

Caples Lake Maintenance Station Rehabilitation

Caples Lake Maintenance Station off State Route 88 in Alpine County

10-ALP-88-1.9

Project ID Number 1017000184

State Clearinghouse Number 2021120587

Initial Study with Negative Declaration

Volume 1 of 2



Prepared by the
State of California Department of Transportation

February 2022



General Information About This Document

Document prepared by: Michaela Shelton, Associate Environmental Planner

The Initial Study circulated to the public for 33 days between December 30, 2021, and January 31, 2022. Comments received during this period are included in Appendix B. Elsewhere, language has been added throughout the document to indicate where a change has been made since the circulation of the draft environmental document. Minor editorial changes and clarifications have not been so indicated.

For individuals with sensory disabilities, this document can be made available in Braille, in large print, on audiocassette, or on computer disk. To obtain a copy in one of these alternate formats, please write to or call Caltrans, Attention: Jaycee Azevedo, Senior Environmental Planner, District 10 Environmental Division, 1976 East Doctor Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard, Stockton, California 95205; phone number 209-992-9824 (Voice), or use the California Relay Service 1-800-735-2929 (Teletype to Voice), 1-800-735-2922 (Voice to Teletype), 1-800-855-3000 (Spanish Teletype to Voice and Voice to Teletype), 1-800-854-7784 (Spanish and English Speech-to-Speech), or 711.

State Clearinghouse Number 2021120587

10-ALP-88-1.9

Project ID Number 1017000184

Rebuild or rehabilitate structures at Caltrans' Caples Lake Maintenance
Station off State Route 88 in Alpine County

**INITIAL STUDY
with Negative Declaration**

Submitted Pursuant to: (State) Division 13, California Public Resources Code

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Transportation
and
Responsible Agency: California Transportation Commission



James P. Henke
Environmental Office Chief, District 10
California Department of Transportation
CEQA Lead Agency

2/28/2022

Date

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Negative Declaration

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

State Clearinghouse Number: 2021120587

District-County-Route-Post Mile: 10-ALP-88-1.9

EA/Project Number: EA 10-1H560 and Project ID Number 1017000184

Project Description

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to rebuild or rehabilitate structures at Caltrans' Caples Lake Maintenance Station off State Route 88 in Alpine County.

Determination

An Initial Study has been prepared by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), District 10.

On the basis of this study, it is determined that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:

The project will have no effect on aesthetics, agriculture and forest resources, air quality, cultural resources, energy, geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation, tribal cultural resources, and wildfire.

The project will have no significant effect on biological resources, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, and utilities and service systems.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'James Henke'.

James P. Henke
Environmental Office Chief, District 10
California Department of Transportation

2/28/2022

Date

Table of Contents

Chapter 1	Proposed Project.....	1
1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Purpose and Need	2
1.2.1	Purpose.....	2
1.2.2	Need.....	2
1.3	Project Description	2
1.4	Project Alternatives	4
1.4.1	Build Alternatives.....	4
1.4.2	No-Build (No-Action) Alternative	5
1.5	Identification of a Preferred Alternative	5
1.6	Standard Measures and Best Management Practices Included in All Build Alternatives	5
1.7	Discussion of the NEPA Categorical Exclusion.....	6
1.8	Permits and Approvals Needed.....	7
Chapter 2	CEQA Evaluation	9
2.1	CEQA Environmental Checklist.....	9
2.1.1	Aesthetics	9
2.1.2	Agriculture and Forest Resources	10
2.1.3	Air Quality	11
2.1.4	Biological Resources.....	12
2.1.5	Cultural Resources.....	15
2.1.6	Energy.....	16
2.1.7	Geology and Soils	16
2.1.8	Greenhouse Gas Emissions	17
2.1.9	Hazards and Hazardous Materials	19
2.1.10	Hydrology and Water Quality	21
2.1.11	Land Use and Planning	22
2.1.12	Mineral Resources	22
2.1.13	Noise	23
2.1.14	Population and Housing.....	23
2.1.15	Public Services.....	24
2.1.16	Recreation	24
2.1.17	Transportation	25
2.1.18	Tribal Cultural Resources	25
2.1.19	Utilities and Service Systems	26
2.1.20	Wildfire	27
2.1.21	Mandatory Findings of Significance	28
Appendix A	Title VI Policy Statement	31
Appendix B	Comment Letters and Responses	33

Chapter 1 Proposed Project

1.1 Introduction

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (known as CEQA). This project is funded under Caltrans' State Highway Operation and Protection Program and does not have federal funding.

Caltrans proposes to rebuild or rehabilitate structures at Caltrans' Caples Lake Maintenance Station off State Route 88 in Alpine County.

The Caples Lake Maintenance Station, Facility Number 31M5730, is in Alpine County at 7,965 feet elevation along State Route 88, about 1.9 miles east of the Amador County line. See Figure 1-1 for the project vicinity map and Figure 1-2 for the project location map. The facility is on U.S. Forest Service property; operations at the facility are covered under a special use permit agreement between the U.S. Forest Service and Caltrans. The facility serves as a base for maintenance and snow removal operations on State Route 88, which is a year-round trans-Sierra pass between California and Nevada; it operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week during the winter months.

The Caples Lake Maintenance Station includes five buildings that support maintenance operations—a mechanic shop, an equipment shed, a generator room, a sand shed, and a dormitory that houses seasonal employees. A leach field services the facility.

The project proposes to demolish and rebuild the existing dormitory and sand shed and rehabilitate the existing generator room. The existing dormitory is a three-story structure with 23 sleeping rooms, four restrooms, a laundry room, office, recreational room, kitchen and dining room, and auxiliary kitchen. The lower level of the dormitory building houses the boiler used for heating the building and nine parking stalls. There is a 12-stall carport next to the building used for employee parking. The existing generator room houses three generators and two 10,000-gallon water storage tanks that supply the facility. The sand shed is used to store snow removal materials and abrasives used in maintenance operations. All three structures have deficient features, with upgrades needed.

1.2 Purpose and Need

1.2.1 Purpose

The purpose of the project is to accommodate the current and future needs of Caples Lake Maintenance Station.

1.2.2 Need

The project is needed to address outdated facilities at the Caples Lake Maintenance Station that are not in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and current building codes.

1.3 Project Description

This section describes the proposed action developed to meet the purpose and need of the project.

The project proposes to build a new dormitory building, demolish the existing dormitory building, rebuild the sand shed, and rehabilitate the generator building at Caples Lake Maintenance Station along State Route 88 in Alpine County to meet current State Fire Marshal, Americans with Disabilities Act, and building code requirements, and to provide the facility with an upgraded onsite domestic wastewater disposal system.

Figure 1-1 Project Vicinity Map

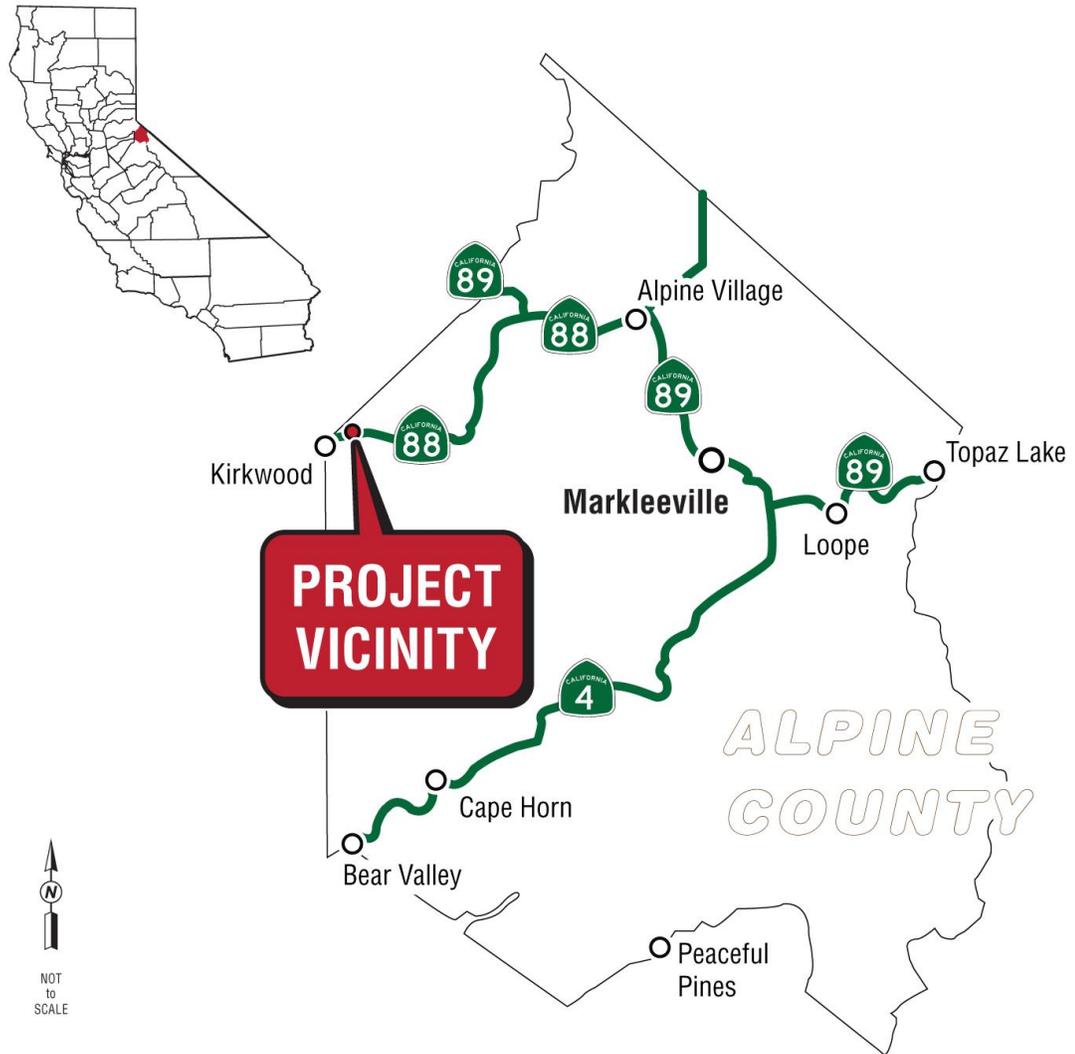
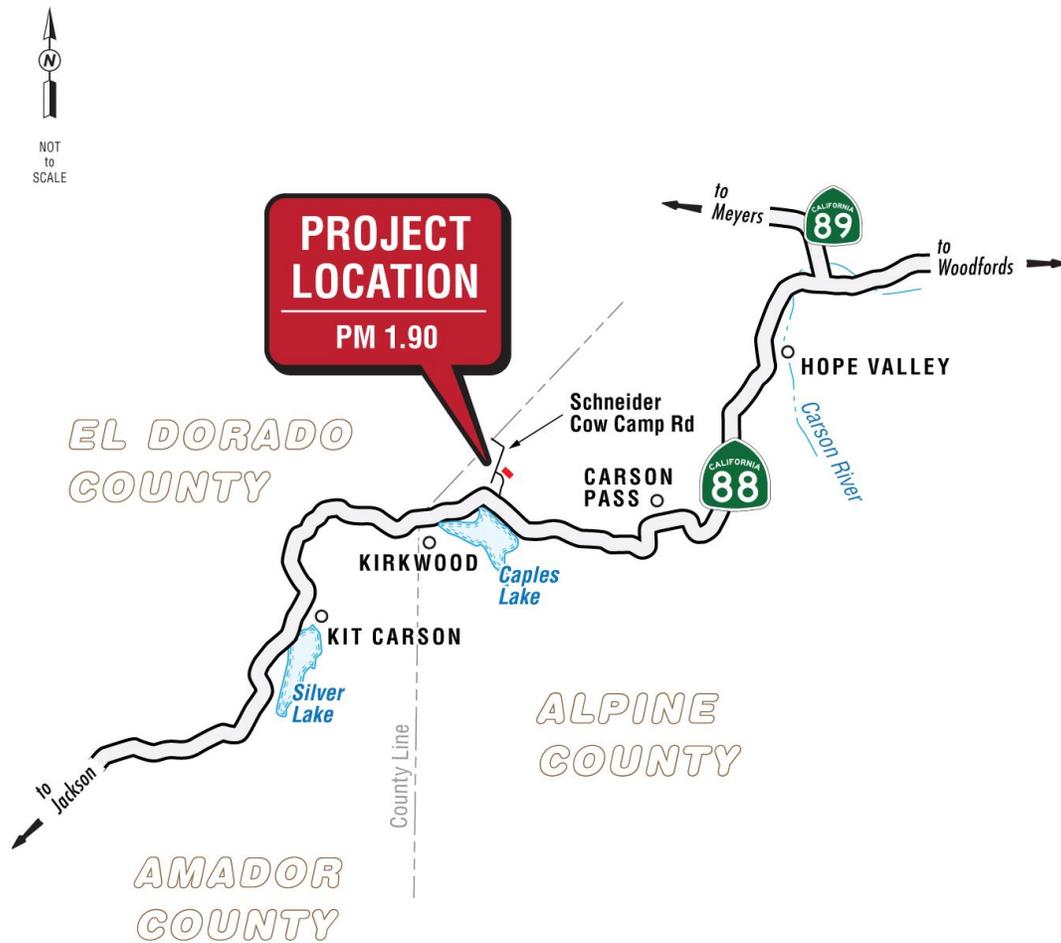


Figure 1-2 Project Location Map



1.4 Project Alternatives

This section describes the project alternatives developed to meet the purpose and need of the project while avoiding or minimizing environmental impacts. Under consideration for the project are a Build Alternative and a No-Build Alternative.

1.4.1 Build Alternatives

The project will rebuild or rehabilitate three structures at the Caples Lake Maintenance Station. The following work will occur at each structure:

- The existing dormitory will be demolished, and a new dormitory will be built to the southeast of the existing dormitory, within the maintenance

station footprint. The new dormitory will include energy-efficient appliances, adequate insulation and windows, a security system, and a fire sprinkler.

- The existing sand shed will be demolished, and a new, larger sand shed will be built to house additional deicing material and a new salt brine system.
- The existing generator room will be rehabilitated. The existing roof and interior and exterior wall will be removed and replaced. New lighting, electrical panels, and controls will be installed.

Also, new leach lines will be added to the existing leach field at the maintenance station, and an additional mound leach field will be built northwest of the existing leach field.

This project contains standardized project measures that are used on most, if not all, Caltrans projects and were not developed in response to any specific environmental impact resulting from the project. These measures are listed later in this chapter under “Standard Measures and Best Management Practices Included in All Build Alternatives.”

1.4.2 No-Build (No-Action) Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative, the existing dormitory, sand shed, and generator building will remain in their current condition.

1.5 Identification of a Preferred Alternative

The draft environmental document was circulated from December 30, 2021, to January 31, 2022. All comments have been considered, and Caltrans has identified the Build Alternative as the preferred alternative. The No-Build alternative was not selected because it does not meet the purpose and need of the project.

1.6 Standard Measures and Best Management Practices Included in All Build Alternatives

BIO-1 Limit vegetation removal.

BIO-2 Tree removal should occur from October 1 to January 31, outside of the bird nesting season.

BIO-3 If construction occurs during the nesting season, preconstruction surveys for nesting migratory birds and raptors will be conducted no more than 14 days before construction.

BIO-4 If active nests are found, biological monitoring may be necessary to ensure that appropriate no-work buffers around active nest sites are being enforced. The buffer for migratory birds will be a radius of 100 feet, and the buffer for raptors will be a radius of 300 feet.

BIO-5 Preconstruction wildlife surveys for North American porcupine dens will take place no more than 14 days before tree removal.

BIO-6 Disturbed areas will be treated with erosion control measures and revegetated with native species.

CC-1 Caltrans' Standard Specifications Sections 7-1.02A and 7-1.02C, Emissions Reduction. Contractors are required to comply with all laws applicable to the project and to certify they are aware of and will comply with all California Air Resources Board emission reduction regulations.

CC-2 Caltrans' Standard Specifications Section 14-9.02, Air Pollution Control. Contractors are required to comply with all air pollution control rules, regulations, ordinances, and statutes. Certain common regulations, such as equipment idling restrictions, that reduce construction vehicle emissions also help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

CC-3 Caltrans' Standard Specifications Sections 10-4, Water Usage, 10-6, Watering, and 20-2.01, Irrigation.

CC-4 Caltrans' Standard Specifications Section 14-10, Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling.

HW-1 Caltrans' Standard Special Provisions Section 7-1.02K(6)(j)(iii), Earth Material Containing Lead.

NQ-1 Caltrans' Standard Specifications Section 14-8.02, Noise Control.

WQ-1 Caltrans' Standard Specifications Section 13, Water Pollution Control.

1.7 Discussion of the NEPA Categorical Exclusion

This document contains information regarding compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and other state laws and regulations. Separate environmental documentation supporting a Categorical Exclusion determination has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). When needed for clarity, or as required by CEQA, this document may contain references to federal laws and/or regulations (CEQA, for example, requires consideration of adverse effects on species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species by the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife

Service—in other words, species protected by the Federal Endangered Species Act).

1.8 Permits and Approvals Needed

No permits, licenses, agreements, or certifications are required for project construction.

Chapter 2 CEQA Evaluation

2.1 CEQA Environmental Checklist

This checklist identifies physical, biological, social, and economic factors that might be affected by the proposed project. Potential impact determinations include Significant and Unavoidable Impact, Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated, Less Than Significant Impact, and No Impact. In many cases, background studies performed in connection with a project will indicate that there are no impacts to a particular resource. A No Impact answer reflects this determination. The questions in this checklist are intended to encourage the thoughtful assessment of impacts and do not represent thresholds of significance.

Project features, which can include both design elements of the project and standardized measures that are applied to all or most Caltrans projects such as Best Management Practices and measures included in the Standard Plans and Specifications or as Standard Special Provisions, are considered to be an integral part of the project and have been considered prior to any significance determinations documented below.

“No Impact” determinations in each section are based on the scope, description, and location of the proposed project as well as the appropriate technical report (bound separately in Volume 2), and no further discussion is included in this document.

2.1.1 Aesthetics

Considering that the project is within an existing Caltrans maintenance facility, the following significance determinations have been made:

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Aesthetics
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

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Aesthetics
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

2.1.2 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 Department 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.

Considering the information in the Alpine County General Plan and that the project will take place entirely within the footprint of an existing Caltrans maintenance facility, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Agriculture and Forest Resources
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

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Agriculture and Forest Resources
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	No Impact
c) Conflict with existing zoning, 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
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

2.1.3 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.

Considering the information in the Air Quality Memorandum dated April 14, 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Air Quality
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	No Impact
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

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Air Quality
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	No Impact

2.1.4 Biological Resources

Considering the information in the Natural Environment Study, Minimal Impacts, June 21, 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Biological Resources
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 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries?	Less Than Significant Impact
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?	No Impact
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?	No Impact
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?	No Impact
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	No Impact

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for 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

Affected Environment

A Natural Environment Study, Minimal Impacts, dated June 21, 2021, was completed for this project. The Natural Environment Study, Minimal Impacts, contains U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service lists for the project. Instructions for requesting copies of the study are included at the end of this document.

Field studies were conducted within the biological study area, which consists of the project area and surrounding vicinity. The biological study area includes 3.35 acres on either side of Schneider Cow Camp Road along State Route 88.

The landscape within the biological study area consists of ruderal habitat with forested areas. Several trees surround the maintenance station that could provide habitat for migratory birds. A creek runs next to the maintenance station; however, it is outside of the project area. Caples Lake is about 1,000 feet south of the maintenance station and is also outside of the project area. There are no waters of the U.S., waters of the State, or communities of natural concern within the project area.

The existing maintenance station is a paved, well-developed facility that Caltrans maintenance workers use daily. The vicinity is ruderal, meaning the area is repeatedly disturbed, and the vegetation is composed largely of nonnative, disturbance-tolerant grasses and forbs. The forested area within the biological study area consists primarily of lodgepole pine and annual grassland. Soils within the biological study area are moderately susceptible to yellow star-thistle invasion and slightly susceptible to invasion by medusa’s head.

Migratory Birds and Raptors

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act protects migratory birds. Several species of migratory birds could potentially nest on the ground or within shrubs and trees within the project area. Field surveys were conducted on May 17, 2021. No nesting bird species were seen, but pine trees in the project area are suitable habitat for migratory and raptor bird nesting habitat.

Tree-Roosting Bat Species

Pallid bat, Townsend’s big-eared bat, long-legged myotis bat, and fringed myotis bat are special-status bat species with the potential to occur in the

project area. Pallid bats and Townsend's big-eared bats are California species of special concern, long-legged myotis is tracked by the California Natural Diversity Database, and fringed myotis is a U.S. Forest Service species of special concern. Also, state laws protect bats and their occupied roosts from harassment and destruction.

Several bat species use trees as daytime roosts for thermal regulation, predator avoidance, and reproduction. Several other bat species occasionally day roost in trees or use trees as night roosts for temporary resting and feeding between foraging flights. Tree-roosting bats may roost in cavities, under bark, and in foliage. Suitable habitat within the project area that could support tree-roosting bats would include mature trees with exfoliating bark, which the bats could wedge under. Field surveys were conducted on May 17, 2021; no bat species were seen within the biological study area.

North American Porcupine

The North American porcupine is a species tracked by the California Natural Diversity Database. The species is present in forested habitats in the Sierra Nevada, Cascade, and Coast Ranges and has been seen in forested areas in the Transverse Ranges. North American porcupines inhabit a wide variety of coniferous and mixed woodland habitat and can use trees as dens. The project area contains suitable habitat for the species within the Biological Study Area; six sightings of the species within 5 miles of the biological study area have been recorded in the California Natural Diversity Database. No signs of the species, including individuals, tracks, scat, or tree damage, were seen during field surveys within the biological study area on May 17, 2021.

Environmental Consequences

The project will not affect federally listed plant or animal species. The Natural Environment Study, Minimal Impacts, contains U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service lists for the project. Instructions for requesting copies of the study are included at the end of this document.

Migratory Birds and Raptors

Nesting birds were not seen during the field survey conducted on May 17, 2021. However, the project will remove approximately 15 large pine trees that are suitable nesting habitat for migratory birds or raptors.

Trimming or removing trees or shrubs in the project area may be required, including removing approximately 15 lodgepole pine trees that are potential habitat for migratory birds.

Tree-Roosting Bat Species

Pallid bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, fringed myotis bat, and long-legged myotis bat have the potential to occur in the project area. Bat species were not seen during the field survey conducted on May 17, 2021. Mature trees in

the project area are potential habitat for tree-roosting bat species. The project will remove about 15 large pine trees; however, the pines are a poor roosting candidate for tree-roosting bats because the bark is thin and scaly.

North American Porcupine

There is suitable habitat for the North American porcupine within the project area. Individuals of the species, tracks, scat, and tree damage associated with the species were not seen during field surveys on May 17, 2021.

The following standard measures will be included in the project:

BIO-1 Limit vegetation removal.

BIO-2 Tree removal should occur from October 1 to January 31, outside of the bird nesting season.

BIO-3 If construction takes place during the bird nesting season, preconstruction surveys for nesting migratory birds and raptors will be conducted no more than 14 days before construction.

BIO-4 If active nests are found, biological monitoring may be necessary to ensure that the appropriate no-work buffers around active nest sites are being enforced. The buffer for migratory birds will be a radius of 100 feet, and the buffer for raptors will be a radius of 300 feet.

BIO-5 Preconstruction wildlife surveys for North American porcupine dens will take place no more than 14 days before tree removal.

BIO-6 Disturbed areas will be treated with erosion control measures and revegetated with native species.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

With the incorporation of the standard measures outlined above, the project will have a less than significant impact on biological resources. Project-specific avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are not required.

2.1.5 Cultural Resources

Considering the information in the Screening Memorandum dated April 12, 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Cultural Resources
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	No Impact
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	No Impact
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	No Impact

2.1.6 Energy

Considering the scope and duration of the project, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Energy
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during project construction or operation?	No Impact
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	No Impact

2.1.7 Geology and Soils

Considering the information in the California Earthquake Hazards Zone Application from the California Department of Conservation, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Geology and Soils
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Geology and Soils
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	No Impact
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	No Impact
iv) Landslides?	No Impact
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	No Impact
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 onsite or offsite landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	No Impact
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	No Impact
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	No Impact
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	No Impact

2.1.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Considering the information in the Climate Change/Greenhouse Gas Analysis dated June 23, 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Greenhouse Gas Emissions
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

Affected Environment

This project proposes to demolish and replace the existing dormitory and sand shed, rehabilitate the existing generator room, and create a new leach

field at Caltrans' Caples Lake Maintenance Station in Alpine County. The Caples Lake Maintenance Station is off State Route 88 at Schneider Cow Camp Road in Kirkwood, California.

The California Air Resources Board sets regional targets for California's 18 metropolitan planning organizations to use in their Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy to plan future projects that will cumulatively achieve greenhouse gas reduction goals. Targets are set at a percent reduction of passenger vehicle greenhouse gas emissions per person from 2005 levels. The project is within the jurisdiction of the Alpine County Local Transportation Commission, which is the Regional Transportation Planning Agency for Alpine County. The Alpine County Local Transportation Commission is not a metropolitan planning organization and is not required to have a Sustainable Communities Strategy or California Air Resources Board-established goals. However, the 2020 Regional Transportation Plan does identify strategies for Alpine County to reach climate change-related goals.

Environmental Consequences

The purpose of the project is to rebuild or rehabilitate structures at the Caples Lake Maintenance Station in Alpine County. The project will not increase the vehicle capacity of the roadway. This type of project generally causes minimal or no increase in operational greenhouse gas emissions. Because the project will not increase the number of travel lanes on State Route 88, no increase in vehicle miles traveled will occur due to project implementation. While some greenhouse gas emissions during the construction period will be unavoidable, no increase in operational greenhouse gas emissions is expected.

Construction greenhouse gas emissions will result from material processing, onsite construction equipment, and traffic delays due to construction. These emissions will be produced at different levels throughout the construction phase; their frequency and occurrence can be reduced through innovations in plans and specifications and by implementing better traffic management during construction phases.

Construction greenhouse gas emissions for the project were calculated using Caltrans' Construction Emissions Tool v1.1. The project's construction activities are expected to generate about 856 tons of carbon dioxide during 350 working days.

The following standard measures will be included in the project:

CC-1 Caltrans' Standard Specifications Sections 7-1.02A and 7-1.02C, Emissions Reduction. Contractors are required to comply with all laws applicable to the project and to certify they are aware of and will comply with all California Air Resources Board emission reduction regulations.

CC-2 Caltrans' Standard Specifications Section 14-9.02, Air Pollution Control. Contractors are required to comply with all air pollution control rules, regulations, ordinances, and statutes. Certain common regulations, such as equipment idling restrictions, that reduce construction vehicle emissions also help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

CC-3 Caltrans' Standard Specifications Sections 10-4, Water Usage, 10-6, Watering, and 20-2.01, Irrigation.

CC-4 Caltrans' Standard Specifications Section 14-10, Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling.

The new dormitory will be built with adequate insulation and windows and will be outfitted with energy-efficient appliances. The dormitory will be required to have energy modeling performed to establish the insulation values for the building envelope and will also be designed to comply with the mandatory measures of the California Green Building Standards Code. These features will save energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

With the incorporation of the standard measures outlined above, the greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the project will have a less than significant impact on the environment. Project-specific avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are not required.

2.1.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Considering the information in the Initial Site Assessment dated June 2, 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Hazards and Hazardous Materials
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	No 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?	No Impact

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Hazards and Hazardous Materials
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within 0.25 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?	Less Than Significant Impact
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within 2 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?	No Impact

Affected Environment

This project proposes to demolish and replace the existing dormitory and sand shed, rehabilitate the existing generator room, and create a new leach field at Caltrans’ Caples Lake Maintenance Station in Alpine County. The Caples Lake Maintenance Station is off State Route 88 at Schneider Cow Camp Road.

There is one closed Leaking Underground Storage Tank site within the project area. The site in the project area has been appropriately remediated and has received No Further Action Required letters from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board. The scope of work near the site is limited to shallow excavation for building foundations.

Environmental Consequences

The excavation for a septic leach field on the south side of the project area is outside the area impacted by the Leaking Underground Storage Tank; the potential to encounter contaminated soil on this project is considered minimal. There is potential to encounter nonhazardous concentrations of aerially

deposited lead while working in unpaved areas within the project limits. Additionally, there is potential to encounter asbestos-containing materials and lead-based paint during the demolition and rehabilitation of the existing dormitory, sand shed, and generator buildings.

The following standard measure will be included in the project:

HW-1 Caltrans' Standard Special Provisions Section 7-1.02K(6)(j)(iii), Earth Material Containing Lead.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The following avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measure will be included in the project:

HW-2 A project-specific survey for asbestos-containing materials and lead-based paints will be conducted at the existing dormitory, sand shed, and generator buildings.

2.1.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

Considering the information in the Water Compliance Memorandum dated December 24, 2020, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Hydrology and Water Quality
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface water or groundwater quality?	No 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 onsite or offsite;	No Impact

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Hydrology and Water Quality
(ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding onsite or offsite;	No 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	No Impact
(iv) impede or redirect flood flows?	No 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

2.1.11 Land Use and Planning

Considering the information in the Alpine County General Plan and that the project location is within an existing Caltrans maintenance facility, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Land Use and Planning
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

2.1.12 Mineral Resources

Considering the information in the Alpine County General Plan, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Mineral Resources
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

2.1.13 Noise

Considering the information in the Noise Compliance Memorandum dated January 30, 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project result in:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Noise
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?	No Impact
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	No 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 2 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

2.1.14 Population and Housing

Considering the scope and location of the project within an existing Caltrans maintenance facility, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Population and Housing
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

2.1.15 Public Services

Considering the scope and the location of the project within an existing Caltrans maintenance facility, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Public Services
a) 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 public services: Fire protection?	No Impact
Police protection?	No Impact
Schools?	No Impact
Parks?	No Impact
Other public facilities?	No Impact

2.1.16 Recreation

Considering the scope and location of the project within an existing Caltrans maintenance facility, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Recreation
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

2.1.17 Transportation

Considering the information in the Alpine County Regional Transportation Plan, 2015, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Transportation
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	No Impact
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	No Impact
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	No Impact
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	No Impact

2.1.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

Considering the information in the Screening Memorandum dated April 12, 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

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 Significance Determinations for Tribal Cultural Resources
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	No 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 Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	No Impact

2.1.19 Utilities and Service Systems

Considering the scope and location of the project within an existing Caltrans maintenance facility, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Utilities and Service Systems
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	Less Than Significant 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

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Utilities and 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
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	No Impact

Affected Environment

This project proposes to demolish and replace the existing dormitory and sand shed, rehabilitate the existing generator room, and create a new leach field at Caltrans’ Caples Lake Maintenance Station in Alpine County. The Caples Lake Maintenance Station is off State Route 88 at Schneider Cow Camp Road.

The maintenance station has an existing leach field to service the facility. Additional leach lines and a new leach field will be built to provide additional service.

Environmental Consequences

New leach lines will be installed between the existing leach lines, and a new mound leach field will be built northwest of the existing leach field within the existing maintenance station. Approximately 15 lodgepole pine trees are expected to be removed to accommodate project activities, including the leach fieldwork.

The standard measures outlined in Section 1.5 and Appendix B of this document will be included in the project.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

With the incorporation of the standard measures outlined in Section 1.5 and Appendix B of this document, the expanded leach field utility service will have a less than significant impact on the environment. Project-specific avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are not required.

2.1.20 Wildfire

Considering the information in the California Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map and given the scope and location of the project within an area of federal responsibility, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Wildfire
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

2.1.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

Question:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Mandatory Findings of Significance
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?	No Impact —The project will not have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment. With standard measures incorporated, the project will have a less than significant impact on biological resources and no impact on cultural resources.

<p style="text-align: center;">Question:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CEQA Significance Determinations for Mandatory Findings of Significance</p>
<p>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)?</p>	<p>No Impact—The project will take place within an existing maintenance facility and will not have cumulatively considerable impacts.</p>
<p>c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?</p>	<p>No Impact—The project will take place within an existing maintenance facility. With standard measures incorporated, the project will have a less than significant impact on human beings, either directly or indirectly.</p>

Appendix A Title VI Policy Statement

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
P.O. BOX 942873, MS-49
SACRAMENTO, CA 94273-0001
PHONE (916) 654-6130
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Making Conservation
a California Way of Life.

September 2021

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

The California Department of Transportation, under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, ensures *"No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."*

Caltrans will make every effort to ensure nondiscrimination in all of its services, programs and activities, whether they are federally funded or not, and that services and benefits are fairly distributed to all people, regardless of race, color, or national origin. In addition, Caltrans will facilitate meaningful participation in the transportation planning process in a nondiscriminatory manner.

Related federal statutes, remedies, and state law further those protections to include sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, and age.

For information or guidance on how to file a complaint, or obtain more information regarding Title VI, please contact the Title VI Branch Manager at (916) 324-8379 or visit the following web page:
<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/civil-rights/title-vi>.

To obtain this information in an alternate format such as Braille or in a language other than English, please contact the California Department of Transportation, Office of Civil Rights, at 1823 14th Street, MS-79, Sacramento, CA 95811; PO Box 942874, MS-79, Sacramento, CA 94274-0001; (916) 324-8379 (TTY 711); or at Title.VI@dot.ca.gov.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Toks Omishakin'.

Toks Omishakin
Director

"Provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment."

Appendix B Comment Letters and Responses

[The following text has been added since the draft environmental document was circulated.] This appendix contains the comments received during the public circulation and comment period from December 30, 2021, to January 31, 2022, retyped for readability. The comment letters are stated verbatim as submitted, with acronyms, abbreviations, and any original grammatical or typographical errors included. A Caltrans response follows each comment presented. Copies of the original comment letters and documents can be found in Volume 2 of this document.

Comment from John Chiara

Comment 1:

Sent via email

1411 Brentwood Court
Gardnerville, Nevada 89410
December 31, 2021

Jaycee Azevedo
Senior Environmental Planner
Central Region Environmental
California Department of Transportation
1976 East Doctor Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard
Stockton, California 95205

Dear Jaycee Azevedo:

Subject: Caples Lake Maintenance Station Rehabilitation, Caples Lake
Maintenance Station off State Route 88 in Alpine County 10-ALP-88-1.9
Project Number 1017000184 Initial Study with Proposed Negative Declaration

I would like California Department of Transportation to consider
improvements to reduce air emissions.

The first improvement would be to obtain power from the electric distribution
line that runs from the Salt Springs area to Kirkwood that is near the facility.
The second improvement would be to go beyond the current building codes to
reduce energy consumption.

The document states, “The existing generator room houses three generators
and two 10,000-gallon water storage tanks that supply the facility”. The
statement implies Caltrans plans to continue using the generators. If Caltrans
connected to the distribution line, then the need for burning fossil fuels at the
site for electric generation would be essentially eliminated. The replacement
electricity would come from “the grid” and have less greenhouse gases.
These greenhouse gases from electric production are expected to be reduced
because of State of the California laws and regulations. As Caltrans begins
using more electric vehicles, this source of energy could provide a recharging
station that obtains its electricity from the grid.

Caltrans may want to exceed code requirements for insulation of the builds
and additional energy conservation improvements to the other builds.

Hence, Caltrans should consider alternatives to reduce air emissions as part
of the project and thus have a positive impact on the environment.

Sincerely,

John Chiara

Response to comment 1: Thank you for your comment. Caltrans Division of Engineering Services designs all projects to meet or exceed California energy requirements. Caltrans currently has a project underway to connect the Peddler Hill Maintenance Station in Amador County to the Kirkwood Meadows Public Utility District utility line. Caltrans may, in the future, consider connecting the Caples Lake Maintenance Station to the electric distribution lines in the area; however, it is considered outside the scope of this project and would be considered under a separate project.

Comment from California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Comment 1:

Sent via email

From: Harvey Tran
California Department of Fish and Wildlife

To: Jaycee Azevedo
California Department of Transportation

Good Afternoon Jaycee:

I hope you're doing well in Stockton.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed draft Negative Declaration (ND) for the Caples Lake Maintenance Station Rehabilitation Project (Project). CDFW is responding to the draft ND as a Trustee Agency for fish and wildlife resources (Fish & Game Code, §§ 711.7 & 1802, and CEQA Guidelines §§ 15836), and as a Responsible Agency regarding any discretionary actions (CEQA Guidelines Section 15381), such as the issuance of a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement (California Fish and Game Code Sections 1600 et seq.) and/or a California Endangered Species Act Permit for incidental take of Endangered, Threatened, and/or Candidate species (California Fish and Game Code Sections 2080 and 2080.1).

The Project would rebuild or rehabilitate three structures at the Caples Lake Maintenance Station. The existing dormitory would be demolished, and a new dormitory would be built to the southeast of the existing dormitory, within the maintenance station footprint. The new dormitory would include energy-efficient appliances, adequate insulation and windows, a security system, and a fire sprinkler. The existing sand shed would be demolished, and a new, larger sand shed would be built to house additional deicing material and a new salt brine system. The existing generator room would be rehabilitated. The existing roof and interior and exterior wall would be removed and replaced. New lighting, electrical panels, and controls would be installed. Also, new leach lines would be added to the existing leach field at the maintenance station, and an additional mound leach field would be built northwest of the existing leach field.

CDFW recommends the following items be addressed in the CEQA document:

1. Pages 13 and 21 **Standard Measures and Best Management Practices Included in All Alternatives: BIO-4**

The CEQA document states the no-work buffers for nests of migratory birds will be a radius of 100 feet, and the buffer for nests of migratory raptors will be a radius of 300 feet. CDFW generally recommends at least a 500 feet buffer radius for raptors. However, buffer radius can be determined by monitoring the active nests and determining the distance that activities will disturb the nesting birds. Therefore, CDFW recommends all measures to protect nesting birds should be performance-based. While some birds may tolerate disturbance within 250 feet of construction activities, other birds may have a different disturbance threshold and “take” could occur if the temporary disturbance buffers are not designed to reduce stress to that individual pair. CDFW recommends including performance-based protection measures for avoiding all nests protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Fish & G. Code. A 250-foot exclusion buffer may be sufficient; however, that buffer may need to be increased based on the birds’ tolerance level to the disturbance. Below is an example of a performance-based protection measure:

Should construction activities cause the nesting migratory bird or raptor to vocalize, make defensive flights at intruders, get up from a brooding position, or fly off the nest, then increase the exclusionary buffer such that activities are far enough from the nest to stop this agitated behavior by the migratory bird or raptor. The exclusionary buffer should remain in place until the chicks have fledged or as otherwise determined by a qualified biologist.

2. Page 21 **2.1.4 Biological Resources**

The CEQA document states that tree roosting bats have potential to occur in the Project area. Suitable habitat within the Project area that could support tree-roosting bats would include mature trees with exfoliating bark, which the bats could wedge under. Fifteen mature trees in the Project area will be removed due to Project activities. In addition, the bat species listed in the CEQA document have potential to also roost in the nearby buildings that planned to be demolished (California Bat Mitigation Techniques, Solutions, and Effectiveness, 2004). Even though the pine trees being removed are not ideal roosting trees for bats, CDFW recommends a preconstruction survey for bats and their signs to clear the Project area and its vicinity to be sure.

CDFW recommends adding text: “Pre-construction surveys for bats prior to the beginning of Project-related activities shall be conducted during the maternity (April 15-August 31) and hibernation (October 15-March 1) seasons. The pre-construction survey shall be performed at potential roost sites 45 minutes before sunset and continue the survey until two hours after sunset.”

Additionally, removal of trees containing suitable habitat should be conducted under the supervision of a qualified bat biologist. Trees should be trimmed and/or removed in a two-phased removal system conducted over two consecutive days. The first day (in the afternoon), limbs and branches should be removed by a tree cutter using chainsaws only. Limbs with cavities,

crevices, or deep bark fissures should be avoided, and only branches or limbs without those features should be removed. On the second day, the entire tree should be removed. Project proponents should consult with a qualified bat biologist to determine suitable buffers around roost and/or hibernaculum sites. Buffers may vary depending on species and Project activity being performed.

To exclude bats from structures, CDFW recommends exclusion devices be installed on structures between approximately March 1 (or when evening temperatures are above 45°F and rainfall less than ½ inch in 24 hours occurs) and April 15, prior to parturition of pups; or (2) between September 1 and October 15 prior to hibernation (or prior to evening temperatures dropping below 45°F and onset of rainfall greater than ½ inch in 24 hours) to prevent bats from accessing the structures. Actively used openings should have a one-way door installed to allow the bats to leave the roost, but not re-enter. Because of the large variability in the way bats use structures, CDFW recommends that a plan on how to monitor and exclude bats be developed by a qualified biologist and submitted to CDFW for review and approval.

Please note that when acting as a responsible agency, CEQA guidelines section 15096, subdivision (f) requires CDFW to consider the CEQA environmental document prepared by the lead agency prior to reaching a decision on the project. Addressing CDFW's comments and disclosing potential Project impacts on CESA-listed species and any river, lake, or stream, and provide adequate avoidance, minimization, mitigation, monitoring, and reporting measures; will assist CDFW with the consideration of the ND.

Thank you.

Harvey Tran
Environmental Scientist
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Region 2 – North Central Region
Habitat Conservation Program
(916) 358-4035

Response to comment 1: Thank you for your comment on the Caples Lake Maintenance Station Rehabilitation project. While the environmental document will remain the same, Caltrans will follow the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's regulations to prevent the take of birds and bats during construction.

Comment from Nicholas White, Water Resource Control Engineer

Comment 1:

Sent via email

31 January 2022

Michaela Shelton
California Department of Transportation, District 10
1976 Dr. Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard
Stockton, CA 95205
michaela.shelton@dot.ca.gov

COMMENTS TO REQUEST FOR REVIEW FOR THE NEGATIVE DECLARATION, CAPLES LAKE MAINTENCNE STATION REHABILITATION PROJECT, SCH#2021120587, ALPINE COUNTY

Pursuant to the State Clearinghouse's 27 December 2021 request, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) has reviewed the Request for Review of the Negative Declaration for the Caples Lake Maintenance Station Rehabilitation Project, located in Alpine County.

Our agency is delegated with the responsibility of protecting the quality of surface and groundwaters of the state; therefore our comments will address concerns surrounding those issues.

I. Regulatory Setting

Basin Plan

The Central Valley Water Board is required to formulate and adopt Basin Plans for all areas within the Central Valley region under Section 13240 of the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. Each Basin Plan must contain water quality objectives to ensure the reasonable protection of the beneficial uses, as well as a program of implementation for achieving water quality objectives with the Basin Plans. Federal regulations require each state to adopt water quality standards to protect the public health or welfare, enhance the quality of water and serve the purposes of the Clean Water Act. In California, the beneficial uses, water quality objectives, and the Antidegradation Policy are the State's water quality standards. Water quality standards are also contained in the National Toxics Rule, 40 CFR Section 131.36, and the California Toxics Rule, 40 CFR Section 131.38.

The Basin Plan is subject to modification as necessary, considering applicable laws, policies, technologies, water quality conditions and priorities. The original Basin Plans were adopted in 1975, and have been updated and

revised periodically as required, using Basin Plan amendments. Once the Central Valley Water Board has adopted a Basin Plan amendment in noticed public hearings, it must be approved by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board), Office of administrative Law (OAL) and in some cases, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). Basin Plan amendments only become effective after they have been approved by the OAL and in some cases, the USEPA. Every three (3) years, a review of the Basin Plan is completed that assesses the appropriateness of existing standards and evaluates and prioritizes Basin Planning issues. For more information on the Water Quality Control Plan for the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Basins, please visit our website:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvally/water_issues/basin_plans/

Antidegradation Considerations

All wastewater discharges must comply with the Antidegradation Policy (State Water Board Resolution 68-16) and the Antidegradation Implementation Policy contained in the Basin Plan. The Antidegradation Implementation Policy is available on page 74 at:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/basin_plans/sacsjr_201805.pdf

In part it states:

Any discharge of waste to high quality waters must apply best practicable treatment or control not only to prevent a condition of pollution or nuisance from occurring, but also to maintain the highest water quality possible consistent with the maximum benefit to the people of the State.

This information must be presented as an analysis of the impacts and potential impacts of the discharge on water quality, as measured by background concentrations and applicable water quality objectives.

The antidegradation analysis is a mandatory element in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System and land discharge Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) permitting processes. The environmental review document should evaluate potential impacts to both surface and groundwater quality.

II. Permitting Requirements

Construction Storm Water General Permit

Dischargers whose project disturb one or more acres of soil or where projects disturb less than one acre but are part of a larger common plan of development that in total disturbs one or more acres, are required to obtain coverage under the General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities (Construction General

Permit), Construct General Permit Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ. Construction activity subject to this permit includes clearing, grading, grubbing, disturbances to the ground, such as stockpiling, or excavation, but does not include regular maintenance activities performed to restore the original line, grade, or capacity of the facility. The Construction General Permit requires the development and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). For more information on the Construction General Permit, visit the State Water Resources Control Board website at: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/stormwater/constpermits.shtml

In you have questions regarding these comments, please contact me at (916) 464-4856 or Nicholas.White@waterboards.ca.gov.

Nicholas White
Water Resource Control Engineer

cc: State Clearinghouse unit, Governor's Office of Planning and Research, Sacramento

Response to comment 1: Thank you for your comment. Caltrans has complied with the Stormwater Management Plan for controlling pollutant discharges and meeting permit requirements for this project by preparing a Stormwater Data Report with a Water Pollution Control Program. Project activities are anticipated to disturb less than 1 acre of soil. The construction contract will be covered by the Caltrans Statewide Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System, also known as MS4, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit CAS000003. In addition, the project will create less than 1 acre of new impervious surface; therefore, postconstruction treatment is not required.

List of Technical Studies Bound Separately (Volume 2)

Air Quality Memorandum

Noise Compliance Study

Water Compliance Memorandum

Natural Environment Study, Minimal Impacts

Screening Memorandum

Initial Site Assessment

To obtain a copy of one or more of these technical studies/reports or the Initial Study, please send your request to:

Jaycee Azevedo
District 10 Environmental Division
California Department of Transportation
1976 East Doctor Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard, Stockton, California 95205

Or send your request via email to: jaycee.azevedo@dot.ca.gov
Or call: 209-992-9824

Please provide the following information in your request:

Project title: Caples Lake Maintenance Station Rehabilitation

General location information: Caples Lake Maintenance Station off State Route 88 in Alpine County

District number-county code-route-post mile: 10-ALP-88-1.9

Project ID number: 1017000184