



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



May 2, 2022

Hailey Lang
Deputy Director of Planning
County of Siskiyou
806 South Main Street
Yreka, CA 96097



SUBJECT: Review of the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Mount Shasta Ski Park Lift Extension Project, State Clearinghouse Number 2022040026, Siskiyou County

Dear Hailey Lang:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) has reviewed the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) 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 (CESA) and other provisions of the Fish and Game Code that conserve the State's fish and wildlife public trust resources. The Department offers the following comments and recommendations on this Project in our role as a trustee and responsible agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), California Public Resources Code section 21000 et seq:

Project Description

According to the MND, the proposed Project includes "the development of a new ski lift to be located on the south slope of Grey Butte and would extend approximately 4,300 feet in a roughly south to north trajectory." The Project is located at the Mount Shasta Ski Park in Siskiyou County.

Comments and Recommendations

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

Project Description

The MND does not include a full project description. To enable the evaluation of Project impacts on biological resources, the MND should provide a full description of all Project

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activities that may result in a potentially significant impact on biological resources. This description should detail any activity that results in ground disturbance, including “minor” disturbances (e.g., trampling, soil erosion, runoff, and sedimentation), visual disturbance (i.e., light sources that may result in phototaxis), auditory disturbance (i.e., noise), and respiratory disturbance (i.e., dust). Detailed information about facilities/infrastructure and related construction should be included, along with a site plan. For example, the Project description should include information on work areas, temporary and permanent access roads, equipment staging and storage areas, sources of water withdrawal, stockpile storage and disposal, dewatering and on/offsite water storage and disposal, and post-Project destination of runoff from the Project site, as applicable.

Mitigation Measure BIO-2

Mitigation Measure BIO-2 states: *“With the exception of sensitive bird species which will be covered under the nesting bird survey), all sensitive wildlife (animal) species mitigated for in THP # 2-21-00103-SIS and THP # 2-21-00185-SIS shall be surveyed for by a qualified biologist Prior to the start of Project construction. Detection of any sensitive wildlife individual, den, or rendezvous area during the surveys, or during Project construction or operation, shall trigger the relevant species-specific protection buffer as specified in the aforementioned THPs. Following a positive detection, the Designated Biologist shall contact CDFW for a consultation.”*

The Department recommends listing out the species-specific mitigation within the mitigation measure instead of referencing measures in the Timber Harvest Plans, which were not included with the MND.

Mitigation Measure BIO-3

Mitigation Measure BIO-3 states: *“The 28-acre Wildlife Mitigation Area and 55-acre Botany Rare Plant Area, as designated by the Mt. Shasta Ski Park, shall be barred from mechanical entry to facilitate the persistence of habitat complexity, and wildlife and botanical diversity within the Ski Park.”*

The Department appreciates the conservation of the Wildlife Mitigation Area and Botany Rare Plant Area and requests that maps depicting these areas be included in the MND. Additionally, mitigation measure BIO-3 should include additional assurances/specifications as to how these areas will be protected from mechanical entry. For instance, information needs to be included on how or if roads will be blocked in these areas and/or if the areas will be protected under a conservation easement or other protection mechanism.

Mitigation Measure GEO-1

Mitigation Measure GEO-1 requires the adoption of a new erosion and sediment control plan to mitigate erosion risks as a result of vegetation removal and grading activities in

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the Project area. Because this plan is proposed as a mitigation measure and used to reduce impacts to Hydrology and Water Quality (section 4.10 C) and Geology and Soils (section 4.7 B) to less than significant levels, the plan should be completed and included in the MND for public review prior to Project approval.

California Endangered Species Act

The Project site has been identified as potential habitat for CESA-listed species such as gray wolf (*Canis lupus*), wolverine (*Gulo gulo*), and Sierra Nevada red fox (*Vulpes vulpes necator*). Please be advised that a CESA permit must be obtained if the project has the potential to result in “take” of plants or animals listed under CESA, either during construction or over the life of the project. Issuance of a CESA Permit is subject to CEQA documentation; the CEQA document must specify impacts, mitigation measures, and a mitigation monitoring and reporting program. If the Project will impact CESA listed species, early consultation is encouraged, as significant modification to the Project and mitigation measures may be required to obtain a CESA Permit. Information on how to attain a CESA permit is available here:

<https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/CESA/Permitting>.

Avoid Inadvertent Entrapment of Wildlife

Trenched and excavated areas should be covered securely prior to stopping work each day, or a ramp should be provided 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 MND to avoid inadvertent entrapment of wildlife. This measure could be as follows:

To prevent the inadvertent entrapment of wildlife, the construction contractor shall ensure that, at the end of each workday, trenches and other excavations that are over one foot deep have been backfilled or covered with plywood or other hard material. If backfilling or covering is not feasible, one or more wildlife escape ramps constructed of earth fill or wooden planks shall be installed in the open trench. Pipes shall be inspected for wildlife prior to capping, moving, or placing backfill over the pipes to ensure that animals have not been trapped. If animals have been trapped, they shall be allowed to leave the area unharmed.

Survey Results

If any special status species are detected during surveys, the Department requests that detections are reported to the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB). The CNDDDB field survey form can be found at:

<https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDDB/Submitting-Data>. Additionally, the Department requests that a copy of the form be sent to the Northern Region office at R1CEQARedding@wildlife.ca.gov.

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If you have any questions, please email R1CEQARedding@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:


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For Tina Bartlett, Regional Manager
Northern Region

ec: State Clearinghouse
State.Clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov

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Habitat Conservation Planning Branch