



State of California – Natural Resources Agency  
 DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE  
 Northern Region  
 601 Locust Street  
 Redding, CA 96001  
[www.wildlife.ca.gov](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov)

**GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor**  
**CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director**



Governor's Office of Planning & Research

July 20, 2023

**Jul 21 2023**

**STATE CLEARINGHOUSE**

Tiffany Lightle, Associate Planner  
 City of Redding  
 777 Cypress Avenue  
 Redding, CA 96001

**SUBJECT: REVIEW OF CENTER OF HOPE APARTMENTS PHASE II PROJECT,  
 STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NUMBER 2023060613, SHASTA COUNTY**

Dear Tiffany Lightle:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has reviewed the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (ISMND) dated February 2023, for the above-referenced project (Project). CDFW appreciates this opportunity to comment on the Project, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines<sup>1</sup>.

**CDFW's 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 is charged by law to provide, as available, biological expertise during public agency environmental review efforts, focusing specifically on projects and related activities that have the potential to adversely affect fish and wildlife resources.

CDFW is also submitting comments 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. 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.), or state-listed rare plant pursuant to the Native Plant Protection Act (NPPA; Fish and G. Code § 1900 et seq.) authorization as provided by the applicable Fish and Game Code will be required.

<sup>1</sup> 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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## Project Description

The Project, as described in the ISMND, is as follows:

*“The project includes Use Permit Application UP-2022-01555, a request for construction of the Center of Hope Apartments, Phase II, consisting of 49 affordable apartment units plus a 4,357-square-foot office space. The project will include off-site improvements to facilitate traffic circulation with an extension of Industrial Street including a streambed crossing of Little Churn Creek.”*

## Comments and Recommendations

CDFW responded to early consultation requests from the City of Redding in October 2021. While CDFW recognizes that many of the concerns identified throughout early consultation were addressed, and that many of the avoidance and minimization measures listed in the ISMND are adequate in avoiding and minimizing potential impacts to biological resources, CDFW reiterates the following comments and recommendations.

### Blue Oak Woodlands

Removal of Oak Woodlands throughout Shasta County without adequate mitigation continues to result in a cumulative permanent loss of oak woodlands throughout the region. Oak woodlands, an S4 habitat alliance<sup>2</sup>, are an important resource to a wide variety of wildlife species. Oak Woodlands have higher levels of biodiversity than virtually any other terrestrial ecosystem in California<sup>3</sup> and provide habitat for nearly half of the 632 terrestrial vertebrates species found in the state<sup>4</sup>.

The ISMND includes a brief discussion of an arborist report, dated February 2023, with regard to tree species and tree health throughout the project area. The ISMND states *“The study identified a mix of grey pine and blue oak trees comprising of 77 trees in total. Of the 77 trees, forty-three (43) were considered in poor or very poor health, one dead, and 33 determined to be in average health. Due to the number of units and associated requirements per California Building Code and the City’s Ordinance and General Plan requirements, and because the project site will be Developed to its maximum density, the site cannot be redesigned to preserve any existing trees. Under the circumstances, the Zoning Ordinance requires the most restrictive standard of shade tree plantings at a rate of 1 per 4 parking spaces bringing a minimum of 21 trees for replanting. The City will condition the planting of blue oaks as part of the project’s landscaping*

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<sup>2</sup> Sawyer, J.O., T. Keeler-Wolf, and J.M. Evens. 2009. A Manual of California Vegetation, Second Edition. California Native Plant Society, Sacramento. 1300 pp.

<sup>3</sup> Bernhardt, Elizabeth A., and Swiecki, Tedmund J., 2001. *Ecological Importance of California Oak Woodlands*. Available here: <https://oaks.cnr.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Ecological-Importance-of-CA-OW.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Drill, Sabrina., Purcell, Kathryn., and Tietje, William. 2005. *Oak Woodlands as Wildlife Habitat*. Available here: [https://www.fs.usda.gov/psw/publications/purcell/psw\\_2005\\_purcell002\\_tietje.pdf](https://www.fs.usda.gov/psw/publications/purcell/psw_2005_purcell002_tietje.pdf)

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*requirements. Thus, with the replanting of new trees as a standard condition of development, the project is consistent with the intent of the Tree Management Ordinance.”*

CDFW’s early consultation letter, dated October 2021, states “*The Department recommends and encourages retaining and working around the existing mature, healthy oaks. Mitigation should be developed for impacts to the blue oaks proposed for removal. The goal of mitigation should be to effectively attain no net loss of oak habitat.*”

While CDFW supports and commends the City of Redding to condition the planting of 21 blue oaks as part of the proposed landscape regime, this effort does not adequately mitigate the permanent loss of 33 healthy oak trees and 2+ acres of blue oak woodlands, nor the temporal loss for the multiple decades it takes for oaks to mature. Additionally, the ISMND does not identify mitigation measures to offset the loss of the 2+ acres of blue oak woodland, as was encouraged in our early consultation letter.

CDFW does not believe the ISMND offers an adequate analysis of oak woodland habitat removal throughout the Project area, nor does the discussion offer adequate measures to reduce impacts to less than significant. CDFW recommends the preparation of a Habitat Restoration Plan, or similar, which would explicitly quantify the number of trees to be removed, acres of habitat impacted, trees proposed to be planted onsite, monitoring and success criteria, and any additional proposed mitigation.

Mitigation at a minimum of 3:1 should be developed for impacts to oak woodlands proposed for removal to adequately reduce this impact to less-than-significant. This ratio would include both permanent and temporal loss of the oak woodland habitat. Impacts to oak woodlands may be mitigated in one of two ways: (1) credits at a 3:1 ratio could be purchased from a Mitigation Bank or (2) acquisition of a parcel with blue oak woodland habitat that contains three acres of preserved oak woodland habitat for every one acre of oak habitat removed. The goal of mitigation should be to effectively attain no net loss of oak woodland habitat. In addition, CDFW continues to encourage retaining, designing, and constructing around existing mature and healthy oak trees.

#### Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement


The ISMND describes a stream crossing over Little Churn Creek; therefore, a notification to CDFW pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 1602 may be warranted. Fish and Game Code Section 1602 requires any person, state or local governmental agency, or public utility to notify CDFW prior to beginning any activity that may do one or more of the following:

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1. substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow of the bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream, or lake; or
  2. substantially change or use any material from the bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream, or lake; or
  3. deposit or dispose of debris, waste, or other material containing crumbled, flaked, or ground pavement where it may pass into any river, stream, or lake.
- To obtain information about the 1600 Notification process, please access CDFW's website at: <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/LSA>.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer comments and recommendations that may assist the City of Redding in adequately analyzing and minimizing impacts to biological resources. If you have any questions, please contact Erika Iacona, Senior Environmental Scientist Specialist, by email at [R1CEQARedding@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:R1CEQARedding@wildlife.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:  
  
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Tina Bartlett, Regional Manager  
Northern Region

cc: State Clearinghouse  
[State.Clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov](mailto:State.Clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov)

Erika Iacona  
[R1CEQARedding@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:R1CEQARedding@wildlife.ca.gov)