



State of California – Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Northern Region
601 Locust Street
Redding, CA 96001
www.wildlife.ca.gov

GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director



Governor's Office of Planning & Research

May 10, 2021

May 12 2021

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

Liz Casson
Deputy Planning Director
City of Yreka
701 Fourth Street
Yreka, CA, 96097

Subject: Review of the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Refresh Travel Center Project PUD Amendment and CUP Amendment, State Clearinghouse Number 2021040260, City of Yreka, Siskiyou County

Dear Liz Casson:

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

Project Description

The proposed Project includes the construction of a convenience store, restaurant, truck stop, and bar. The overall size of the proposed Travel Center is approximately 12,300 square feet including a 3,180 square foot Arco AM/PM gas station and convenience store. The Project includes eight gas pumps (16 dispensers) under a canopy and four diesel pumps under a separate canopy and two EV charging stations. The site provides 59 automobile parking spaces, four RV parking spaces and 32 semi-truck parking spaces. The site includes above-ground and under-ground fuel storage tanks. The site will be landscaped with grass and a variety of trees and shrubs. In addition to the convenience store and fueling stations, there will be a food court with several restaurants, a bar, an exterior patio, laundry, showers, restrooms, and a truck shop. Development of the Project would require the approval by the City Council of an amendment to PUD 5-98 and associated Use Permit No. 2883.

The Project is located in the northeast area of the City of Yreka, adjacent to Interstate 5 and Montague Road/State Route 3.

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Comments and Recommendations

The Department has the following recommendations and comments as they pertain to biological resources.

Biological Surveys

The Department appreciates the completion of the Biological Resources Assessment prior to the circulation of the MND. The Department concurs with the recommendation to conduct nesting bird surveys and focused protocol-level plant surveys prior to construction of the Project.

Migratory and Nesting Bird Measure

The Department recommends the following changes to Mitigation Measure BIO-2: Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) Birds:

- Shorten the survey window prior to construction activities from the proposed 14 days to 7 days.
- Add “*The results of the pre-construction surveys shall be sent electronically to CDFW at R1CEQARedding@wildlife.ca.gov*” to the measure.
- The measure states that “*impacts to special-status bird and MBTA bird nests shall be avoided by establishing appropriate buffers around active raptor nests.*” The buffer should be established around all special-status and MBTA birds, not just raptors.

Native Vegetation in Landscaping

The Department recommends utilizing vegetation native to the local area in landscaping whenever possible. Benefits of utilizing native vegetation in landscaping include providing resources for native wildlife such as hummingbirds and beneficial pollinators, conserving water, reducing pesticide use, and reducing landscaping maintenance. The California Native Plant Society (CNPS) website (<https://www.cnps.org>) includes a variety of useful information and tools to help determine which native species occur in a particular area, information on care and maintenance of native species, and contacts for purchasing native plants or seeds. The CNPS tool Calscape generates a list of native plants that grow in an area based on a specific address. A search of Calscape returned a wide variety of plants native to the Project site and surrounding landscapes (<https://calscape.org/>).

For more information regarding the importance of using native species in landscaping, please see the *CNPS Guidelines for Landscaping to Protect Native Vegetation from Genetic Degradation* at: <https://www.cnps.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/landscaping.pdf>.

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Lighting

The Department recognizes the adverse effects that artificial lighting has on birds and other nocturnal species. The effects are numerous and include impacts to singing and foraging behavior, reproductive behavior, navigation, and altered migration patterns. To minimize adverse effects of artificial light on wildlife, the Department recommends that lighting fixtures associated with the Project be downward facing, fully shielded, and designed and installed to minimize photo-pollution and spillover of light onto adjacent properties.

Trenching

If trenching will occur as a result of Project activities, it should be covered securely prior to stopping work each day, or a ramp should be provided in the trench to prevent wildlife entrapment. If pipes are left out onsite, they should be inspected for animals prior to burying, capping, moving, or filling. The Department recommends a mitigation measure be developed and included in the final environmental document or project approval.

Survey Results

If any special-status species are found during surveys, the Department requests that CNDDDB forms be filled out and sent to Sacramento and a copy of the form be sent to the Regional office at the above address. Instructions for providing data to the CNDDDB can be found at: <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDDB/Submitting-Data>.

If you have any questions, please contact Kristin Hubbard, Environmental Scientist, at (530) 225-2138, or by e-mail at kristin.hubbard@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:
Curt Babcock
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Curt Babcock

Habitat Conservation Program Manager

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