



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



September 10, 2021

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

September 10 2021

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

Peter Bird, Senior Planner
 City of Shasta Lake
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SUBJECT: REVIEW OF NOTICE OF PREPARATION FOR THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE CITY OF SHASTA LAKE 2040 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE, STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NUMBER 2021070574, CITY OF SHASTA LAKE, SHASTA COUNTY

Dear Peter Bird:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) has reviewed the Notice of Preparation dated July 28, 2021, 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 §21000 et seq.

Project Description

The Project as proposed is as follows: "California State law requires each city and county to adopt a general plan *"for the physical development of the county or city and any land outside its boundaries that in the planning agency's judgment bears relation to its planning"* (Cal. Gov. Code § 65300) [sic]. The Shasta Lake General Plan establishes a community vision that expresses the community's development goals and includes public policy relative to the distribution of future public and private land uses. The 2040 General Plan will include updates to Land Use, Circulation, Conservation, Open Space, and Health and Safety Elements with minor revisions to the general plan land use designations.

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Comments and Recommendations

Conservation Element

In Section 5.2.1, one of the paragraphs starts with “*Efforts to preserve this waterway and its ecosystem are underway by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife’s Ecosystem Restoration Program...*” The Department recommends revising this paragraph to better articulate that (1) a project is already in progress (name the project) or (2) the City has goals and policies to preserve the Stillwater-Churn Creek Watershed. Currently, it sounds as if the Department has a project in the Stillwater-Churn Creek Watershed; however, this grant funding program has likely exhausted its funding.

Section 5.3 discusses the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) and the importance of balancing conservation policies with vegetation management policies within the community. The Department agrees and recommends discussing the fuel management strategies commonly used within and adjacent to the WUI and the impacts they have on botanical, wildlife, and the natural communities that support them in the forthcoming Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR).

Section 5.5 of this document states the planning area is regionally important for wildlife and further states, “*Wildlife conservation efforts within the City help preserve important wildlife corridors and linkages to these public lands.*” The Department concurs and recommends conserving these corridors and linkages with a resources overlay. The Department’s website may have additional information on wildlife connectivity linkages (<https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Planning/Connectivity>) as well as overall biological diversity (<https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/Analysis/Ace>) for use in the DEIR.

The Department has reviewed the goals and policies within Section 5.9 of the Conservation Element and recommends the City work with the Department to develop policies prior to release of the public review DEIR. For example, Policy-LU-3.2 states, “*Design or condition new development to avoid significant adverse impacts on rare, threatened, or endangered plant or animal species, as officially designated by federal and state resource agencies. Work with California Department of Fish and Wildlife to ensure the preservation of resident and anadromous fish.*” The Department recommends adding “sensitive vegetation communities” to the first sentence so that it reads, “*Design or condition new development to avoid significant adverse impacts on rare, threatened, or endangered plant or animal species or sensitive natural communities, as officially designated by federal and/or state resource agencies.*” In addition, the Department recommends separating this policy into two separate policies.

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The second sentence focuses on the preservation of resident and anadromous fish, but there are other sensitive resources that deserve protection as well. A second policy for sensitive aquatic species that are recognized by the Department and/or federal agencies would be more appropriate. Another example is Policy-LU-3.3, which describes the use of riparian and wetland buffers during the environmental review process. The Department concurs with this policy, but other sensitive biological resources may need consideration as well beyond only riparian and wetland vegetation communities. The Department recommends including a policy for other important habitats such as oak woodlands, grasslands, etc., in addition to riparian and wetland communities.

Open Space Element

The Open Space Element contains goals, policies, and implementation measures but it lacks a detailed assessment that determines the biodiversity and connectivity values of parcels within the City. The Department recommends basic biological surveys across undeveloped land within the City limits are conducted to determine how to best provide resource protection while balancing public access.

If you have any questions, please contact Amy Henderson, Senior Environmental Scientist, at (530) 598-7194, or by email at Amy.Henderson@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

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Curt Babcock
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