on-site drainage patterns; however, it would not impede or redirect flood flows. All on-site drainage would be managed to ensure preconstruction flows off-site are maintained at current levels. The project would not expose people or structures to flood hazard from severe storm events. The project site is not located in a dam inundation zone, and is not located near a large body of water. As a result, the project would not be impacted by a seiche, tsunami, or mudflows.

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

No impact. The project does not obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan.

1.11 LAND USE AND PLANNING

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Physically divide an established community?	No Impact
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?	No Impact

Discussion

a) Physically divide an established community?

No impact. There is no established community in, or close to, the project site.

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?

No impact. Project activities will not alter any existing land use. The project complies with zoning and plan designations as documented in the Plumas County General Plan.

1.12 MINERAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
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?	No Impact
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?	No Impact

Discussion

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?

No impact. Development of the project would not preclude future extraction of available mineral resources.

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?

No impact. Development of the project would not preclude future extraction of available mineral resources.

1.13 NOISE

Would the project result in:

Question	CEQA Determination
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?	Less Than Significant Impact
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	Less Than Significant Impact
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	No Impact

Discussion

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 in other applicable local, state, or federal standards?

Less than significant impact. Construction noises would primarily be from the use of equipment, worker vehicle trips and chainsaws. Construction-related noises would be temporary and intermittent and would not be a long-term noise source. Construction activities would occur during daytime hours, making potential impacts less than significant.

b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Less than significant impact. The proposed project may involve temporary sources of groundborne vibration from the operation of trail building equipment during construction. The type of equipment typically used during trail construction would only generate localized groundborne vibration. The project is not in the vicinity of any population center that would be impacted by this localized groundborne vibration.

- c) **For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?**

No impact. As referenced, the project site is located outside of the Airport Influence Area. Thus, while aircraft overflights would be audible at the project site, the proposed project would not expose people on the site to excessive noise levels from a public use airport or private airstrip. No impact would occur under this threshold.

1.14 POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
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)?	No Impact
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	No Impact

Discussion

- 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)?

No impact. The proposed project would not result in population growth in the County. Trail users are transitory, arriving from local and regional population centers for a short duration. The project would not result in any new employees that would cause relocation of populations or the need for additional housing.

- b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

No impact. The trail would be a stand-alone development and not require the removal or construction of any housing. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in the loss of existing housing or cause a significant increase in the local population that would displace existing residents, necessitating the construction of additional housing.

1.15 PUBLIC SERVICES

Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the following public services:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Fire protection?	No Impact
b) Police protection?	No Impact
c) Schools?	No Impact
d) Parks?	No Impact
e) Other public facilities?	No Impact

Discussion

a) Fire protection?

No Impact. The project is within a natural setting. No public services are available in the area and the project will not impact existing fire protection services.

b) Police protection?

No Impact. The project is within a natural setting. No public services are available in the area and the project will not impact existing police protection services.

c) Schools?

No Impact. The project is within a natural setting. No public services are available in the area and the project will not impact existing schools.

d) Parks?

No Impact. The project is within a natural setting. No public services are available in the area and the project will not impact existing parks.

e) Other public facilities?

No Impact. The project is within a natural setting. Development of the project does not require the extension of any public infrastructure, such as roads, water, or sewer systems, and the project will not impact other public facilities.

1.16 RECREATION

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	No Impact
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	No Impact

Discussion

- 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?**

No Impact. The project area is already a popular recreation spot for OHV enthusiasts. The project is not anticipated to attract additional trail users, but rather provide additional opportunities for existing users through better trail connectivity resulting in all day riding opportunities.

- b) **Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?**

No impact. The project would likely not include plans for recreational facilities nor would development require expansion of existing recreational facilities. The project would not result in any adverse physical effects on the environment from construction or expansion of recreational facilities. No impact would occur under this threshold.

1.17 TRANSPORTATION

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	Less Than Significant Impact
b) Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	Less Than Significant Impact

Question	CEQA Determination
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	Less Than Significant Impact
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	Less Than Significant Impact

Discussion

a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities?

Less than significant impact. The project area is already a popular recreation spot for OHV enthusiasts. The project is not anticipated to attract additional trail users, but rather provide additional opportunities for existing users through better trail connectivity resulting in all day riding opportunities. Therefore, it is not anticipated that the project will result in additional traffic to the area.

b) Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?

Less than significant impact. While this project will require some vehicle miles traveled, the increase will be temporary and project-focused and will not exceed a threshold of significance. The project will not result in any sustained change in vehicle miles traveled in the region.

c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

Less than significant impact. The proposed project would not change the configuration (alignment) of area roadways and would not introduce types of vehicles that would result in dangerous conditions on area roads. A Safety Analysis conducted by Butte County Public Works (2020) found that there were low levels of traffic on 23N18 and 23N95, and that OHV were using these routes even though the road was classified as ML3. The analysis concluded that these roads had adequate site distances to accommodate OHV use and that reclassifying portions of 23N18 and 23N95Y from ML3 to ML2 or mixed use would increase safety because motorists would be aware that the road was being utilized by OHV users.

d) Result in inadequate emergency access?

Less than significant impact. The trail project will have no impact on emergency impact. Reclassification of a portion of 23N18 and 23N95Y from ML3 to ML2 would result in a reduction in the maintenance of these road segments. These roads would still

remain adequate for emergency access. Reclassification from ML3 to mixed use would have no impact on emergency access as maintenance would remain at the same level.

1.18 TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

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

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or	Less Than Significant Impact
b) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	No Impact

Environmental Setting

Tribal Cultural Resources are defined as a site feature, place, cultural landscape, sacred place or object, which is of cultural value to a Tribe and is either on or eligible for the California Historic Register, a local register, or a resource that the lead agency, at its discretion, chooses to treat as such (Public Resources Code Section 21074 (a)(1)). Plumas County contains a rich diversity of archaeological, prehistoric and historical resources.

A substantial adverse change upon a historically significant resource would be one wherein the resource is demolished or materially altered so that it no longer conveys its historic or cultural significance in such a way that justifies its inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources or such a local register (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5, sub. (b)(2)). Cultural resources include prehistoric and historic period archaeological sites; historical features, such as rock walls, water ditches and flumes, and cemeteries; and architectural features. Cultural resources consist of any human-made site, object (i.e., artifact), or feature that defines and illuminates our past. Often such sites are found in foothill areas, areas with high bluffs, rock outcroppings, areas overlooking deer migratory corridors, or near bodies of water.

Per Assembly Bill AB 52 (Statutes of 2014) Notification Request, Public Resources Code Section 21080.3(b), the RCD requested a list from the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) of local Tribes to consult with regarding the project The RCD has sent a letter to these

Tribes informing them of the project, the intent to adopt a mitigated negative declaration, and offering them the opportunity to consult prior to adoption. To date no Tribes have responded.

Discussion

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:

- a) **Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k)?**

Less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated. Native American populations used the local region for seasonal use gathering of plants, roots, seeds, and seasonal game. Historically, Euro-Americans utilized the region for transportation, mining, and logging. With historic use of the project area by prehistoric and historic populations, unanticipated and accidental archaeological discoveries may be encountered during ground-disturbing activities, resulting in potentially significant impacts. Implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-5, discussed in Section 1.5 – Cultural Resources, would avoid potential impacts to undiscovered prehistoric resources, historic resources, and human remains that may be uncovered during development activities. With implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-5 if needed, impacts under this threshold would be less than significant.

- b) **A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1? In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.**

No impact. No resources significant to a California Native American tribe has been identified within the project area based on the NEIC records search, archaeological survey, and notification to Tribes regarding the proposed project.

1.19 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
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Question	CEQA Determination
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	No Impact
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	No Impact
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	No Impact
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?	No Impact
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	No Impact

Discussion

- a) **Require or result in the relocation or construction of construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunication facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?**

No impact. The project area is within a natural setting with no utilities or public service systems.

- b) **Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?**

No impact. The project is a trail development project that will not affect utilities in this uninhabited area.

- c) **Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand, in addition to the provider's existing commitments?**

No impact. The project area is within a natural setting with no utilities or public service systems.

- 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?**

No impact. The project will not generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure.

- e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?**

No impact. The project will comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste.

1.20 WILDFIRE

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	No Impact
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?	No Impact
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?	No Impact
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?	No Impact

Environmental Setting

The project site is located within a designated Federal Responsibility Area (SRA) on the Plumas National Forest and is not near state responsibility areas (SRAs) classified as very high fire hazard severity zones.

Discussion

- a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?**

No impact. The project site is located within a designated Federal Responsibility Area (SRA) on the Plumas National Forest and is not near state responsibility areas (SRAs) classified as very high fire hazard severity zones. The project places such small and incidental demands on local roads and fire protection services that it will not 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?**

No impact. The project site is located within a designated Federal Responsibility Area (SRA) on the Plumas National Forest and is not near state responsibility area (SRAs) classified as very high fire hazard severity zones. The project will not result in exposing project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire. Trails in many cases are used as fire lines to control wildfires.

- c) Require the installation 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?**

No impact. The project site is located within a designated Federal Responsibility Area (SRA) on the Plumas National Forest and is not near state responsibility areas (SRAs) classified as very high fire hazard severity zones. The project will not result in the need for additional 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?**

- e) No impact.** The project site is located within a designated Federal Responsibility Area (SRA) on the Plumas National Forest and is not near state responsibility areas (SRAs) classified as very high fire hazard severity zones. The project will not 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.

1.21 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Question	CEQA Determination
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Question	CEQA Determination
a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Discussion

- a) **Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare, or threatened species, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?**

Less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated. Potential impacts to biological resources and cultural resources associated with future project development were analyzed in this Initial Study. All direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts were determined to have no impact, a less than significant impact, or reduced to a less than significant impact with implementation of mitigation. Development of the project would not cause fish or wildlife populations to drop below self-sustaining levels or restrict the movement/distribution of a rare or endangered species. Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-9 would be implemented if needed to address potential impacts to on-site resources, frogs, and nesting birds during construction.

Development would not affect known significant historic resources or known archaeological or paleontological resources. There are no known unique ethnic or cultural values associated with the project site, nor are known religious or sacred uses associated with the project site. Mitigation Measures CUL-5 has been identified to address the potential discovery of unknown resources during excavation or other soil disturbance associated with development. Additionally, the project is required to comply with

California Code of Regulations (CCR) Section 15064.5(e), California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, and Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 5097.98 as a matter of policy in the event human remains are encountered at any time. Implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-5, as well as regulations governing human remains, would reduce potential impacts to cultural and paleontological resources to less than significant.

b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)
Less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated. The project would have no impact, a less than significant impact or a less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated with respect to all environmental issues pursuant to CEQA. Due to the limited scope of direct physical impacts to the environment associated with the project, potential impacts are project-specific in nature.

c) Does the project have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

Less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated. There have been no impacts discovered through the review of this project demonstrating that approval of the project would cause substantial adverse effects to human beings either directly or indirectly. However, the proposed development has the potential to cause both temporary and future impacts related to biological resources, cultural resources, and geology/soils. With implementation of mitigation measures included in this Initial Study, these impacts would be mitigated to less than significant.

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MITIGATION MEASURES & MONITORING REQUIREMENTS

Granite Basin OHV Trail Development Project

Mitigation Measure BIO-1:

New trail planned for construction across Frenchman Hill would traverse a population of scattered *Frangula purshiana ssp. ultramafica* occurrences. All occurrences of *Frangula purshiana ssp. ultramafica* in the area have been mapped and would be displayed as control areas on contract maps. A biological monitor would be present when crews build trail through the *Frangula purshiana ssp. ultramafica* population to ensure no *Frangula purshiana ssp. ultramafica* stems are cut. Hand-thinning activities may occur within all occurrences of *Frangula purshiana ssp. ultramafica*, but piles would be placed at least 20' from occurrences. Slash would not be piled or allowed to fall on *Frangula purshiana ssp. ultramafica* occurrences and no ignitions would occur within 20' of any occurrences of *Frangula purshiana ssp. ultramafica*.

Plan Requirements: Biological monitor present when construction activities occur within identified populations of *Frangula purshiana ssp. ultramafica*.

Timing: Requirements of the condition shall be adhered to during construction activities planned within populations of *Frangula purshiana ssp. ultramafica*.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is met at the time of construction activities.

Mitigation Measure BIO-2

New trail originally planned for construction in the far northeast of the project area would have cut through a dense population of *Penstemon personatus* that is not part of a Penstemon Management Area (PMA). To avoid ground disturbance to this dense population, the trail corridor was re-routed after botanical survey. The proposed trail corridor now follows an existing system road, 23N71YC, or Coquette Creek Spur C. Although *Penstemon personatus* is also present on 23N71YC, it will not be affected by the project because no new construction or designation is needed. The road is already open to single-track OHV and other vehicles.

However, some roadbed improvement activities (e.g., placement of waterbars and correction of hydro-connected segments of road) are desirable to make 23N71YC better suited for increased traffic. To minimize impacts to *Penstemon personatus*, crews would do this work after seed set whenever possible, and would work with a biological monitor to minimize impacts to the species.

Plan Requirements: Biological monitor present when construction activities occur within identified populations of *Penstemon personatus*.

Timing: Requirements of the condition shall be adhered to during construction activities planned within populations of *Penstemon personatus*.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is met at the time of construction activities.

MITIGATION MEASURES & MONITORING REQUIREMENTS
Granite Basin OHV Trail Development Project

Mitigation Measure BIO-3

New occurrences of TES or Special Interest plant species discovered before or during ground-disturbing activities would be protected through flag and avoid methods or measures similar to those described above.

Plan Requirements: Protect new occurrences of TES or special interest plant species discovered before or during trail construction.

Timing: Requirements of the condition shall be adhered to prior to and during construction activities.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is met at the time of construction activities.

Mitigation Measure BIO-4

If project construction activities, including ground disturbance or vegetation removal occur during the nesting season for birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and California Department Fish & Game Code (CDFC) (approximately February 1 – August 31), the project proponent shall retain a qualified biologist to perform preconstruction surveys for nesting bird species. Surveys to identify active bird nests shall be conducted within and 250 feet around the footprint of the proposed trail construction site. The survey shall be conducted within 7 days prior to the initiation of construction activities. In the event that an active nest is observed, a species protection buffer shall be established. The species protection buffer will be defined by the qualified biologist based on the species, nest type and tolerance to disturbance. Construction activity shall be prohibited within the buffer zones until the young have fledged or the nest fails. Nests shall be monitored by a qualified biologist once per week and a report submitted to the Butte County Resource Conservation District

Plan Requirements: Perform protocol-level surveys for migratory birds protected by the California Department Fish & Game Code and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Timing: Requirements of the condition shall be adhered to prior to and during construction activities planned to occur during nesting seasons for CDFC and MBTA species (between February 1 and August 31).

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is met at the time of construction activities.

Mitigation Measure BIO-5

Implement Limited Operating Periods (LOPs) to avoid or minimize disturbance to breeding activities of California spotted owls and northern goshawks during construction activities. The LOP for the spotted owl is March 1 – August 15 and the LOP for the northern goshawk is March 15 – September 15. Trail construction can proceed during the LOP if a qualified biologist determines non-presence or that project activities will not result in disturbance to these species.

MITIGATION MEASURES & MONITORING REQUIREMENTS

Granite Basin OHV Trail Development Project

Plan Requirements: Do not work within the LOP for California spotted owls (March 1 – August 15) and/or northern goshawks (February 1 – August 31) unless a qualified biologist has determined non-presence or that project activities will not result in disturbance to these species

Timing: Requirements of the condition shall be adhered to prior to and during construction activities planned to occur during nesting seasons for California spotted owls and northern goshawks (between February 1 and August 31).

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is met at the time of construction activities.

Mitigation Measure BIO-6

Seasonal designations of use will be determined in conjunction with the Plumas National Forest Feather River Ranger District and delineated on the Plumas National Forest Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM), limiting use on proposed trail segments to certain portions of the year in order to avoid disturbance within spotted owl and goshawk activity centers.

Plan Requirements: Add new trails to Plumas National Forest MVUM with seasonal designations that protect nesting spotted owls and goshawks.

Timing: Requirements of the condition shall be adhered to prior to use of the trails by the public.

Monitoring: The Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is met prior to allowing use of the new trails by the public.

Mitigation Measure BIO-7

Projects will follow all applicable protection measures identified in the US Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Opinion on Sierra Nevada Yellow Legged Frog within the Plumas National Forest.

Plan Requirements: Project will adhere to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Programmatic Biological Opinion for Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frogs on the Plumas National Forest.

Timing: Requirements of the condition shall be adhered to prior to and during construction activities.

Monitoring: The Butte County RCD and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is met prior to allowing use of the new trails by the public.

Mitigation Measure BIO-8

Prior to construction activities within riparian areas potential jurisdictional wetlands potentially impacted by proposed trail construction shall be delineated utilizing approved USACE methodologies to determine the nature and extent of jurisdictional features. The data will be compiled into a report and submitted to the USACE for a jurisdictional

MITIGATION MEASURES & MONITORING REQUIREMENTS

Granite Basin OHV Trail Development Project

verification. If trail construction activities would affect the identified wetland resources project proponent shall either obtain appropriate permits from the USACE, pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, or obtain a letter from USACE that states the areas of disturbance would not impact jurisdictional features. If construction activities affect any Waters of the U.S. which include but are not limited to, interstate lakes, rivers, streams (including intermittent streams), mudflats, sand flats, “wetland”, sloughs, prairie potholes, wet meadows, playa lakes, vernal pools or natural ponds, then the Project proponent will need to obtain the following:

3. Prior to any discharge or fill materials into Waters of the U.S., authorization under a Nationwide Permit or Individual Permit shall be obtained from the USACE. For fill requiring a USACE permit, a water quality certification from Regional Water Quality Control Board (Clean Water Act §401) shall also be obtained prior to discharge of dredged or fill material.
4. Prior to any activities that would obstruct the flow of or alter the bed, channel, or bank of any perennial, intermittent or ephemeral creeks, notification of Streambed Alteration Agreement (§1602) shall be obtained.

Mitigation requirements for the fill of waters of the U.S. will be implemented through an onsite restoration plan, and/or an In Lieu Fund and/or a certified conservation bank with a Service Area that covers the proposed Project area. These agreements, certifications and permits may be contingent upon successful completion of the CEQA process.

Plan Requirements: Jurisdiction wetland features shall be identified and mitigated in accordance with State and Federal regulations.

Timing: Requirements of the condition shall be satisfied prior to any development activity.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and the Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is met at the time of development and during construction activities.

Mitigation Measure BIO-9

Prior to construction activities within riparian areas a pre-construction Biological Resources Report and any necessary protocol-level surveys shall be conducted during the appropriate survey window for any identified special-status species. If any sensitive species will be impacted, as determined by a qualified biologist, the project will be redesigned to avoid the population(s).

For those populations to be fully avoided, the following measures shall be implemented:

4. During the planning stages of the project, the known populations in the project area will be included in the engineering drawings and all construction activities will be conducted so as to avoid the populations.

MITIGATION MEASURES & MONITORING REQUIREMENTS

Granite Basin OHV Trail Development Project

5. Complete avoidance will be achieved by preventing any changes to on-site drainage patterns that could dewater or introduce water to known populations.
6. Prior to the start of construction activities within the project area, temporary exclusionary fencing shall be erected around the buffer zones of the populations that will be completely avoided. If necessary, a qualified biologist shall be present to monitor construction activities. The exclusionary fencing shall be periodically inspected throughout each period of construction and be repaired as necessary. All entry into the completely avoided areas delineated by the fencing shall be prohibited during construction.

If complete avoidance of a population of the federally, state or CNPS ranked species is not feasible, then a species-specific determination will be made by CDFW for state only listed species and by CDFW and USFWS for jointly listed species and the District and CDFW for CNPS ranked species as to the appropriate mitigation measures to be employed.

Plan Requirements: The proposed construction area shall be evaluated by a qualified biologist. Identified populations of special-status species shall be delineated on engineering drawings together with the applicable avoidance buffer, as recommended by State, federal and local agencies. Temporary exclusionary fencing shall be installed around established buffer areas.

Timing: Requirements of the condition shall be satisfied prior to any trail construction activities, and shall be maintained throughout the construction periods.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is met at the time of development and during construction activities.

Mitigation Measure CUL-1

Prior to project construction, the designated project manager will inform the project construction crew about heritage resource restrictions, including showing them specific locations and protective flagging. The project manager would provide oversight during the course of construction.

Plan Requirements: Pre-construction meeting between project manager and project construction crew regarding heritage resource protection.

Timing: This measure shall be implemented prior to construction activities.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is met prior to construction activities.

Mitigation Measure CUL-2

Prior to project construction a qualified archaeologist will flag site boundaries for the heritage sites and linear features recorded within 100 feet of project construction. Site boundaries would be re-flagged as needed to clearly demarcate the presence of these resources.

MITIGATION MEASURES & MONITORING REQUIREMENTS
Granite Basin OHV Trail Development Project

Plan Requirements: Heritage sites and linear features within 100 feet of project construction will be flagged prior to construction by a qualified Archaeologist.

Timing: The measure shall be implemented prior to and during construction activities.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is met prior to and during construction activities.

Mitigation Measure CUL-3

Project construction work on the dirt road between site FS No. 05-11-54-162 and FS No. 05-11-54-851 will be monitored by a qualified archaeologist.

Plan Requirements: A qualified Archaeologist will be present to monitor work between sites FS No. 05-11-54-162 and FS No. 05-11-54-851

Timing: The measure shall be implemented during construction activities between sites FS No. 05-11-54-162 and FS No. 05-11-54-851.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is met during construction activities.

Mitigation Measure CUL-4

Project construction will include removing access to a non-system trail that is impacting site FS No. 05-11-54-39 Segment 68.

Plan Requirements: Project construction will include removing access to a non-system trail that is impacting site FS No. 05-11-54-39 Segment 68.

Timing: This measure shall be implemented during construction activities.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is incorporated into project construction plans and implemented during construction activities.

Mitigation Measure CUL-5

If construction activities reveal the presence of prehistoric or historic cultural resources (i.e., artifact concentrations, including arrowheads and other stone tools or chipping debris, cans glass, etc.; structural remains; or human skeletal remains) work within 50 feet of the find shall immediately cease until a qualified professional archaeologist can be consulted to evaluate the find and implement appropriate mitigation procedures. If human skeletal remains are encountered, State law requires immediate notification of the County Coroner (530.538.7404). If the County Coroner determines that the remains are in an archaeological context, the Native American Heritage Commission in Sacramento shall be notified immediately, pursuant to State Law, to arrange for Native American participation in determining the disposition of such remains. The provisions of this mitigation shall be followed during all aspects of construction.

MITIGATION MEASURES & MONITORING REQUIREMENTS

Granite Basin OHV Trail Development Project

Plan Requirements: This note shall be shown on all trail and bridge development plans and contracts.

Timing: This measure shall be implemented during all site preparation and construction activities.

Monitoring: If potential cultural resources are discovered, the contractor shall notify the Plumas National Forest Feather Ranger District Archaeologist. The Archaeologist will coordinate with the contractor and appropriate authorities to avoid damage to cultural resources and determine appropriate action. State law requires the reporting of any human remains.

Mitigation Measure SOIL-1

Limit timing of activities. Trail construction and reconstruction activities that involve grading or movement of more than 5 cubic yards of dirt would occur between May 1 and October 15 each year to avoid the period of highest rainfall, streamflows, and erosion potential. If grading or movement outside of this window becomes necessary (i.e. to finish BMPs, etc.) a standard grading exception may be granted from the District Hydrologist. During periods of inclement weather, operations would be shut down until streamflows are seasonably low and soil/channel conditions are sufficiently dry and stable to allow construction to continue without the threat of substantial erosion, sedimentation, or offsite sediment transport.

Plan Requirements: Project construction will be timed to avoid the periods of highest rainfall, streamflows, and erosion potential.

Timing: This measure shall be implemented during construction activities.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is followed during construction activities.

Mitigation Measure SOIL-2

Stabilize construction spoils. Earthen spoils temporarily generated during construction would be stockpiled in stable areas located 100 feet from watercourses. Straw wattles, silt fences, or hay bales would be installed around the base of temporary stockpiles to intercept runoff and sediment draining from the stockpiles. To minimize airborne transport of dust, stockpiles would be either watered or covered during periods of non-use

Plan Requirements: Temporary construction spoils will be stockpiled in stable areas away from streamcourses, and temporary erosion control will be placed around them, if necessary, to intercept runoff and sediment.

Timing: This measure shall be implemented during construction activities.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is followed during construction activities.

Mitigation Measure SOIL-3

MITIGATION MEASURES & MONITORING REQUIREMENTS

Granite Basin OHV Trail Development Project

Implement erosion and sediment control BMPs on temporarily delayed project elements. Appropriate erosion and sediment control BMPs would be applied to all disturbed ground during temporary construction delays. Mitigation measures would vary with conditions, but are likely to include (1) placement of readily available mulch materials (e.g., pine needles, branches, coarse woody debris) and/or imported mulch materials (e.g., certified weed-free rice straw) to protect disturbed surfaces from raindrop impact, reduce runoff velocity, and reduce erosion; and (2) installation of straw wattles and/or silt fences to reduce runoff velocity and intercept sediment when excavation exceeds five cubic yards at one time.

Plan Requirements: Erosion and sediment control BMPs will be temporary installed during construction delays to all disturbed areas

Timing: This measure shall be implemented during construction activities.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is followed during construction activities.

Mitigation Measure SOIL-4:

Minimize ground and vegetation disturbance. Ground and vegetation disturbance would be minimized during implementation of the proposed action. Activities are in many instances confined to existing trail or road prisms, defined as the top of the cutslope to the base of the fillslope. Few, if any, snags or green trees would be felled, because the surveyed trail alignment corridors are wide enough to allow trail construction crews and engineers the latitude to relocate the trail to avoid trees and snags. No live trees greater than 24 inches in diameter at breast height (dbh) would be felled, and snags larger than 24 inches would be avoided unless deemed a hazard (within striking distance of and oriented toward the trail or leaning over the trail). Disturbances would also be minimized at channel crossings by locating proposed channel-crossing upgrades in approximately the same locations as any existing channel crossings and by designating construction boundaries and equipment access corridors before initiating construction.

Plan Requirements: Ground and vegetation disturbance will be minimized during trail construction.

Timing: This measure shall be implemented during construction activities.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is followed during construction activities.

Mitigation Measure SOIL-5

Recontour, decompact, incorporate organic matter, and mulch disturbed areas on either side of the new trail. Soils lacking adequate ground cover would be mulched with available forest materials, such as pine needles, tree bark, and branches (while ensuring that source areas retain sufficient cover), or with imported mulch, such as certified weed-free straw. Slash and logs from the site may also be distributed over the disturbed area to provide additional soil cover, retain sediment, provide a microclimate to speed up the soil development and revegetation process, and discourage off-trail use.

MITIGATION MEASURES & MONITORING REQUIREMENTS

Granite Basin OHV Trail Development Project

Plan Requirements: Disturbed areas on either side of the new trail will be mulched with native materials or certified weed free straw at the end of trail construction

Timing: This measure shall be implemented during trail construction activities.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is followed during construction activities.

Mitigation Measure SOIL-6:

Control concentrated runoff from trail surfaces to reduce erosion. Methods to reduce erosion and disperse drainage include properly spaced reverse grade, turns, and switchbacks (i.e. less than 164ft {50m}), with reduced intervals for approaches to watercourses and steeper terrain, drainage dips, water bars, cross drains, and outsloping.

Plan Requirements: Runoff control methods will be incorporated into the design and construction of the trail.

Timing: This measure shall be implemented during trail construction activities.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is followed during construction activities.

Mitigation Measure SOIL-7

Improve drainage on approach trails. Drainage control methods such as grade reversals, water bars, rolling dips, and outsloping would be used to improve drainage on the approaches to channel crossings of intermittent/ephemeral watercourses and thereby reduce the delivery of sediment to stream channels.

Plan Requirements: Drainage control methods will be incorporated into approaches toward intermittent/ephemeral drainages (i.e. those where bridges are not being installed).

Timing: This measure shall be implemented during trail construction activities.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is followed during construction activities.

Mitigation Measure SOIL-8

Stabilize approach trails. Where native surface approach trails exist at proposed intermittent/ephemeral watercourses, they would be surfaced with rock or paver stones or hardened (i.e., compacted) to increase their resistance to erosion and reduce the delivery of sediment to subject stream channels.

Plan Requirements: Approaches toward intermittent/ephemeral drainages (i.e. those where bridges are not being installed) will be stabilized with rock, paver stones, or hardening.

Timing: This measure shall be implemented during trail construction activities.

MITIGATION MEASURES & MONITORING REQUIREMENTS
Granite Basin OHV Trail Development Project

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is followed during construction activities.

Mitigation Measure SOIL-9

Dispose of wastes and petroleum products properly. Wastes and petroleum products used during construction would be collected and removed from the project site in accordance with Resource Conservation and Recovery Act regulations and federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards.

Plan Requirements: Waste and petroleum products used during construction shall be disposed of properly.

Timing: This measure shall be implemented during trail construction activities.

Monitoring: The Butte County Resource Conservation District and Plumas National Forest shall ensure the condition is followed during construction activities.