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NOV 23 2022

STATE CLEARING HOUSE

November 22, 2022

Mardy Thomas
Director
Glenn County Planning & Community Development Services
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Subject: COUNTY GENERAL PLAN UPDATE - NOTICE OF PREPARATION DRAFT
PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (PEIR)
SCH# 2022100620

Dear Mr. Thomas:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) received and reviewed the Notice of Preparation of a Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) from Glenn County Planning and Community Development Services for the Glenn County General Plan Update (Project) in Glenn County pursuant the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) statute and guidelines.¹

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and recommendations regarding those activities involved in the Project that may affect California fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats. Likewise, we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments regarding those aspects of the Project that CDFW, by law, may need to exercise its own regulatory authority under the Fish and Game Code (Fish & G. Code).

CDFW ROLE

CDFW is California's Trustee Agency for fish and wildlife resources and holds those resources in trust by statute for all the people of the State (Fish & G. Code, §§ 711.7, subd. (a) & 1802; Pub. Resources Code, § 21070; CEQA Guidelines § 15386, subd. (a)). CDFW, in its trustee capacity, has jurisdiction over the conservation, protection, and management of fish, wildlife, native plants, and habitat necessary for biologically sustainable populations of those species (*Id.*, § 1802.). Similarly, for purposes of CEQA, CDFW provides, as available, biological expertise during public agency environmental

¹ CEQA is codified in the California Public Resources Code in section 21000 et seq. The "CEQA Guidelines" are found in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, commencing with section 15000.

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review efforts, focusing specifically on projects and related activities that have the potential to adversely affect fish and wildlife resources.

CDFW may also act as a Responsible Agency under CEQA. (Pub. Resources Code, § 21069; CEQA Guidelines, § 15381.) CDFW expects that it may need to exercise regulatory authority as provided by the Fish and Game Code. As proposed, for example, the Project may be subject to CDFW's lake and streambed alteration regulatory authority. (Fish & G. Code, § 1600 et seq.) Likewise, to the extent implementation of the Project as proposed may result in "take" as defined by State law of any species protected under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) (Fish & G. Code, § 2050 et seq.), the project proponent may seek related take authorization as provided by the Fish and Game Code.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

The Project site is located in Glenn County, encompassing the entirety of the County.

The Project consists of a Programmatic Update to the County General Plan. The proposed project is a long-term General Plan consisting of policies that will guide future development activities and County actions. No specific development projects are proposed as part of the Plan.

The Project description should include the whole action as defined in the CEQA Guidelines section 15378 and should include appropriate detailed exhibits disclosing the Project area including temporary impacted areas such as equipment stage area, spoils areas, adjacent infrastructure development, staging areas and access and haul roads if applicable.

As required by section 15126.6 of the CEQA Guidelines, the PEIR should include an appropriate range of reasonable and feasible alternatives that would attain most of the basic Project objectives and avoid or minimize significant impacts to resources under CDFW's jurisdiction.

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CDFW offers the comments and recommendations presented below to assist the Glenn County Planning & Community Development Services in adequately identifying and/or mitigating the Project's significant, or potentially significant, impacts on biological resources. The comments and recommendations are also offered to enable CDFW to adequately review and comment on the proposed Project with respect to impacts on biological resources. CDFW recommends that the forthcoming PEIR address the following:

Assessment of Biological Resources

Section 15125(c) of the CEQA Guidelines states that knowledge of the regional setting of a project is critical to the assessment of environmental impacts and that special emphasis should be placed on environmental resources that are rare or unique to the region. To enable CDFW staff to adequately review and comment on the Project, the PEIR should include a complete assessment of the flora and fauna within and adjacent to the Project footprint, with emphasis on identifying rare, threatened, endangered, and other sensitive species and their associated habitats. CDFW recommends the PEIR specifically include:

1. An assessment of all habitat types located within the Project footprint, and a map that identifies the location of each habitat type. CDFW recommends that floristic, alliance- and/or association-based mapping and assessment be completed following, *The Manual of California Vegetation*, second edition (Sawyer 2009). Adjoining habitat areas should also be included in this assessment where site activities could lead to direct or indirect impacts offsite. Habitat mapping at the alliance level will help establish baseline vegetation conditions.
2. A general biological inventory of the fish, amphibian, reptile, bird, and mammal species that are present or have the potential to be present within each habitat type onsite and within adjacent areas that could be affected by the Project. CDFW recommends that the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB), as well as previous studies performed in the area, be consulted to assess the potential presence of sensitive species and habitats. A nine United States Geologic Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute quadrangle search is recommended to determine what may occur in the region, larger if the Project area extends past one quad (see *Data Use Guidelines* on the Department webpage www.wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDDB/Maps-and-Data). Please review the webpage for information on how to access the database to obtain current information on any previously reported sensitive species and habitat, including Significant Natural Areas identified under Chapter 12 of the Fish and Game Code, in the vicinity of the Project. CDFW recommends that CNDDDB Field Survey Forms be completed and submitted to CNDDDB to document survey results. Online forms can be obtained and submitted at: <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDDB/Submitting-Data>.

Please note that CDFW's CNDDDB is not exhaustive in terms of the data it houses, nor is it an absence database. CDFW recommends that it be used as a starting point in gathering information about the *potential presence* of species within the general area of the Project site. Other sources for identification of species and habitats near or adjacent to the Project area should include, but may not be limited to, State and federal resource agency lists, California Wildlife Habitat Relationship (CWHR) System, California Native Plant Society (CNPS)

Inventory, agency contacts, environmental documents for other projects in the vicinity, academics, and professional or scientific organizations.

3. A complete and recent inventory of rare, threatened, endangered, and other sensitive species located within the Project footprint and within offsite areas with the potential to be affected, including California Species of Special Concern and California Fully Protected Species (Fish & G. Code § § 3511, 4700, 5050, and 5515). Species to be addressed should include all those which meet the CEQA definition (CEQA Guidelines § 15380). The inventory should address seasonal variations in use of the Project area and should not be limited to resident species. The PEIR should include the results of focused species-specific surveys, completed by a qualified biologist, and conducted at the appropriate time of year and time of day when the sensitive species are active or otherwise identifiable. Species-specific surveys should be conducted in order to ascertain the presence of species with the potential to be directly, indirectly, on or within a reasonable distance of the Project activities. CDFW recommends the Glenn County Planning & Community Development Services rely on survey and monitoring protocols and guidelines available at: www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Survey-Protocols. Alternative survey protocols may be warranted; justification should be provided to substantiate why an alternative protocol is necessary. Acceptable species-specific survey procedures should be developed in consultation with CDFW and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, where necessary. Some aspects of the Project may warrant periodic updated surveys for certain sensitive taxa, particularly if the Project is proposed to occur over a protracted time frame, or in phases, or if surveys are completed during periods of drought or deluge.
4. A complete analysis of water resources including mapping of groundwater dependent ecosystems (GDEs) and interconnected surface water (ISW) within Glenn County. Analysis should assess potential localized reduction in groundwater levels and associated reduction in groundwater availability for GDEs and ISW.
5. A thorough, recent (within the last two years), floristic-based assessment of special-status plants and natural communities, following CDFW's *Protocols for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts to Special Status Native Plant Populations and Natural Communities* (see www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Plants).
6. Information on the regional setting that is critical to an assessment of environmental impacts, with special emphasis on resources that are rare or unique to the region (CEQA Guidelines § 15125[c]).

Analysis of Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Impacts to Biological Resources

The PEIR should provide a thorough discussion of the Project's potential direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts on biological resources. To ensure that Project impacts on

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biological resources are fully analyzed, the following information should be included in the PEIR:

1. The PEIR should define the threshold of significance for each impact and describe the criteria used to determine whether the impacts are significant (CEQA Guidelines, § 15064, subd. (f)). The PEIR must demonstrate that the significant environmental impacts of the Project were adequately investigated and discussed, and it must permit the significant effects of the Project to be considered in the full environmental context.

The Public Trust Doctrine imposes a distinct obligation to consider how groundwater management affects public trust resources, including navigable surface waters and fisheries. Groundwater hydrologically connected to surface waters is also subject to the Public Trust Doctrine to the extent that groundwater extractions or diversions affect or may affect public trust uses. (*Environmental Law Foundation v. State Water Resources Control Board* (2018), 26 Cal. App. 5th 844; *National Audubon Society v. Superior Court* (1983), 33 Cal. 3d 419.) The County, as a Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA), has “an affirmative duty to take the public trust into account in the planning and allocation of water resources, and to protect public trust uses whenever feasible.” (*National Audubon Society*, supra, 33 Cal. 3d at 446.)

Portions of Glenn County are underlain by the Colusa, Corning, and Butte Subbasins; each subbasin submitted a final Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) to the Department of Water Resources (DWR) in January 2022. The PEIR should include a discussion of each subbasin GSP’s sustainable management criteria, and the PEIR’s thresholds of significance related to potential Project impacts on groundwater resources should be at least as protective as the management criteria identified in the GSPs. The PEIR should consider and discuss the Project’s potential impact on the ability of the subbasins within Butte County to achieve groundwater sustainability as defined in their GSPs.

The PEIR should also include a thorough discussion of the Project’s potential impacts on public trust resources that may result from proposed zoning, subsequent approval of domestic and agricultural wells, and the resulting increase in groundwater pumping from development. Analysis should assess potential localized reduction in groundwater levels and associated reduction in groundwater availability for GDEs and ISW, and propose mitigation measures, if warranted, to prevent groundwater-related project impacts from adversely affecting public trust resources.

Tools to support this analysis may include the Natural Communities Commonly Associated with Groundwater (NCCAG) dataset, which identifies locations of potential GDEs, available at: <https://gis.water.ca.gov/app/NCDatasetViewer/#>; The Nature Conservancy’s GDE Pulse tool, which identifies trends in GDE health

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through the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI), Normalized Difference Moisture Index (NDMI), precipitation, and groundwater, available at: <https://gde.codefornature.org/#/map>; and The Nature Conservancy's Plant Rooting Depth Database, which can support an assessment of vegetation's groundwater reliance, available at: <https://groundwaterresourcehub.org/sgma-tools/gde-rooting-depths-database-for-gdes>.

2. A discussion of potential impacts from lighting, noise, human activity, and wildlife-human interactions created by Project activities especially those adjacent to natural areas, exotic and/or invasive species occurrences, and drainages. The PEIR should address Project-related changes to drainage patterns and water quality within, upstream, and downstream of the Project site, including: volume, velocity, and frequency of existing and post-Project surface flows; polluted runoff; soil erosion and/or sedimentation in streams and water bodies; and post-Project fate of runoff from the Project site.
3. A discussion of potential indirect Project impacts on biological resources, including resources in areas adjacent to the Project footprint, such as nearby public lands (e.g. National Forests, State Parks, etc.), open space, adjacent natural habitats, riparian ecosystems, wildlife corridors, and any designated and/or proposed reserve or mitigation lands (e.g., preserved lands associated with a Conservation or Recovery Plan, or other conserved lands).
4. A cumulative effects analysis developed as described under CEQA Guidelines section 15130. The PEIR should discuss the Project's cumulative impacts to natural resources and determine if that contribution would result in a significant impact. The PEIR should include a list of present, past, and probable future projects producing related impacts to biological resources or shall include a summary of the projections contained in an adopted local, regional, or statewide plan, that consider conditions contributing to a cumulative effect. The cumulative analysis shall include impact analysis of vegetation and habitat reductions within the area and their potential cumulative effects. Please include all potential direct and indirect Project-related impacts to riparian areas, wetlands, wildlife corridors or wildlife movement areas, aquatic habitats, sensitive species and/or special-status species, open space, and adjacent natural habitats in the cumulative effects analysis.

Mitigation Measures for Project Impacts to Biological Resources

The PEIR should include appropriate and adequate avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures for all direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts that are expected to occur as a result of the construction and long-term operation and maintenance of the Project. CDFW also recommends the environmental documentation provide scientifically supported discussion regarding adequate avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures to address the Project's significant impacts upon fish and wildlife

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and their habitat. For individual projects, mitigation must be roughly proportional to the level of impacts, including cumulative impacts, in accordance with the provisions of CEQA (Guidelines § § 15126.4(a)(4)(B), 15064, 15065, and 16355). In order for mitigation measures to be effective, they must be specific, enforceable, and feasible actions that will improve environmental conditions. When proposing measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts, CDFW recommends consideration of the following:

1. *Fully Protected Species*: Several Fully Protected Species (Fish & G. Code § § 3511, 4700, 5050 and 5515) have the potential to occur within or adjacent to the Project area, including, but not limited to: California Black Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis coturniculus*), Southern Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus leucocephalus*), Greater Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis tabida*), White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*), ringtail (*Bassariscus astutus*), and wolverine (*Gulo gulo*). Fully protected species may not be taken or possessed at any time. Project activities described in the PEIR should be designed to completely avoid any fully protected species that have the potential to be present within or adjacent to the Project area. CDFW also recommends the PEIR fully analyze potential adverse impacts to fully protected species due to habitat modification, loss of foraging habitat, and/or interruption of migratory and breeding behaviors. CDFW recommends that the Glenn County Planning & Community Development Services include in the analysis how appropriate avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures will reduce indirect impacts to fully protected species.
2. *Species of Special Concern*: Several Species of Special Concern (SSC) have the potential to occur within or adjacent to the Project area, including, but not limited to: North Coast population of foothill yellow-legged frog (*Rana boylei* pop.1), western spadefoot toad (*Spea hammondi*), Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*), Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*), Northern Harrier (*Circus hudsonius*), Modesto population of the Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia* pop.1), Townsend's big eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*), western mastiff bat (*Eumops perotis californicus*), western red bat (*Lasiurus frantzii*), Humboldt marten (*Martes caurina humboldtensis*), fisher (*Pekania pennanti*), American badger (*Taxedia taxus*), and western pond turtle (*Emys marmorata*). Project activities described in the PEIR should be designed to avoid any SSC that have the potential to be present within or adjacent to the Project area. CDFW also recommends that the PEIR fully analyze potential adverse impacts to SSC due to habitat modification, loss of foraging habitat, and/or interruption of migratory and breeding behaviors. CDFW recommends the Glenn County Planning & Community Development Services include in the analysis how appropriate avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures will reduce impacts to SSC.
3. *Sensitive Plant Communities*: CDFW considers sensitive plant communities to be imperiled habitats having both local and regional significance. Plant communities,

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alliances, and associations with a statewide ranking of S-1, S-2, S-3, and S-4 should be considered sensitive and declining at the local and regional level. These ranks can be obtained by querying the CNDDDB and are included in *The Manual of California Vegetation* (Sawyer 2009). The PEIR should include measures to fully avoid and otherwise protect sensitive plant communities from Project-related direct and indirect impacts.

4. *Native Wildlife Nursery Sites*: CDFW recommends the PEIR fully analyze potential adverse impacts to native wildlife nursery sites, including but not limited to bat maternity roosts. Based on review of Project materials, aerial photography, and observation of Glenn County from public roadways, the Project area contains potential nursery habitat for structure and tree roosting bats and potential foraging habitat. Bats are considered non-game mammals and are afforded protection by state law from take and/or harassment, (Fish & G. Code, § 4150; Cal. Code of Regs, § 251.1). CDFW recommends that the PEIR fully identify the Project's potential impacts to native wildlife nursery sites, and include appropriate avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures to reduce impacts or mitigate any potential significant impacts to bat nursery sites.
5. *Mitigation*: CDFW considers adverse Project-related impacts to sensitive species and habitats to be significant to both local and regional ecosystems, and the PEIR should include mitigation measures for adverse Project-related impacts to these resources. Mitigation measures should emphasize avoidance and reduction of Project impacts. For unavoidable impacts, onsite habitat restoration, enhancement, or permanent protection should be evaluated and discussed in detail. If onsite mitigation is not feasible or would not be biologically viable and therefore not adequately mitigate the loss of biological functions and values, offsite mitigation through habitat creation and/or acquisition and preservation in perpetuity should be addressed.

The PEIR should include measures to perpetually protect the targeted habitat values within mitigation areas from direct and indirect adverse impacts in order to meet mitigation objectives to offset Project-induced qualitative and quantitative losses of biological values. Specific issues that should be addressed include restrictions on access, proposed land dedications, long-term monitoring and management programs, control of illegal dumping, water pollution, increased human intrusion, etc.

6. *Habitat Revegetation/Restoration Plans*: Plans for restoration and revegetation should be prepared by persons with expertise in the regional ecosystems and native plant restoration techniques. Plans should identify the assumptions used to develop the proposed restoration strategy. Each plan should include, at a minimum: (a) the location of restoration sites and assessment of appropriate reference sites; (b) the plant species to be used, sources of local propagules, container sizes, and seeding rates; (c) a schematic depicting the mitigation area;

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(d) a local seed and cuttings and planting schedule; (e) a description of the irrigation methodology; (f) measures to control exotic vegetation on site; (g) specific success criteria; (h) a detailed monitoring program; (i) contingency measures should the success criteria not be met; and (j) identification of the party responsible for meeting the success criteria and providing for conservation of the mitigation site in perpetuity. Monitoring of restoration areas should extend across a sufficient time frame to ensure that the new habitat is established, self-sustaining, and capable of surviving drought.

CDFW recommends that local onsite propagules from the Project area and nearby vicinity be collected and used for restoration purposes. Onsite seed collection should be appropriately timed to ensure the viability of the seeds when planted. Onsite vegetation mapping at the alliance and/or association level should be used to develop appropriate restoration goals and local plant palettes. Reference areas should be identified to help guide restoration efforts. Specific restoration plans should be developed for various Project components as appropriate. Restoration objectives should include protecting special habitat elements or re-creating them in areas affected by the Project. Examples may include retention of woody material, logs, snags, rocks, and brush piles. Fish and Game Code sections 1002, 1002.5 and 1003 authorize CDFW to issue permits for the take or possession of plants and wildlife for scientific, educational, and propagation purposes. Please see our website for more information on Scientific Collecting Permits at www.wildlife.ca.gov/Licensing/Scientific-Collecting#53949678-regulations-.

7. *Nesting Birds*: Please note that it is the Project proponent's responsibility to comply with all applicable laws related to nesting birds and birds of prey. Migratory non-game native bird species are protected by international treaty under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918, as amended (16 U.S.C. 703 *et seq.*). CDFW implemented the MBTA by adopting the Fish and Game Code section 3513. Fish and Game Code sections 3503, 3503.5 and 3800 provide additional protection to nongame birds, birds of prey, their nests and eggs. Sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3513 of the Fish and Game Code afford protective measures as follows: section 3503 states that it is unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird, except as otherwise provided by the Fish and Game Code or any regulation made pursuant thereto; section 3503.5 states that it is unlawful to take, possess, or destroy any birds in the orders Falconiformes or Strigiformes (birds-of-prey) or to take, possess, or destroy the nest or eggs of any such bird except as otherwise provided by the Fish and Game Code or any regulation adopted pursuant thereto; and section 3513 states that it is unlawful to take or possess any migratory nongame bird as designated in the MBTA or any part of such migratory nongame bird except as provided by rules and regulations adopted by the Secretary of the Interior under provisions of the MBTA.

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Potential habitat for nesting birds and birds of prey is present within the Project area. The Project should disclose all potential activities that may incur a direct or indirect take to nongame nesting birds within the Project footprint and its vicinity. Appropriate avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures to avoid take must be included in the PEIR.

CDFW recommends the PEIR include specific avoidance and minimization measures to ensure that impacts to nesting birds or their nests do not occur. Project-specific avoidance and minimization measures may include, but not be limited to: Project phasing and timing, monitoring of Project-related noise (where applicable), sound walls, and buffers, where appropriate. The PEIR should also include specific avoidance and minimization measures that will be implemented should a nest be located within the Project site. In addition to larger, protocol level survey efforts (e.g. Swainson's Hawk surveys) and scientific assessments, CDFW recommends a final preconstruction survey be required no more than three (3) days prior to vegetation clearing or ground disturbance activities, as instances of nesting could be missed if surveys are conducted earlier.

8. *Moving out of Harm's Way*: The Project is anticipated to result in the clearing of natural habitats that support native species. To avoid direct mortality, the Glenn County Planning & Community Development Services should state in the PEIR a requirement for a qualified biologist with the proper handling permits, will be retained to be onsite prior to and during all ground- and habitat-disturbing activities. Furthermore, the PEIR should describe that the qualified biologist with the proper permits may move out of harm's way special-status species or other wildlife of low or limited mobility that would otherwise be injured or killed from Project-related activities, as needed. The PEIR should also describe qualified biologist qualifications and authorities to stop work to prevent direct mortality of special-status species. CDFW recommends fish and wildlife species be allowed to move out of harm's way on their own volition, if possible, and to assist their relocation as a last resort. It should be noted that the temporary relocation of onsite wildlife does not constitute effective mitigation for habitat loss.
9. *Translocation of Species*: Additionally, the PEIR should cover a range of possibilities for mitigation. The use of relocation, salvage, and/or transplantation as mitigation for impacts to rare, threatened, or endangered species are generally experimental in nature and largely unsuccessful. Therefore, the PEIR should describe additional mitigation measures utilizing habitat restoration, conservation, and/or preservation, in addition to avoidance and minimization measures, if it is determined that there may be impacts to rare, threatened, or endangered species.
10. *Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems and Interconnected Surface Waters*: CDFW considers adverse Project-related impacts to GDEs and ISWs to be significant. CDFW recommends that the PEIR fully identify the Project's potential impacts via

zoning and land use designation to GDEs and ISWs, and include appropriate avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures to reduce impacts or mitigate any potential significant impacts. Measures may include but are not limited to: designating open space around named creeks; requiring minimum well set-back distances from GDEs and ISW for future well drilling; establishing groundwater level thresholds based on likely GDE rooting depths or ISW streambed elevations that, when reached, would require a reduction in or cessation of pumping; setting pumping rate limits or seasonal forbearance periods during critical periods for special status species.

The PEIR should incorporate mitigation performance standards that would ensure that impacts are reduced to a less-than-significant level. Mitigation measures proposed in the PEIR should be made a condition of approval of the Project. Please note that obtaining a permit from CDFW by itself with no other mitigation proposal may constitute mitigation deferral. CEQA Guidelines section 15126.4, subdivision (a)(1)(B) states that formulation of mitigation measures should not be deferred until some future time. To avoid deferring mitigation in this way, the PEIR should describe avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures that would be implemented should the impact occur.

California Endangered Species Act

CDFW is responsible for ensuring appropriate conservation of fish and wildlife resources including threatened, endangered, and/or candidate plant and animal species, pursuant to the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). CDFW recommends that a CESA Incidental Take Permit (ITP) be obtained if the Project has the potential to result in “take” (Fish & G. Code § 86 defines “take” as “hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill”) of State-listed CESA species, either through construction or over the life of the Project.

State-listed species with the potential to occur in the area include, but are not limited to: California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*), Tricolored Blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*), Greater Sandhill Crane (*Antigone canadensis tabida*), Swainson’s Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*), Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), California Black Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis coturniculus*), Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*), Least Bell’s Vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*), palmate-bracted bird's-beak (*Chloropyron palmatum*), Butte County meadowfoam (*Limnanthes floccosa californica*), Crotch bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*), Wolverine (*Gulo gulo*), Humboldt marten (*Martes caurina humboldtensis*), Indian Valley brodiaea (*Brodiaea rosea*), Colusa grass (*Neostapfia colusana*), hairy Orcutt grass (*Orcuttia pilosa*), and giant gartersnake (*Thamnophis gigas*).

The PEIR should disclose the potential of the Project to take State-listed species and how the impacts will be avoided, minimized, and mitigated. Please note that mitigation measures that are adequate to reduce impacts to a less-than significant level to meet

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CEQA requirements may not be enough for the issuance of an ITP. To issue an ITP, CDFW must demonstrate that the impacts of the authorized take will be minimized and fully mitigated (Fish & G. Code §2081 (b)). To facilitate the issuance of an ITP, if applicable, CDFW recommends the PEIR include measures to minimize and fully mitigate the impacts to any State-listed species the Project has potential to take. CDFW encourages early consultation with staff to determine appropriate measures to facilitate future permitting processes and to engage with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and/or National Marine Fisheries Service to coordinate specific measures if both State and federally listed species may be present within the Project vicinity.

Native Plant Protection Act

The Native Plant Protection Act (NPPA) (Fish & G. Code §1900 *et seq.*) prohibits the take or possession of State-listed rare and endangered plants, including any part or product thereof, unless authorized by CDFW or in certain limited circumstances. Take of State-listed rare and/or endangered plants due to Project activities may only be permitted through an ITP or other authorization issued by CDFW pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 786.9 subdivision (b).

Lake and Streambed Alteration Program

The PEIR should identify all perennial, intermittent, and ephemeral rivers, streams, lakes, other hydrologically connected aquatic features, and any associated biological resources/habitats present within the entire Project footprint (including utilities, access and staging areas). The environmental document should analyze all potential temporary, permanent, direct, indirect and/or cumulative impacts to the above-mentioned features and associated biological resources/habitats that may occur because of the Project. If it is determined the Project will result in significant impacts to these resources the PEIR shall propose appropriate avoidance, minimization and/or mitigation measures to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Section 1602 of the Fish and Game Code requires an entity to notify CDFW prior to commencing any activity that may do one or more of the following:

1. Substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow of any river, stream or lake.
2. Substantially change or use any material from the bed, channel or bank of any river, stream, or lake; or
3. Deposit debris, waste, or other materials where it may pass into any river, stream, or lake.

Please note that "any river, stream or lake" includes those that are episodic (i.e., those that are dry for periods of time) as well as those that are perennial (i.e., those that flow year-round). This includes ephemeral streams and watercourses with a subsurface flow.

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It may also apply to work undertaken within the flood plain of a body of water.

If upon review of an entity's notification, CDFW determines that the Project activities may substantially adversely affect an existing fish or wildlife resource, a Lake and Streambed Alteration (LSA) Agreement will be issued which will include reasonable measures necessary to protect the resource. CDFW's issuance of an LSA Agreement is a "project" subject to CEQA (see Pub. Resources Code § 21065). To facilitate issuance of an LSA Agreement, if one is necessary, the PEIR should fully identify the potential impacts to the lake, stream, or riparian resources, and provide adequate avoidance, mitigation, and monitoring and reporting commitments. Early consultation with CDFW is recommended, since modification of the Project may avoid or reduce impacts to fish and wildlife resources. Notifications for projects should be submitted online through CDFW's Environmental Permit Information Management System (EPIMS). For more information about EPIMS, please visit <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Environmental-Review/EPIMS>. More information about LSA Notifications, forms, and fees may be found at <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Environmental-Review/LSA>.

Please note that other agencies may use specific methods and definitions to determine impacts to areas subject to their authorities. These methods and definitions often do not include all needed information for CDFW to determine the extent of fish and wildlife resources affected by activities subject to Notification under Fish and Game Code section 1602. Therefore, CDFW does not recommend relying solely on methods developed specifically for delineating areas subject to other agencies' jurisdiction (such as United States Army Corps of Engineers) when mapping lakes, streams, wetlands, floodplains, riparian areas, etc. in preparation for submitting a Notification of an LSA.

CDFW relies on the lead agency environmental document analysis when acting as a responsible agency issuing an LSA Agreement. CDFW recommends lead agencies coordinate with us as early as possible, since potential modification of the proposed Project may avoid or reduce impacts to fish and wildlife resources and expedite the Project approval process.

The following information will be required for the processing of an LSA Notification and CDFW recommends incorporating this information into any forthcoming CEQA document(s) to avoid subsequent documentation and Project delays:

1. Mapping and quantification of lakes, streams, and associated fish and wildlife habitat (e.g., riparian habitat, freshwater wetlands, etc.) that will be temporarily and/or permanently impacted by the Project, including impacts from access and staging areas. Please include an estimate of impact to each habitat type.

2. Discussion of specific avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures to reduce Project impacts to fish and wildlife resources to a less-than-significant level. Please refer to section 15370 of the CEQA Guidelines.

Based on review of Project materials, aerial photography and observation of Glenn County from public roadways, the Project area supports a number of waterways, their unnamed tributaries, and associated riparian habitat, including but not limited to the Sacramento River, Butte Creek, Elk Creek, Grindstone Creek, the Central Irrigation Canal, Salt Creek, Willow Creek, Angel Slough, Watson Creek, Dry Gulch, No Name Drain, Hambright Creek, Logan Creek, Swallow Drain, Stony Creek, Clark's Valley Creek, Willow Creek Overflow, Stony Creek Irrigation Canal, Bayliss Slough, Drain A, Shoat Draw, County Road WW Drain Ditch, Tehama-Colusa Canal, Hunter Creek, Corbin Creek, Briscoe Creek, Walker Creek, Glenn-Colusa Canal, Tehama-Colusa Canal, Princeton-Codora Canal, Provident Main Canal, Provident Irrigation Canal, Quint Canal, Drumheller Canal, Packard Draw, Pancake Draw, Shoat Draw, Dead Dog Draw, Artois Drawlet, Colusa Drain, Drain A, Ortiz Drain, C.I.C. Drain, Afton Drain, Willow Creek Overflow, Sacramento River Overflow, North Fork Logan Creek Overflow, McKee Overflow, Howard Slough, Campbell Slough, Vansyckle Slough, White Cabin Creek, Wilson Creek, Nye Creek, Hunter Creek, Corbin Creek, Dry Creek, and Sheep Corral Creek. CDFW recommends the PEIR fully identify the Project's potential impacts to the stream and/or its associated vegetation and wetlands.

CHEMICAL USE

Rodenticides that control small mammal populations would also reduce available burrows, making the habitat no longer suitable for Burrowing Owl, giant garter snake and other sensitive wildlife species. Lack of underground refugia could result in increased exposure to predators, heat, and other elements. Additionally, the widespread use of rodenticides has been documented to result in wildlife losses due to non-target exposure of fully protected and listed species as well as losses through secondary exposure (McMillin et al. 2008, Hosea 2000). CDFW recommends that the PEIR fully identify, and address, the Project's potential impacts to fish and wildlife populations from the use of agricultural pesticides and related pest control activities.

ENVIRONMENTAL DATA

CEQA requires that information developed in environmental impact reports and negative declarations be incorporated into a database, which may be used to make subsequent or supplemental environmental determinations (Pub. Resources Code, § 21003, subd. (e)). Accordingly, please report any special-status species and natural communities detected during Project surveys to the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB). The CNDDDB field survey form can be found at the following link: <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDDB/Submitting-Data>. The completed form can be submitted online or mailed electronically to CNDDDB at the following email address: CNDDDB@wildlife.ca.gov.

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FILING FEES

The Project, as proposed, would have an effect on fish and wildlife, and assessment of filing fees is necessary. Fees are payable upon filing of the Notice of Determination by the Glenn County Planning and Community Development Services and serve to help defray the cost of environmental review by CDFW. Payment of the fee is required in order for the underlying project approval to be operative, vested, and final. (Cal. Code Regs, tit. 14, § 753.5; Fish & G. Code § 711.4; Pub. Resources Code, § 21089.)

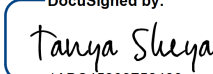
CONCLUSION

Pursuant to Public Resources Code sections 21092 and 21092.2, CDFW requests written notification of proposed actions and pending decisions regarding the Project. Written notifications shall be directed to: California Department of Fish and Wildlife North Central Region, 1701 Nimbus Road, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670.

CDFW appreciates the opportunity to comment on the NOP of the PEIR for the Glenn County General Plan Update and recommends that the Glenn County Planning and Community Development Services address CDFW's comments and concerns in the forthcoming PEIR. CDFW personnel are available for consultation regarding biological resources and strategies to minimize impacts.

If you have any questions regarding the comments provided in this letter, or wish to schedule a meeting, and/or site visit, please contact Robert Hosea, Environmental Scientist at (530) 708-1199 or robert.hosea@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

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Tanya Sheya
Environmental Program Manager

ec: Juan Torres, Senior Environmental Scientist (Supervisory)
Robert Hosea, Environmental Scientist

Department of Fish and Wildlife

Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse, Sacramento

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McMillin, S. C., R.C. Hosea, B.J. Finlayson, B.L. Cypher, and A Mekebri. 2008. Anticoagulant Rodenticide Exposure in an Urban Population of the San Joaquin Kit Fox. Proc.23rd Vertebrate. Pest Conf. (R. M. Timm and M. B. Madon, Eds.) Published at Univ. of Calif., Davis. Pp. 163-165.

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