



*PUBLIC DRAFT*  
**INITIAL STUDY AND  
MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION**

**SCH: XXXXXX**

FOR  
**RPCA SOLAR 10, LLC  
MAJOR USE PERMIT  
AT 2550 & 2350 REDEMEYER ROAD; APNS: 178-050-01,  
178-170-01, & -02.  
File No. U\_2023-0008**

**LEAD AGENCY:**

County of Mendocino  
Department of Planning & Building Services  
860 North Bush Street, Ukiah, CA 95482  
(707) 234-6650

**PREPARED BY:**

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(707) 234-6650

**MAY 22, 2023**

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# INTRODUCTION

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In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (California Public Resources Code §21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, §15000 et seq.), this Draft Initial Study (IS) has been prepared as documentation for a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for a Major Impact Services and Utilities Facility to include a 20-acre Solar Farm that spans three parcels utilizing approximately 10,287 solar modules, 32 string inverters, and generating up to a total of 4.0 megawatts (MW) alternating current (AC) [5.6 MW direct current (DC)] equipped with a 4 MW energy storage system interconnecting to PG&E's pre-existing electrical distribution system located at 2550 & 2350 Redemeyer Road; APNs: 178-050-01, 178-170-01, & -02 (Project). This Draft IS/MND includes a description of the Project; the location of the Project site; an evaluation of the potential environmental impacts of Project implementation; and written statement that an Environment Impact Report (EIR) is not required because the project will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment.

Pursuant to Section 15367 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the County of Mendocino is the Lead Agency for the Project. As the Lead Agency, The County of Mendocino has the principal responsibility for carrying out the project and has the authority to approve the Project and its accompanying environmental documentation. In addition to addressing the potential environmental impacts that would result from the Project, this Draft IS/MND serves as the primary environmental document for future activities associated with the Project, including discretionary approvals requested or required for Project implementation.

Questions in the Initial Study Checklist are provided with their respective answers based on analysis undertaken. An explanation for all checklist responses is included, and all answers take account of the whole action involved, including off site as well as on-site; cumulative as well as project level; indirect as well as direct; and construction as well as operational impacts. The explanation of each issue identifies (a) the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and (b) the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance. In the checklist the following definitions are used:

**"Potentially Significant Impact"** means there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant.

**"Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated"** means the incorporation of one or more mitigation measures can reduce the effect from potentially significant to a less than significant level.

**"Less Than Significant Impact"** means that the effect is less than significant, and no mitigation is necessary to reduce the impact to a lesser level.

**"No Impact"** means that the effect does not apply to the Project, or clearly will not impact nor be impacted by the Project.

## PROJECT INFORMATION

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**FILE NUMBER:** U\_2023-0008

**OWNER:** Hooper Ranch LLC  
Po Box 1133  
Elko, NV 89803

**APPLICANT:** RPCA Solar 10, LLC  
879 Sanchez Street  
San Francisco, CA 94114

**PROJECT LOCATION:** 2.3± miles northeast of Ukiah's city center on the west side of Redemeyer Road (CR 215A), 0.5± miles north of its intersection with Deerwood Drive (CR 215B); located at 2550 & 2350 Redemeyer Road; APNs: 178-050-01, 178-170-01, & -02.

**TOTAL ACREAGE:** 31.9± Acres

**GENERAL PLAN:** Agricultural Lands (AG40)

**ZONING:** Agricultural (AG40), Seismic Study Combining District (SS),  
Special Flood Plain Combining District (FP)

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15125, the Project Description is required to identify the existing baseline physical conditions. For this project, the baseline conditions include all existing development and the current parcel configuration. The applicant requests Major Use Permit for a Major Impact Services and Utilities Facility to include a 20-acre Solar Farm that spans three parcels utilizing approximately 10,287 solar modules, 32 string inverters, and generating up to a total of 4.0 megawatts (MW) alternating current (AC) [5.6 MW direct current (DC)] equipped with a 4 MW energy storage system interconnecting to PG&E's pre-existing electrical distribution system located on-site.

The proposed project site would span across three parcels 2.3± miles northeast of Ukiah's city center on the west side of Redemeyer Road (CR 215A), 0.5± miles north of its intersection with Deerwood Drive (CR 215B). Redemeyer Road provides the eastern boundary of the project site with Howard Creek, an intermittent freshwater stream that terminates at the Russian River located to the south. Redemeyer Road provides public access to the proposed project site. The project site itself is relatively flat with estimated slopes ranging from 0° - 14°. The entirety of the subject parcels is mapped in a Non-Wildland/Non-Urban CALFIRE Fire Hazard Severity Zone and Local Responsibility Area for fire protection services. Ukiah Valley Fire Protection District provides fire protection and emergency medical services to the subject parcels. The National Wetlands Inventory maps a riverine (Howard Creek) at the southernmost section of the project site that is located within the Mendocino Coast Hydrologic Unit No. 1113, the Wages Creek Hydrologic Sub-area 111312. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Flood Hazard Maps the far western portions of the subject parcels with a 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard. However, the proposed project site is located within Flood Hazard Zone X, an area of minimal flood hazard. It is important to note that the project site is located 0.8± miles south of Lake Mendocino and within the estimated dam inundation zone. Should the dam break and fail, the project site would quickly become flooded with the water previously held in Lake Mendocino. Farmland classifications for the site are mapped as grazing land where the existing vegetation is suited to the grazing of livestock. The project site previously sustained an agricultural use as a vineyard until approximately 2006. There are no structures present within the proposed project area, The applicant intends to interconnect to the existing electrical distribution system located on-site owned by a public utility company.

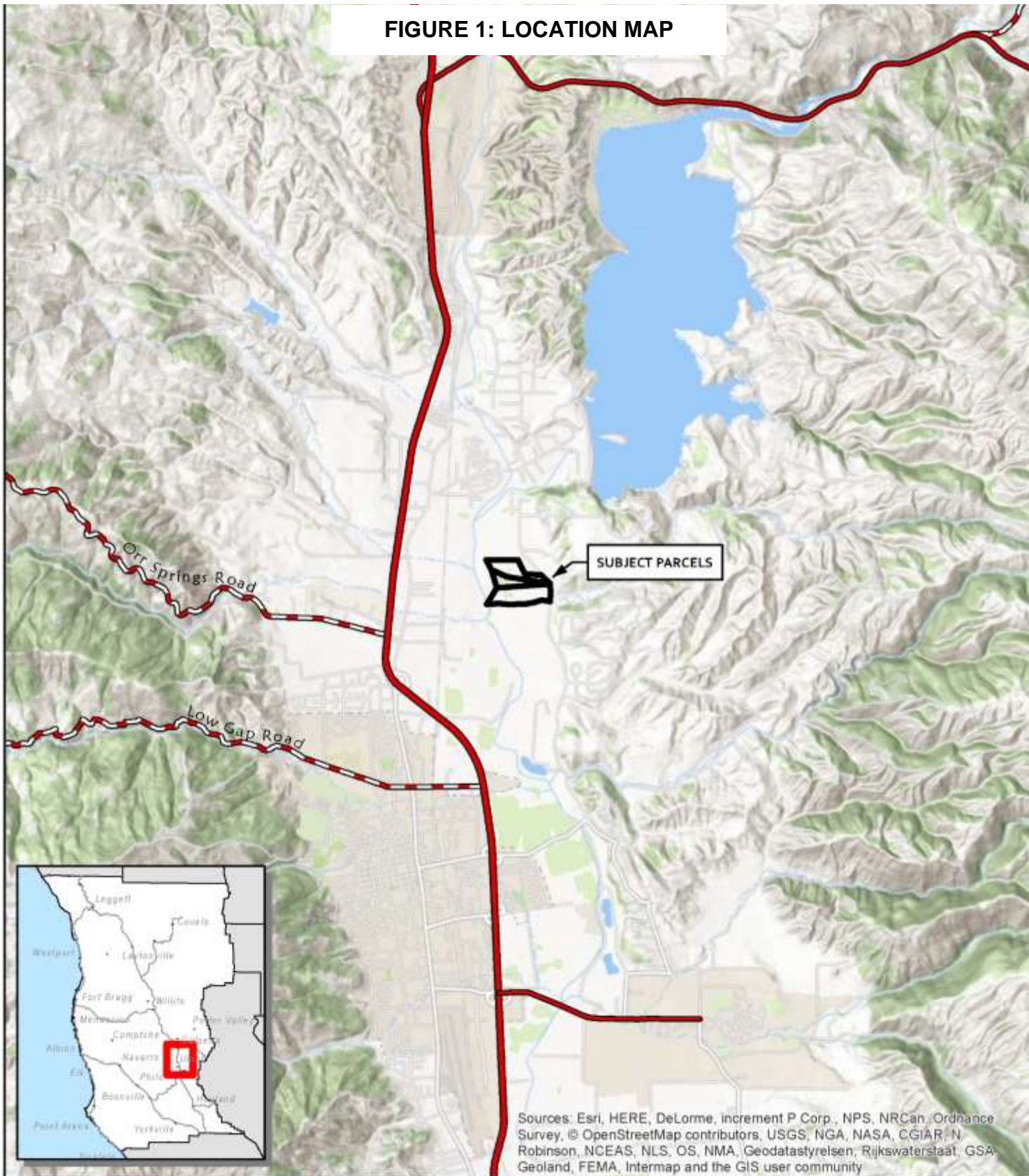
**TABLE 1: ADJACENT LAND USE AND ZONING**

	<b>GENERAL PLAN</b>	<b>ZONING</b>	<b>LOT SIZES</b>	<b>USES</b>
<b>NORTH</b>	Agriculture (AG 40)	Agriculture (AG 40)	2.4± to 7.5± Acres	Agricultural, Residential
<b>EAST</b>	Rural Residential (RR5)	Rural Residential (RR5)	10.7± to 23± Acres	Residential, Agricultural
<b>SOUTH</b>	Agriculture (AG 40)	Agriculture (AG 40)	98± Acres	Agricultural
<b>WEST</b>	Agriculture (AG 40)	Agriculture (AG 40)	15.2± to 37.8± Acres	Agricultural

**Other Public Agencies Whose Approval is Required (e.g., permits, financial approval, or participation agreements):** None

**Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1? If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.?** Pursuant to the consultation requirements of Assembly Bill (AB) 52, in July 2023, the County of Mendocino (County) provided formal notification to the California Native American tribes that requested notification of all new potential Negative Declarations within the County. The following tribes were notified Cloverdale Rancheria, Redwood Valley Rancheria, and Sherwood Valley Rancheria. As of the date of this report, no response has been received.

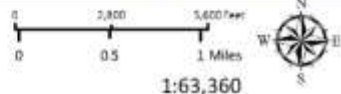
**FIGURE 1: LOCATION MAP**



Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, increment P Corp., NPS, NRCAn, Ordnance Survey, © OpenStreetMap contributors, USGS, NGA, NASA, CGIAR, N Robinson, NCEAS, NLS, OS, NMA, Geodatastyrelsen, Rijkswaterstaat, GSA, Geoland, FEMA, Intermap and the GIS user community

**CASE:** U 2023-0008  
**OWNER:** Hooper Ranch, LLC  
**APN:** 178-050-01, 178-170-01 & 02  
**APLCT:** RPCA Solar 10, LLC  
**AGENT:**  
**ADDRESS:** 2550 Redemeyer Rd., Ukiah

Highways  
Major Roads



LOCATION

**THIS MAP AND DATA ARE PROVIDED WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND.**

**PROJECT PLOT PLAN:** See Page 5 of this document.

**INITIAL STUDY  
DRAFT MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION**

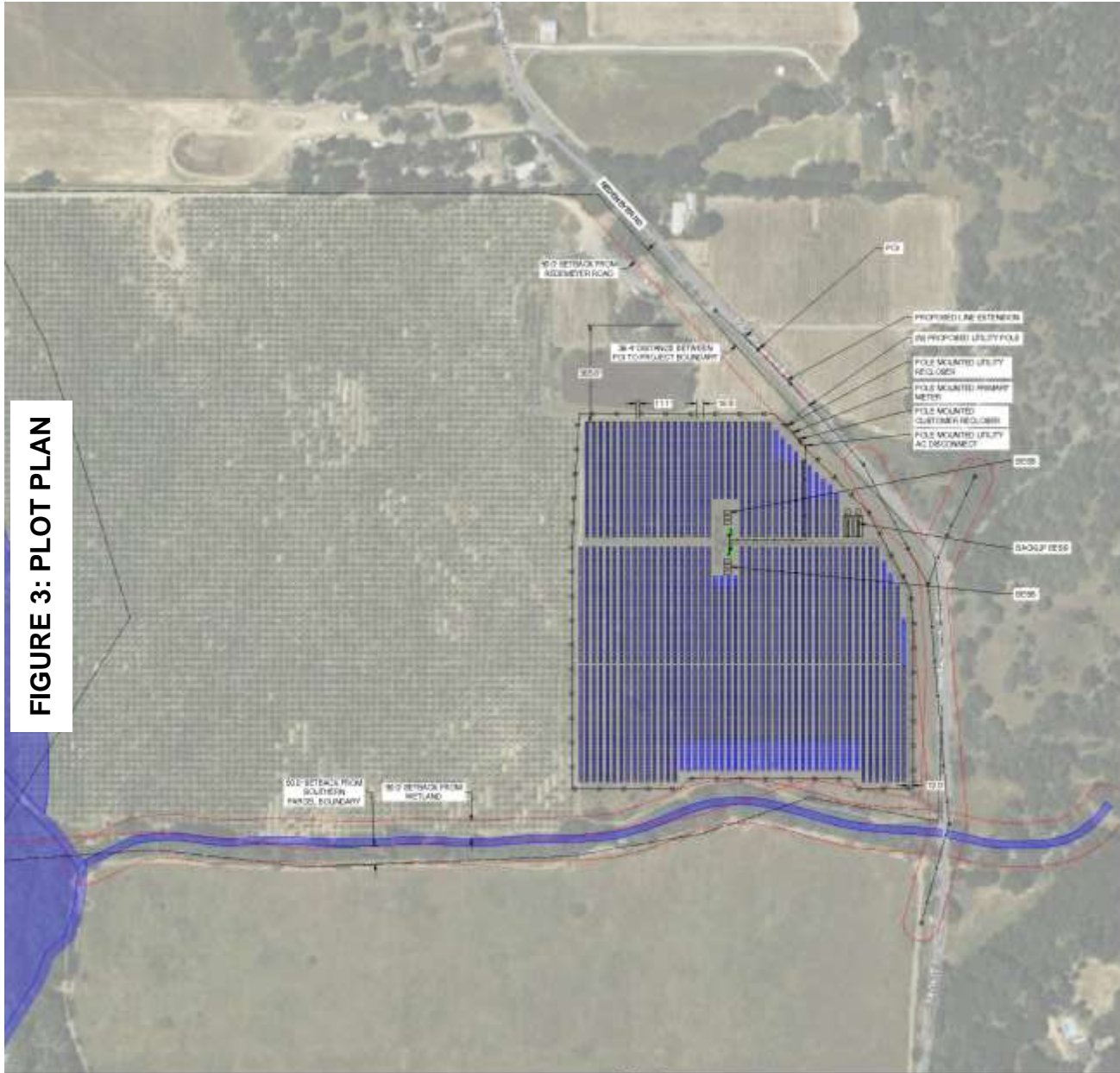
**U\_2023-0008  
PAGE 3**







FIGURE 3: PLOT PLAN



SYSTEM INFORMATION	
SYSTEM MAKE/DC	5,700.40 Wp
SYSTEM SIZE AC	4,000.00 kW
COG/INVERTER	1:43
MODULE MANUFACTURER	WELB
MODULE MODEL	VELAD444H
MODULE RATING	340 W
TOTAL MODULE QTY	16,512
MODULES PER STRING	36
TOTAL NO. OF STRINGS	459
INVERTER MODEL	SUNPOWER S1120H
INVERTER RATING	1,200 kW
INVERTER QTY	33
STEP-UP TRANSFORMER	1000 600V, 15,000kVA
RACKING	AT 150T
# OF 14' MODULE TRACKER ROWS	37
# OF 16' MODULE TRACKER ROWS	40
# OF 22' MODULE TRACKER ROWS	3
TILT ANGLE	21°
TRACK ROW SPACING	11.7'
PITCH	18.5°
GZI	40%
SITE AREA INDEX/FENCE	18.07 AC

**LEGEND**

- AT 14' MODULE TRACKER ROW
- AT 16' MODULE TRACKER ROW
- AT 22' MODULE TRACKER ROW
- POWER STATION - (1) MV LINE, (1) LV LINE
- (1) WEAVER STATION, (2) BUSE COMPANIES
- SUNPOWER 150W STRING INVERTER
- BACKUP AREA
- 12' WIDE BTD ACCESS (GRADE, ROAD)
- WETLAND
- RD PUBLIC ROAD
- PROPERTY LINE
- PROJECT SITE SECURITY FENCE
- RETRACT
- 33 OH LINES
- 3W CABLE

- GENERAL NOTES**
- REFER TO SINGLE LINE DIAGRAM FOR DETAILS.
  - INSTALLATION TO COMPLY WITH IEC 60080, IEC 60081 AND ALL APPLICABLE LOCAL, STATE AND NATIONAL CODES OR REGULATIONS.
  - EQUIPMENT SHALL BE LABELED PER RECORD AND UTILITY REGULATIONS.
  - 2" ACCESS ROADS SHALL BE DESIGNED TO ACCOMMODATE ALL CONSTRUCTION, OPERATIONS, MAINTENANCE, AND UTILITY TRAFFIC THROUGHOUT THE SITE.
  - DIMENSIONS TO PROPERTY LINES AND EXISTING FEATURES ARE APPROXIMATE. PENDING SURVEY.

PIC VISIT/LOG

PRELIM LAYOUT	06/10/23
PRELIM LAYOUT	11/01/23

**RENEWABLE PROPERTIES**

800 BANCHEZ STREET  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94116  
PHONE (415) 555-7800  
WWW.RENEWABLEPROPERTIES.COM

**SEDA**

SEDA SOLAR ENGINEERING, ARCHITECTURE & CONSTRUCTION  
1000 CALIFORNIA STREET, SUITE 100  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94109  
PHONE (415) 434-1234  
FAX (415) 434-1234  
WWW.SEDASOLAR.COM

**PROJECT**

REDEMeyer ROAD SOLAR  
REDEMeyer RD,  
UKIAH,  
CA 95482  
LAT: 39.182221°  
LON: -123.180571°

**SHEET TITLE**

SITE PLAN

SCALE: AS SHOWN  
REVISED:  
DATE: 06/14/23

**PV-100**

SHEET 2 OF 2

1 ARRAY LOCATION  
SCALE: 1" = 150'



NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION, FOR IA DISCUSSION ONLY.



## ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

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This project would potentially affect the environmental factors checked below, involving at least one impact that is "Potentially Significant" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Ag and Forestry Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources        | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources        | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geology/Soils               | <input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions  | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazards/Hazardous Materials           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology / Water Quality   | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use / Planning       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Population / Housing      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation            | <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal Cultural Resources             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities / Service Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildfire                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings<br>of Significance |

## DETERMINATION

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Based on this initial evaluation:

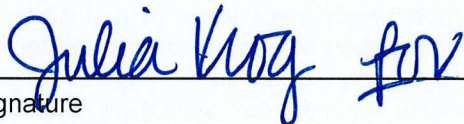
I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

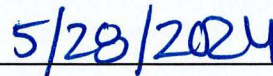
I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.



Signature

RUSSELL FORD

Printed Name



Date

SENIOR PLANNER

Title

# ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

## 5.1 AESTHETICS

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**DISCUSSION:** A scenic vista is defined as a location that offers a high quality, harmonious, and visually interesting view. One roadway in Mendocino County, State Route (SR) 128, was officially added to the eligibility list of State Scenic Highways by California State Assembly Bill 998 on July 12, 2019. According to California Department of Transportation, SR 1 and SR 20 are “eligible” for designation as scenic highways but have not been officially designated as such.

State Route 1 is part of the California Freeway and Expressway System, and through the Los Angeles metro area, Monterey, Santa Cruz, San Francisco metro area, and Leggett, is part of the National Highway System, a network of highways that are considered essential to the country's economy, defense, and mobility by the Federal Highway Administration. State Route 1 is eligible to be included in the State Scenic Highway System; however, only a few stretches between Los Angeles and San Francisco have officially been designated as a “scenic highway”, meaning that there are substantial sections of highway passing through a “memorable landscape” with no “visual intrusions.”

Additionally, the County has two roadway segments designated as “heritage corridors” by California Public Resources Code Section 5077.5. The North Coast Heritage Corridor includes the entire segment of SR 1 in the county, as well as the segment of U.S. Highway 101 from the junction with SR 1 in Leggett, north to the Humboldt County line. The Tahoe-Pacific Heritage Corridor extends from Lake Tahoe to the Mendocino County coast. It includes the entire segment of SR 20 within the county and the segment of US 101 from the SR 20 junction north of Calpella to the SR 20 highway exit south of Willits. Mendocino County's General Plan Resource Management Goal RM-14's (Visual Character) objective is: *Protection of the visual quality of the county's natural and rural landscapes, scenic resources, and areas of significant natural beauty.* The main source of daytime glare in the unincorporated portions of the Mendocino County is from sunlight reflecting off of structures with reflective surfaces, such as windows. A nighttime sky in which stars are readily visible is often considered a valuable scenic/visual resource. In urban areas, views of the nighttime sky are being diminished by “light pollution.” Two elements of light pollution may affect county residents: sky glow (a result of light fixtures that emit a portion of their light directly upward in the sky), and light trespass (poorly shielded or poorly aimed fixtures which cast light into unwanted areas, such as neighboring properties and homes). Different lighting standards are set by classifying areas by lighting zones (LZ). The 2000 Census classified the majority of Mendocino County as LZ2 (rural), which requires stricter lighting standards in order to protect these areas from new sources of light pollution and light trespass. Mendocino County's General Plan Resource Management Goal RM-15's (Dark Sky) objective is, *“Protection of the qualities of the county's nighttime sky and reduced energy use.”*

- a) **No Impact:** The proposed project is not located on or nearby any state designated scenic highway. Further, scenic vistas often include three distinguishing criteria, high quality,

harmonious, and visually interesting views. A significant impact would involve a defined by the following three criteria:

- High quality: most views from the location are not impaired by a significant amount of physical obstruction such as manmade structures or debris.
- Harmonious: most views from the location are consistent with the surrounding environment or adjacent views to the extent that a unified whole can be identified.
- Visually Interesting: views from the location offer unique or rare features that could draw the attention of those that occupy the site.

The project is not anticipated to have an impact on any on-site or off-site locations that may qualify as scenic vistas. The property itself is not located in an area designated as a scenic vista. Application materials indicate that the proposed solar modules would be 15 feet in height. This height is consistent with the building height limit of 50 feet provided by the governing Agricultural zoning district.

- b) **No Impact:** There are no state designated scenic highways within the immediate proximity to the project site. It is not anticipated that an impact would occur on scenic resources including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway. The project will not require the removal of any natural elements such as trees or rocks, thus there is no impact to those resources.
- c) **Less Than Significant Impact:** The project is not anticipated to substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. Public views of the project site are provided along Redemeyer Road (CR 215A). The tallest Project structure would be approximately 15 feet, structural elements on the Project Site would be substantially shorter than existing residential components on adjacent lands, and therefore, would be less visible than existing features within the visual landscape. As such, the Project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings, and impacts would be less than significant.
- d) **No Impact:** The project does not include any item of development that would create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. No nighttime construction work is proposed. Any project related lighting would be shielded and aimed downward and would comply with the County's dark sky policies. The glare and reflectance levels from a given PV system are lower than the glare and reflectance levels of steel, snow, standard glass, plexiglass, and smooth water. The panels will be angled in an east-west orientation (towards the horizon) at sunrise and sunset, minimizing any light reflection to adjacent parcels. Some Project facilities may include metallic components which could introduce new sources of glare. Any glare associated with the Project facilities would be minor and highly scattered because the metallic components, if any, would be separated geographically and would not concentrate potential glare in any one direction. Therefore, the solar PV panels and metallic electrical components would not create a new source of substantial glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area, and impacts would be less than significant.

**MITIGATION MEASURES:** None

**FINDINGS:** The proposed project would have a **LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT** on Aesthetics.



## 5.2 AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 (FMMP) of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by PRC section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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 forestland to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**DISCUSSION:** The State of California Department of Conservation manages the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) which produces maps and statistical data used for analyzing impacts on California’s agricultural resources. The FMMP mapping survey covers roughly 98% of privately owned land in the state and updates each map approximately every two years to provide an archive of land use change over time. Agricultural land is rated according to soil quality and irrigation status; the best quality land is called “Prime Farmland,” with other critical designations including “Unique Farmland,” or “Farmland of Statewide Importance.”

The Williamson Act (officially the California Land Conservation Act of 1965) provides preferential tax assessments to owners of farmland and open-space land in exchange for a ten-year agreement that the land will not be developed or otherwise converted to another use. Since the early 1980’s participation in the program has hovered around 16 million acres enrolled under contract, constituting about one third of all privately held land in the state and about one half of the state’s agricultural land. The intent of the Williamson Act is to preserve a maximum amount of a limited supply of prime agricultural land to discourage premature and unnecessary conversion of prime agricultural land to urban uses.

The Timberland Production Zone (TPZ) was established in 1976 in the California Government Code as a designation for lands for which the Assessor’s records as of 1976 demonstrated that the “highest and best use” would be timber production and its accessory uses. Public improvements and urban services are prohibited on TPZ lands except where necessary and compatible with ongoing timber production. The original purpose of TPZ Zoning District was to preserve and protect timberland from conversion to other more profitable uses and ensure that timber producing areas not be subject to use conflicts with neighboring lands.

- a) **No Impact:** The Project Site is predominantly classified as Grazing Land by the State’s Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP), with a portion of the site closer to the river falling into the Prime classification. However, none of the proposed development would intersect with the Prime farmland areas or create associated impacts to those areas. The existing zoning for the Project Site is AG 40 and is not currently subject to a Williamson Act contract. The Project would not conflict with existing/future zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in PRC Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by PRC Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g)). The Project would not: (1) convert agricultural or forest land to non-forest or non-agricultural uses; (2) conflict with a Williamson Act contract; or (3) conflict with existing zoning for agricultural or forest uses. No impact is anticipated.

- b) **Less Than Significant Impact:** The project site is not currently subject to a Williamson Act contract although portions of the subject parcel appear to still be used for vineyard production. The project would not require removal of any of the existing vines and is not expected to have an impact on the agricultural uses. Energy generating facilities are allowed with a Major Use Permit within the projects Agricultural zoning designation. Construction of a solar farm would limit future agricultural uses of the site by limiting available space for crops or grazing. The history of the project site indicates that the previous vineyard use was either not desired or not financially sustainable, so impacts related to loss of viable agricultural lands are expected to be minimal.
- c) **No Impact:** The project is not on lands zoned for forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g), timberland (as defined by PRC section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g)). No conversion of forest land, timberland, or timberland production would occur as a result of the project. No impact in anticipated.
- d) **No Impact:** The project is not on lands zoned for forest land, therefore no conversion of forest land to non-forest use would occur. No impact in anticipated.
- e) **Less Than Significant Impact:** Should the project be successful in generating revenue for the property owner, it's conceivable that future consideration may be given to converting additional vineyard uses to open space in order to allow additional solar arrays to be installed. Ultimately this decision would be heavily influenced by market factors, such as the productivity and commercial value of the grape crop and any subsidies or rent being generated by the solar operation. Future expansion of the solar array would require a modification to this use permit (if approved) and would be reviewed in more detail at that time. Ultimately it would be converting land from one high priority use (agriculture) to another, equally high priority use (renewable energy).

**MITIGATION MEASURES:** None

**FINDINGS:** The proposed project would have a **LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT** on Agricultural and Forestry Resources.

### 5.3 AIR QUALITY

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**DISCUSSION:** Mendocino County is located within the North Coast Air Basin, consisting of Del Norte, Humboldt, Trinity, Mendocino, and northern Sonoma counties. Additionally, the Mendocino County Air Quality Management District (MCAQMD) is responsible for enforcing state and federal clean air acts, as well as local air quality protection regulations. Any new emission point source is subject to an air quality permit, consistent with the District's air quality plan, prior to project construction. The MCAQMD also

enforces standards requiring new construction, including houses, to use energy efficient, low-emission EPA certified wood stoves and similar combustion devices to help reduce area source emissions.

MCAQMD operates air monitoring stations in Fort Bragg, Ukiah, and Willits. Based on the results of monitoring, the entire County has been determined to be in attainment for all Federal criteria air pollutants and in attainment for all State standards except Particulate Matter less than 10 microns in size (PM10). In January of 2005, MCAQMD adopted a Particulate Matter Attainment Plan establishing a policy framework for the reduction of PM10 emissions, and has adopted Rule 1-430 which requires specific dust control measures during all construction operations, the grading of roads, or the clearing of land as follows:

- 1) All visibly dry, disturbed soil road surfaces shall be watered to minimize fugitive dust emissions;
- 2) All unpaved surfaces, unless otherwise treated with suitable chemicals or oils, shall have a posted speed limit of 10 miles per hour;
- 3) Earth or other material that has been transported by trucking or earth moving equipment, erosion by water, or other means onto paved streets shall be promptly removed;
- 4) Asphalt, oil, water, or suitable chemicals shall be applied on materials stockpiles and other surfaces that can give rise to airborne dusts;
- 5) All earthmoving activities shall cease when sustained winds exceed 15 miles per hour;
- 6) The operator shall take reasonable precautions to prevent the entry of unauthorized vehicles onto the site during non-work hours; and
- 7) The operator shall keep a daily log of activities to control fugitive dust. In December 2006, MCAQMD adopted Regulation 4, Particulate Emissions Reduction Measures, which establishes emissions standards and use of wood burning appliances to reduce particulate emissions. These regulations applied to wood heating appliances, installed both indoors and outdoors for residential and commercial structures, including public facilities. Where applicable, MCAQMD also recommends mitigation measures to encourage alternatives to woodstoves/fireplaces, to control dust on construction sites and unpaved access roads (generally excepting roads used for agricultural purposes), and to promote trip reduction measures where feasible. In 2007, the Air Resources Board (ARB) adopted a regulation to reduce diesel particulate matter (PM) and oxides of nitrogen (NOx) emissions from in-use (existing) off-road heavy-duty diesel vehicles in California. Such vehicles are used in construction, mining, and industrial operations. The regulation imposes limits on idling, requires a written idling policy, and requires disclosure when selling vehicles. Off-road diesel-powered equipment used for grading or road development must be registered in the Air Resources Board DOORS program and be labeled accordingly. The regulation restricts the adding of older vehicles into fleets and requires fleets to reduce their emissions by retiring, replacing, or repowering older engines or installing Verified Diesel Emission Control Strategies. In 1998, the California Air Resources Board established diesel exhaust as an Air Toxic, leading to regulations for categories of diesel engines. Diesel engines emit a complex mixture of air pollutants, including both gaseous and solid material which contributes to PM2.5. All stationary and portable diesel engines over 50 horsepower need a permit through the MCAQMD.

Receptors include sensitive receptors and worker receptors. Sensitive receptors refer to those segments of the population most susceptible to poor air quality (i.e., children, the elderly, and those with pre-existing serious health problems affected by air quality). Land uses where sensitive individuals are most likely to spend time include schools and schoolyards, parks and playgrounds, daycare centers, nursing homes, hospitals, and residential communities (these sensitive land uses may also be referred to as sensitive receptors). Worker receptors refer to employees and locations where people work.

- a) **No Impact:** The project is located within the North Coast Air Basin and the Mendocino County Air Quality Management District (MCAQMD). MCAQMD enforces state and federal clean air acts, as well as local air quality protection regulations that require projects with new emission point sources to secure an air quality permit prior to project construction. Considering the project would be subject to the MCAQMD requirements, it is anticipated that the proposed



development would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan.

- b) **No Impact:** As detailed in the discussion section above, the MCAQMD is in attainment for all Federal criteria air pollutants as well as all State standards except Particulate Matter less than 10 microns in size (PM10). Compliance with the MCAQMD Particulate Matter Attainment Plan, including Rule 1-430 ensures that PM10 generated by the project would be less than significant. The project would not include a new point source for emissions. Further, the project will not conflict with nor obstruct attainment of the Air Quality Plan PM10 reduction goals.
- c) **Less Than Significant Impact:** Though there are no adjacent land uses such as schools and schoolyards, parks and playgrounds, daycare centers, nursing homes, and/or hospitals adjacent to the project site, the project is within a residential community that could have residents with pre-existing serious health problems affected by air quality. Since the project entails no physical development within the existing residential area, and the number of sensitive receptors located within the vicinity of the project site are limited, it is anticipated that the project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.
- d) **No Impact:** There are no short-term or long-term activities, or processes associated with the project that would create objectionable odors. Currently, there are no uses in the surrounding area commonly associated with a substantial number of people that could be affected by any odor generated by the proposed project. Therefore, the project would have no impact in terms of creating objectionable odors that would adversely affect a substantial number of people.

**MITIGATION MEASURES:** None

**FINDINGS:** The proposed project would have a **LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT** on Air Quality.

### **5.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

<b>WOULD THE PROJECT:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**DISCUSSION:** Mendocino County’s Biology and Ecology Resources Policy RM-28 states: *all discretionary public and private projects that identify special-status species in a biological resources evaluation (where natural conditions of the site suggest the potential presence of special-status species) shall avoid impacts to special-status species and their habitat to the maximum extent feasible. Where impacts cannot be avoided, projects shall include the implementation of site-specific or project-specific effective mitigation strategies developed by a qualified professional in consultation with state or federal resource agencies with jurisdiction.*

The California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) provides location and natural history information on special status plants, animals, and natural communities to the public, other agencies, and conservation organizations. The data helps drive conservation decisions, aid in the environmental review of projects and land use changes and provide baseline data helpful in recovering endangered species and for research projects. Currently, the CNDDDB has 32 species listed for Mendocino County that range in listing status from Candidate Threatened, Threatened, or Endangered.

Many species of plants and animals within the State of California have low populations, limited distributions, or both. Such species may be considered “rare” and are vulnerable to extirpation as the state’s human population grows and the habitats these species occupy are converted to agricultural and urban uses. A sizable number of native species and animals have been formally designated as threatened or endangered under State and Federal endangered species legislation. Others have been designated as “Candidates” for such listing and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) have designated others as “Species of Special Concern”. The California Native Plant Society (CNPS) has developed its own lists of native plants considered rare, threatened, or endangered. Collectively, these plants and animals are referred to as “special status species.”

Section 404 of the Clean Water Act defines wetlands as *“those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstance do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bog and similar areas.”*

Mendocino County currently has one active Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife which provides protections for the Point Arena Mountain Beaver. The Fisher Family HCP (Permit #TE170629-0) covers 24 acres of coastal scrub and was adopted December 3, 2007, for a period of 50 years. The Fisher Family HCP applies to parcel APN 027-211-02 located at 43400 Hathaway Crossing, Point Arena. Additionally, since 2003, the Mendocino Redwood Company (MRC) has managed the County’s only Natural Community Conservation Plan which covers all lands owned by the MRC to preserve regionally important habitat.

- a) **Less Than Significant with Mitigation:** The California Natural Diversity Database does not identify the project site as the source of any species of concern, but a riverine wetland exists along the southern boundary of the parcel. The applicants included a Biological Resources Assessment with the project application, prepared by Kleinfelder. When referred to CDFW for review, the State conclude the assessment was not sufficient due to having been conducted outside of the bloom window (December, 2022). In response to CDFW’s concerns, the applicants developed a revised mitigation measure to address possible special-status plants within the project site, and a Special-Status Plant Salvage Plan in March of 2024. The revised language includes avoidance measures, seed collection, bulb salvage, replanting and seeding, storage efforts, and a monitoring and reporting plan (MMRP) for five years. With inclusion of the proposed mitigations, any possible biological impacts can be mitigated to a less-than-significant level.
- b) **No Impact:** A riverine wetland runs along the southern portion of the project site, as identified on the California Aquatic Resources Inventory (CARI). Project plans indicate that all development will maintain a minimum 50-foot buffer from the boundaries of the identified wetland.
- c) **No Impact:** A riverine wetland runs along the southern portion of the project site, as identified on the California Aquatic Resources Inventory (CARI). Project plans indicate that all

development will maintain a minimum 50-foot buffer from the boundaries of the identified wetland.

- d) **No Impact:** The project does not include any development that could substantially interfere with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors or impeded the use of native wildlife nursery sites.
- e) **No Impact:** There are no local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance that the project could conflict with. No impact is anticipated.
- f) **No Impact:** There are no adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan applicable to the site. No impact would occur.

**MITIGATION MEASURES: BIO-1:** Preconstruction Nesting Bird Survey. A nesting bird survey shall be performed by a qualified biologist no earlier than two weeks prior to any construction during the nesting season (March 1 – August 31) to determine if any native birds are nesting on or near the site (including a 150-foot buffer for raptors, where accessible). If any active nests are observed during surveys, a suitable avoidance buffer from the nests shall be determined by the qualified biologist based on species, location, and extent and type of planned construction activity. These nests shall be avoided until the chicks have fledged and the nests are no longer active, as determined by the qualified biologist. Removal of any suitable nesting habitat (i.e. trees and vegetation) outside of the bird breeding season to avoid impacts to nesting birds is also recommended.

**BIO-2:** Trash Receptacles. All trash and waste items generated by construction or crew activities shall be properly contained in a covered and locked trash receptacle and/or removed from the Project site daily. This includes biodegradable items, such as apple cores and banana peels that attract predators such as raccoons and American crows that could prey upon sensitive wildlife species

**BIO-3:** Common and Special-Status Wildlife Awareness. All Project personnel will visually check for animals in any pipes, culverts, or other open-ended materials and equipment stored on site for one or more overnight periods prior to moving, burying, or capping to ensure that no animals are present within the materials and equipment. To prevent accidental entrapment of wildlife during construction, all excavated holes, ditches, or trenches greater than six (6) inches deep will be covered at the end of each workday by suitable materials that cannot be displaced or escape ramps will be placed in excavations. After opening and before filling, such holes, ditches, and trenches will be thoroughly inspected for trapped animals.

**BIO-4:** Western Pond Turtle. If construction must occur during the breeding season (April-July), preconstruction surveys shall be performed by a qualified biologist one week prior to the onset of construction. The surveys shall include any area included in the Project footprint that is within 325 feet of Howard Creek and the pond north of the Project Area to determine whether any western pond turtle nests/burrows are present. If any active nests/burrows are present, they shall be flagged and avoided until the eggs have hatched or they are no longer active, as determined by the qualified biologist. Construction shall not occur within 50 feet of an active nest site (burrow), and proper water quality best management practices (BMP's) shall be utilized prior to Project construction to prevent erosion or hazardous materials from entering the pond adjacent to the northeast corner of the study area and Howard Creek south of the study area.

**BIO-5:** Pallid Bat. To avoid impacts to foraging bats that may occur in the Project Area, Project activities shall be restricted to daytime hours, defined as one hour after sunrise and one hour before sunset.

**BIO-6:** Worker Environmental Awareness Training. A qualified biologist shall conduct an environmental education program for all persons working on the Project prior to the onset of construction. A discussion of the biology and general behavior of any sensitive species which may be in the area, how they may be encountered within the work area, and procedures to follow when they are encountered will be included in the training. Special-status species, including legal protection, penalties for violations, and Project-specific protective measures will also be discussed. Interpretation shall be provided for non-English speaking workers, and the same instruction shall be provided for any new workers prior to on-site Project activity. Copies of the training will be maintained at the worksite with the Project supervisor, and handout containing



this information will be distributed for workers to carry on-site. Upon completion of the program, employees shall sign an attendance log stating they attended the program and understand all protective measures.

**BIO-7: Special-status Plant Avoidance.** Prior to the onset of construction and within the blooming period for target species (which typically begin blooming April/May through June), a qualified botanist shall perform a special-status plant survey within the Project Area to determine if any special-status plants are evident and identifiable. The botanical field survey shall be floristic in nature, meaning that every plant taxon that occurs in the Project Area is identified to the taxonomic level necessary to determine rarity and listing status. During this initial special-status plant survey, habitat suitability can be further determined for any later blooming species with potential to occur and recommendation can be made for any follow up survey pass(es). Should any special-status plant species be encountered during surveys, those plants shall be avoided during project construction activities to the extent feasible, as detailed below. If full avoidance is not feasible, the project sponsors shall develop and implement a rare plant salvage plan, in consultation with CDFW (and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, if applicable), as detailed below.

- a. **AVOIDANCE:** Prior to the start of ground- or vegetation-disturbing activities, buffers will be established around each avoidable special status plant/population by a qualified biologist. The buffer area will be clearly staked, flagged, and signed for avoidance and maintained throughout the construction phase. The buffer zone shall be of sufficient size as determined by the qualified biologist to prevent direct or indirect disturbance to the plants from construction activities, erosion, inundation, or dust. No Project activities will be permitted within buffer zones.
- b. **SALVAGE:** If full avoidance is not feasible, the project sponsor shall develop and implement a rare plant salvage plan that addresses the following requirements, as appropriate for the species proposed for salvage.
  - i. **Collection:** Salvage of unavoidable plants will consist of collecting seed and bulb salvage (for herbaceous perennials) by a qualified biologist, in accordance with Table 1 below.
  - ii. **Replanting:** Salvaged plant stock will be replanted into appropriate receptor sites as near as feasible to the disturbance areas from which they were salvaged.
  - iii. **Storage:** If replanting cannot occur immediately or if timing is unsuitable for potential establishment success (e.g., planting during summer heat could lead to mortality), the qualified biologist shall transfer the seed or bulbs to a qualified horticultural institution such as California Botanic Garden, located in Claremont, for storage until planting conditions are suitable (generally during the late fall).
  - iv. **Monitoring:** Salvaged special-status plants will be monitored and maintained by a qualified biologist throughout the first year to increase the rate of re-establishment and reproductive success. Success criteria will equal a 1:1 replacement ratio (one plant must survive transplantation or seed must successfully germinate and set seed

**TABLE 1. Salvage Approach for Rare Plant Species with Potential to Occur in the Project Area**

Scientific Name Common Name	Status (Federal/State/CR PR)	Life Form Primary Habitat Associations, Elevation Range (feet), Blooming Period	Salvage Approach
<i>Allium peninsulare</i> var. <i>franciscanum</i> Franciscan onion	None/None CRPR 1B.2	Perennial bulbiferous herb found in cismontane woodland and valley and foothill grassland. Elevation 170-1,000 feet. Blooms May-Jun.	<b>Bulb Salvage and Seen Collection and Replanting.</b> Bulbs and seeds will be directly transported or stored at a qualified nursery until replanting conditions are suitable.

<i>Fritillaria roderickii</i> Roderick's fritillary	None/Endangered CPRP 1B.1	Perennial bulbiferous herb found in coastal bluff scrub, coastal prairie, valley and foothill grassland. Elevation 50-1,310 feet. Blooms Mar-May.	<b>Bulb Salvage and Seen Collection and Replanting.</b> Bulbs and seeds will be directly transported or stored at a qualified nursery until replanting conditions are suitable.
<i>Hesperolinon adenophyllum</i> Glandular western flax	None/None CRPR 1B.2	Annual herb found in chaparral, cismontane woodland, valley and foothill grassland, usually serpentinite. Elevation 490-4,315 feet. Blooms May-Aug.	<b>Seed Collecting and Replanting.</b> Seed will be collected and directly reseeded or stored at a qualified nursery until seeding conditions are suitable.
<i>Layia septentrionalis</i> Colusa layia	None/None CRPR 1B.2	Annual herb found in chaparral, cismontane woodland, valley and foothill grassland. Elevation 325-3,595 feet. Blooms Apr-May	<b>Seed Collecting and Replanting.</b> Seed will be collected and directly reseeded or stored at a qualified nursery until seeding conditions are suitable.
<i>Plagiobothrys lithocaryus</i> Mayacamas popcornflower	None/Rare CRPR 1A	Annual herb found in chaparral, cismontane woodland, valley and foothill grassland (mesic). Elevation 985-1,475 feet. Blooms Apr-May	<b>Seed Collecting and Replanting.</b> Seed will be collected and directly reseeded or stored at a qualified nursery until seeding conditions are suitable.
<i>Tracyina rostrata</i> Beaked tracyina	None/Threatened CRPR 1B.2	Annual herb found in chaparral, cismontane woodland, valley and foothill grassland. Elevation 295-4,165 feet. Blooms May-Jun.	<b>Seed Collecting and Replanting.</b> Seed will be collected and directly reseeded or stored at a qualified nursery until seeding conditions are suitable.
<i>Trifolium amoneum</i> Two-fork clover	Endangered/None CRPR 1B.1	Annual herb found in coastal bluff scrub, valley and foothill grassland (sometimes serpentinite). Elevation 15-1,360 feet. Blooms Apr-Jun	<b>Seed Collecting and Replanting.</b> Seed will be collected and directly reseeded or stored at a qualified nursery until seeding conditions are suitable.
<i>Trifolium buckwestorium</i> Santa Cruz clover	Endangered/None CRPR 1B.1	Annual herb found in coastal bluff scrub, valley and foothill grassland (sometimes serpentinite) Elevation 15-1,360 feet. Blooms Apr-Jun.	<b>Seed Collecting and Replanting.</b> Seed will be collected and directly reseeded or stored at a qualified nursery until seeding conditions are suitable.

**FINDINGS:** The proposed project would have a **LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION** on Biological Resources.

## 5.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**DISCUSSION:** Archaeological resources are governed by MCC Sec. 22.12.090, which echoes state law regarding discovery of artifacts and states, in part, “*It shall be unlawful, prohibited, and a misdemeanor for any person knowingly to disturb, or cause to be disturbed, in any fashion whatsoever, or to excavate, or cause to be excavated, to any extent whatsoever, an archeological site without complying with the provisions of this section*”. MCC Section 22.12.090 governs discovery and treatment of archaeological resources, while Section 22.12.100 speaks directly to the discovery of human remains and codifies the procedures by which said discovery shall be handled. Pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Sub Section 15064.5(c)(4), “*If an archeological resource is neither a unique archaeological nor an historic resource, the effects of the project on those resources shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment.*”

- a) **No Impact:** The project site has not been identified as the location of any significant historical resources. A field survey was performed by Kleinfelder on January 10, 2023 and did not identify any cultural resources within the project area.
- b) **No Impact:** The project site has not been identified as the location of any significant historical resources. A field survey was performed by Kleinfelder on January 10, 2023 and did not identify any cultural resources within the project area.
- c) **No Impact:** The project site has not been identified as the location of any significant historical resources. A field survey was performed by Kleinfelder on January 10, 2023 and did not identify any cultural resources within the project area.

**MITIGATION MEASURES:** None

**FINDINGS:** The proposed project would have **NO IMPACT** on Cultural Resources.

## 5.6 ENERGY

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy, or wasteful use of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**DISCUSSION:** On October 7, 2015, Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr. signed into law Senate Bill (SB) 350, known as the Clean Energy and Pollution Reduction Act of 2015 (De León, Chapter 547, Statutes of 2015), which sets ambitious annual targets for energy efficiency and renewable electricity aimed at reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. SB 350 requires the California Energy Commission to establish annual energy efficiency targets that will achieve a cumulative doubling of statewide energy efficiency savings and demand reductions in electricity and natural gas final end uses by January 1, 2030. This mandate is one of

the primary measures to help the state achieve its long-term climate goal of reducing GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. The proposed SB 350 doubling target for electricity increases from 7,286 gigawatt hours (GWh) in 2015 up to 82,870 GWh in 2029. For natural gas, the proposed SB 350 doubling target increases from 42 million of therms (MM) in 2015 up to 1,174 MM in 2029 (CEC, 2017).

Permanent structures constructed on-site would be subject to Part 6 (California Energy Code) of Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations, which contains energy conservation standards applicable to residential and non-residential buildings throughout California. The 2019 Building Energy Efficiency Standards are designed to reduce wasteful, uneconomic, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy, and enhance outdoor and indoor environmental quality. It is estimated that single-family homes built with the 2019 standards will use about 7 percent less energy due to energy efficiency measures versus those built under the 2016 standards (CEC, 2016).

- a) **No Impact:** The project proposes to install more than 10,000 solar modules across a 20 acre area designed to capture and convert solar energy to electricity. Current technology related to energy capture, storage and transmission will be used, and the electricity will ultimately be connected to the PG&E grid and offered for sale. The project will not create any additional energy consumption and will increase supply through renewable sources.
- b) **No Impact:** Project approval is consistent with the goals of SB 350 by increasing the source of energy consumption being generated from renewable sources.

**MITIGATION MEASURES:** None

**FINDINGS:** The proposed project would have **NO IMPACT** on Energy.

### 5.7 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iv) Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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 on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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 waste water?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**DISCUSSION:** Of the five known fault zones in Mendocino County, the Maacama Fault Zone is the closest active fault to the subject parcel, located approximately 16 miles to the southwest.

The Maacama Fault extends from northern Sonoma County to north of Laytonville. The Maacama Fault is the northern most segment of a series of closely related faults within the San Andreas Fault system that includes the Hayward, Rodgers Creek, and Healdsburg faults to the south. Historically, the Maacama Fault has generated only a few moderate earthquakes. However, an abundance of micro-earthquakes (less than magnitude 3) are associated with the fault. A magnitude 5.6 earthquake was reported in the Ukiah area in 1869. Several, earthquakes in the magnitude range of 4, with the strongest 4.9, were recorded in the Ukiah area between 1977-1978. At locations east of Willits and Ukiah surface fault creep, or very slow movements across know fault locations, have been documented.

The vast majority of Mendocino County is underlain by bedrock of the Franciscan Formation. Thick soil development and landslides very commonly cover the underlying bedrock throughout the county. Due to the weak and deformed nature of the Franciscan rocks, they are prone to deep weathering and development of thick overlying soils. Soil deposits in swales and on the flanks of slopes commonly contain substantial amounts of clay and weathered rock fragments up to boulder size. These soils can be unstable when wet and are prone to slides. Land sliding of such soils is widespread in Mendocino County, particularly in the eastern belt of the Franciscan Formation beneath the eastern portion of the county. Human activities that affect vegetation, slope gradients, and drainage processes can also contribute to landslides and erosion.

- a) **Less than Significant Impact:** The proposed development is situated atop the Maacama Fault Zone and would likely see severe seismic impact should an earthquake occur. As proposed, the project complies with PRC§2621.7(b) related to development within a fault zone because it will not involve any structures suitable for human habitation. Seismic related impacts would affect only the solar infrastructure and not cause any immediate or delayed impacts to human health.
- b) **No Impact:** The project site is predominantly flat, so minimal grading and site preparation will be required in order to install the solar arrays. A grading permit consistent with Mendocino County Code would be require prior to project approval.
- c) **No Impact:** The subject parcel is comprised of several different soil types, all terrace-formed and well drained. No fill exists on the site or would need to be brought in, so the risk of liquefaction is minimal.
- d) **No Impact:** The project site is not comprised of expansive soils as defined in Table 18-1-B of the UBC.
- e) **No Impact:** The project proposes installation of solar arrays and will not provide any facilities for wastewater or wastewater treatment.
- f) **No Impact:** No unique paleontological resources, sites, or geologic features have been identified on the Project site. The project site was previously used as a vineyard for decades and has been disturbed consistent with that prior use.

**MITIGATION MEASURES:** None

**FINDINGS:** The proposed project would have **NO IMPACT** on Geology and Soils.



## 5.8 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**DISCUSSION:** Assembly Bill 32 (AB32), the California Global Warming Solutions Act, 2006 recognized that California is a source of substantial amounts of greenhouse gas (GHG) emission which poses a serious threat to the economic well-being, public health, natural resources, and the environment of California. AB32 established a state goal of reducing GHG emission to 1990 levels by the year 2020 with further reductions to follow. In order to address global climate change associated with air quality impacts, CEQA statutes were amended to require evaluation of GHG emission, which includes criteria air pollutants (regional) and toxic air contaminants (local). As a result, Mendocino County Air Quality Management District (AQMD) adopted CEQA thresholds of significance for criteria air pollutants and GHGs, and issued updated CEQA guidelines to assist lead agencies in evaluating air quality impacts to determine if a project's individual emissions would be cumulatively considerable. According to the AQMD, these CEQA thresholds of significance are the same as those, which have been adopted by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD). Pursuant to the BAAQMD CEQA Guidelines, the threshold for project significance of GHG emissions is 1,100 metric tons CO<sub>2</sub>e (CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent) of operation emission on an annual basis. Additionally, Mendocino County's building code requires new construction to include energy efficient materials and fixtures.

- a) **No Impact:** The project would be below the 1,100 metric tons CO<sub>2</sub>e (CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent) threshold for project emission significance. Therefore, the project would not generate greenhouse gas emissions either directly or indirectly that would have a significant impact on the environment.
- b) **No Impact:** Although Action Item RM-50.2 in Chapter 4 of the Mendocino County General Plan (2009) requires the County to "create a greenhouse gas reduction plan for the unincorporated areas of the county that sets specific reduction strategies and targets to meet", such a plan has not yet been drafted or adopted by the County. Since there are no adopted local plans for reducing GHG emissions, no conflict with an applicable plan could occur.

**MITIGATION MEASURES:** None

**FINDINGS:** The proposed project would have **NO IMPACT** on Greenhouse Gas Emissions.

## 5.9 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Impair implementation of, or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**DISCUSSION:** California Health and Safety Code states: "Hazardous material" means any material that, because of its quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical characteristics, poses a significant present or potential hazard to human health and safety or to the environment if released into the workplace or the environment. "Hazardous materials" include, but are not limited to, hazardous substances, hazardous waste, and any material that a handler or the unified program agency has a reasonable basis for believing that it would be injurious to the health and safety of persons or harmful to the environment if released into the workplace or the environment (California Health and Safety Code Section 25501 (m)).

Mendocino County has adopted a Hazardous Waste Management Plan to guide future decisions by the County and the incorporated cities about hazardous waste management. Policies in this General Plan emphasize source reduction and recycling of hazardous wastes and express a preference for onsite hazardous waste treatment over offsite treatment. The Hazardous Waste Management Plan proposed a number of hazardous waste programs and set forth criteria to guide the siting of new offsite hazardous waste facilities. However, to date, no facilities have been cited in the county. In 1997, the County Division of Environmental Health assumed responsibility for administering hazardous waste generation and treatment regulations. Solid Waste and Hazardous Waste and Materials Management Policy DE-203 states: *All development projects shall include plans and facilities to store and manage solid waste and hazardous materials and wastes in a safe and environmentally sound manner.*

The California Air Resources Board classifies asbestos as a known human carcinogen. Asbestos of any type is considered hazardous and may cause asbestosis and lung cancer if inhaled, becoming permanently lodged in body tissues. Exposure to asbestos has also been shown to cause stomach and other cancers. Asbestos is the general name for a group of rock-forming minerals that consist of extremely strong and durable fibers. When asbestos fibers are disturbed, such as by grading and construction activities, they are released into the air where they remain for a long period of time. Naturally occurring asbestos is an issue of concern in Mendocino County, which contains areas where asbestos-containing rocks are found. The presence of ultramafic rocks indicates the possible existence of asbestos mineral groups. Ultramafic rocks contain 90 percent or more of dark-colored, iron-magnesium-silicate minerals. Ultramafic rocks may be partially or completely altered to a rock known as serpentinite, more commonly called serpentine.

The Mendocino County Air Quality Management District enforces state regulations to reduce the effects of development projects involving construction sites and unpaved roads in areas tested and determined by a state-registered geologist to contain naturally occurring asbestos. Serpentine and ultramafic rocks are common in the eastern belt of the Franciscan Formation in Mendocino County. Small, localized areas of serpentine do occur in the coastal belt of the Franciscan Formation, but they are significantly less abundant.

Mendocino County's aviation system is composed of airports, privately owned aircraft of various types, privately operated aircraft service facilities, and publicly and privately operated airport service facilities. Most aircraft are privately owned, small single or twin-engine planes flown primarily for personal business. Six public use airports in Mendocino County provide for regional and interregional needs of commercial and

general aviation. Actions involving areas around airports will continue to be evaluated for consistency with the County's Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan and applicable federal regulations. Mendocino County's Airport Policy DE-167 states: "*Land use decisions and development should be carried out in a manner that will reduce aviation-related hazards (including hazards to aircraft, and hazards posed by aircraft)*".

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection divides the County into fire severity zones. These maps are used to develop recommendations for local land use agencies and for general planning purposes.

- a) **Less than Significant with Mitigation:** The project infrastructure would include various hazardous materials, including Envirotemp FR3 Fluid, Lithium Ion, cooling refrigerant, lead-acid batteries, lead and cadmium present in solar modules. The project site is approximately 1600 feet east of the Russian River but is shown as being outside of both the Zone A and Zone X (100 & 500 year) flood zones per the FEMA FIRM maps, making the likelihood of pollution impacts related to flooding very low. However, due to its proximity to a major watercourse, mitigation is proposed to help prevent accidental contamination of the site through faulty or damaged equipment.
- b) **Less than Significant with Mitigation:** The project infrastructure would include various hazardous materials, including Envirotemp FR3 Fluid, Lithium Ion, cooling refrigerant, lead-acid batteries, lead and cadmium present in solar modules. The project site is approximately 1600 feet east of the Russian River but is shown as being outside of both the Zone A and Zone X (100 & 500 year) flood zones per the FEMA FIRM maps, making the likelihood of pollution impacts related to flooding very low. However, due to its proximity to a major watercourse, mitigation is proposed to help prevent accidental contamination of the site through faulty or damaged equipment.
- c) **No Impact:** Mendocino Community College is the nearest school facility to the site, located approximately 1.8 miles to the east.
- d) **No Impact:** Government Code section 65962.5 requires the California Environmental Protection Agency to develop at least annually an updated Cortese List. The Department of Toxic Substances Control is responsible for a portion of the information contained in the Cortese List. Other State and local government agencies are required to provide additional hazardous material release information for the Cortese List. The subject parcels are not identified on the Cortese List.
- e) **No Impact:** The project is located approximately 2 miles north of the nearest airport zone, Zone 6 of the Ukiah Municipal Airport.
- f) **No Impact:** The project does not include any development that would impair the implementation of, or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.
- g) **No Impact:** The subject parcel is currently mapped as non-wildland/non-urban within CAL FIRE's high fire hazard severity zone mapping. It is important to note that the CALFIRE Fire Hazard Severity Zone maps evaluate "hazard," not "risk". "Hazard" is based on the physical conditions that create a likelihood and expected fire behavior over a 30 to 50-year period without considering mitigation measures such as home hardening, recent wildfire, or fuel reduction efforts. "Risk" is the potential damage a fire can do to the area under existing conditions, accounting for any modifications such as fuel reduction projects, defensible space, and ignition resistant building construction. Considering this, the project does not include any physical development that could potentially expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires.

**MITIGATION MEASURES:** HAZ-1: All project components containing hazardous materials, including but not limited to batteries, transformers and coolant, shall be inspected for integrity at least every six months. Faulty equipment shall be removed from the site immediately and replaced as soon as feasible, and any ground contamination shall be immediately reported to the Division of Environmental Health.

**FINDINGS:** The proposed project would have **LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION** on Hazards or Hazardous Materials.

### 5.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
i) Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iv) Impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**DISCUSSION:** Regulatory agencies include the state and regional water quality control boards; State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and the North Coast Regional Quality Control Board (NCRWQCB). The State Water Resources Control Board is responsible for implementing water quality standards in California. Water Code Section 13050(d) states: *Waste includes sewage and any and all other waste substances, liquid, solid, gaseous, or radioactive, associated with human habitation, or of human or animal origin, or from any producing, manufacturing, or processing operation, including waste placed within containers of whatever nature prior to, and for purposes of, disposal.* Typical activities and uses that affect water quality include, but are not limited to, discharge of process wastewater from factories, confined animal facilities, construction sites, sewage treatment facilities, and material handling areas which drain into storm drains.

Water Code Section 1005.1 defines groundwater as *water beneath the surface of the ground, whether or not flowing through known and definite channels.* Both surface water and groundwater define a watershed, as they move from higher to lower elevations. In Mendocino County, groundwater is the main source for municipal and individual domestic water systems, outside of the Ukiah Valley, and contributes significantly to irrigation. Wells throughout Mendocino County support a variety of uses, including domestic, commercial, industrial, agricultural needs, and fire protection. The County's groundwater is found in two distinct geologic settings: the inland valleys and the mountainous areas. Mountainous areas are underlain by consolidated rocks of the Franciscan Complex, which are commonly dry and generally supply less than 5 gallons per minute of water to wells. Interior valleys are underlain by relatively thick deposits of valley fill, in which yields vary from less than 50 gallons per minute to 1,000 gallons per minute. There are six identified major groundwater basins in Mendocino County. Groundwater recharge is the replacement of water in the groundwater aquifer. Recharge occurs in the form of precipitation, surface runoff that later enters the

ground, irrigation, and in some parts of California (but not in Mendocino County) by imported water. Specific information regarding recharge areas for Mendocino County’s groundwater basins is not generally available, but recharge for inland groundwater basins comes primarily from infiltration of precipitation and intercepted runoff in stream channels, and from permeable soils along the margins of valleys. Recharge for coastal groundwater basins takes place in fractured and weathered bedrock and coastal terraces, and along recent alluvial deposits and bedrock formations. If recharge areas are protected from major modification - such as paving, building and gravel removal –it is anticipated that continued recharge will re-supply groundwater reservoirs.

The basic source of all water in Mendocino County is precipitation in the form of rain or snow. Average annual rainfall in Mendocino County ranges from slightly less than 35 inches in the Ukiah area to more than 80 inches near Branscomb. Most of the precipitation falls during the winter, and substantial snowfall is limited to higher elevations. Rainfall is often from storms which move in from the northwest. Virtually no rainfall occurs during the summer months.

- a) **No Impact:** The project infrastructure would include various hazardous materials, including Envirotep FR3 Fluid, Lithium Ion, cooling refrigerant, lead-acid batteries, lead and cadmium present in solar modules. The project site is approximately 1600 feet east of the Russian River but is shown as being outside of both the Zone A and Zone X (100 & 500 year) flood zones per the FEMA FIRM maps, making the likelihood of pollution impacts related to flooding very low. However, due to its proximity to a major watercourse, mitigation is proposed to help prevent accidental contamination of the site through faulty or damaged equipment.
- b) **No Impact:** The proposed project does not require a water source and would not have an effect on groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level.
- c) **No Impact:** The project site would require only minimal grading and earthwork to install the solar arrays and would not have an impact on siltation or erosion. Minor impacts to surface runoff may be seen due to the increase impermeable areas created by the solar arrays, but ground water penetration is still possible between and underneath the arrays. Any additional runoff created by the arrays would likely be absorbed by the permeable areas immediately adjacent to the project site, and the project will have no effect on possible flood flows and is show outside of flood zones on the FEMA FIRM maps.
- d) **No Impact:** The project site is not located within an identified flood hazard area as identified on the FEMA FIRM maps. It is within a potential dam inundation zone should the Coyote Dam at Lake Mendocino one day fail.
- e) **No Impact:** The Project is not located in an area with a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan.

**MITIGATION MEASURES:** None

**FINDINGS:** The proposed project would have **NO IMPACT** on Hydrology and Water Quality.

### **5.11 LAND USE AND PLANNING**

<b>WOULD THE PROJECT:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**DISCUSSION:** All lands within the unincorporated portions of Mendocino County are regulated by the General Plan and zoning ordinance, as well as several more locally derived specific plans, such as the



Gualala Town Plan, or Ukiah Valley Area Plan. The proposed project is not within the boundaries of a locally derived specific plan. During project referrals, a number of agencies that may have jurisdiction over the project were contacted.

- a) **No Impact:** The project would not physically divide an established community. All proposed development is to be sited between Redemeyer Road and the Russian River.
- b) **No Impact:** The County General Plan and Ukiah Valley Area Plan do not have significant policies related to clean energy and renewable resources, but the project would be consistent with State goals for renewal resource attainment by 2030.

**MITIGATION MEASURES:** None

**FINDINGS:** The proposed project would have **NO IMPACT** on Land Use and Planning.

### **5.12 MINERAL RESOURCES**

<b>WOULD THE PROJECT:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**DISCUSSION:** The Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) of 1975 provides a comprehensive surface mining and reclamation policy with the regulation of surface mining operations to assure that adverse environmental impacts are minimized, and mined lands are reclaimed to a usable condition. SMARA also encourages the production, conservation, and protection of the state’s mineral resources. SMARA requires the State Mining and Geology Board to adopt State policy for the reclamation of mined lands and the conservation of mineral resources.

The most predominant minerals found in Mendocino County are aggregate resources, primarily sand and gravel. Three sources of aggregate materials are present in Mendocino County: quarries, instream gravel, and terrace gravel deposits. The demand for aggregate is typically related to the size of the population, and construction activities, with demand fluctuating from year to year in response to major construction projects, large development activity, and overall economic conditions. After the completion of U.S. 101 in the late 1960s, the bulk of aggregate production and use shifted primarily to residential and related construction. However, since 1990, use has begun to shift back toward highway construction.

- a) **No Impact:** No known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state are identified on the project site. The project would not reduce the availability of a known mineral resource by converting it to non-mineral production use or precluding it from future uses.
- b) **No Impact:** The subject parcel is not identified as a site with known mineral resources by the General Plan, Zoning Code, or any other land use plan. Mendocino County is the administrator of the California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA). Therefore, all activities undertaken regarding essentially non-renewable resources are subject to review and approval from the local jurisdiction. Mendocino County has many aggregate mineral resources, the demand for which varies. However, any negative impacts to either active mining activities or mining reclamation efforts would be required to be reviewed and approved by the County. there are no delineated locally important mineral resources within the project boundaries. Therefore, there will be no loss of availability of a known mineral resource or loss in locally important mineral resource recovery sites. No impact would occur.

**MITIGATION MEASURES:** None

**FINDINGS:** The proposed project would have **NO IMPACT** on Mineral Resources.

### 5.13 NOISE

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Generation of excessive ground borne vibration or ground borne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) For a project located within the vicinity of private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**DISCUSSION:** Acceptable levels of noise vary depending on the land use. In any one location, the noise level will vary over time, from the lowest background or ambient noise level to temporary increases caused by traffic or other sources. State and federal standards have been established as guidelines for determining the compatibility of a particular use with its noise environment. Mendocino County relies principally on standards in its Noise Element, its Zoning Ordinance, and other County ordinances, and the Mendocino County Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan to evaluate noise-related impacts of development. Land uses considered noise-sensitive are those in which noise can adversely affect what people are doing on the land. For example, a residential land use where people live, sleep, and study is generally considered sensitive to noise because noise can disrupt these activities. Churches, schools, and certain kinds of outdoor recreation are also usually considered noise sensitive.

- a) **No Impact:** Mendocino County General Plan (page 3-10) provides that, *“Noise policies are intended to protect County communities from excessive noise generation from stationary and non-stationary sources. Land uses would be controlled to reduce potential for incompatible uses relative to noise. Residential and urban uses will be restricted near agriculture lands to prevent incompatible uses being placed near inherently noisy agricultural operations. Noise-sensitive environments, including schools, hospitals, and passive recreational use areas, would be protected from noise-generating uses. Structural development would be required to include noise insulation and other methods of construction to reduce the extent of excessive noise.”* Solar panels do not generate any noise, but solar farms have additional infrastructure that may produce minimal noise levels, including fans and transformers<sup>1</sup>. Due to the low density of development in the area, impacts associated with these noise producers are likely to be minimal and no ambient noise study of the area exists.
- b) **No Impact:** The project does not propose any components that would result in ground borne vibrations or noise.
- c) **No Impact:** The project is located approximately 2 miles north of the nearest airport zone, Zone 6 of the Ukiah Municipal Airport.

**MITIGATION MEASURES:** None

**FINDINGS:** The proposed project would have **NO IMPACT** on Noise.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.acentech.com/resources/yes-solar-farms-can-produce-noise/>

## 5.14 POPULATION AND HOUSING

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (e.g., by proposing new homes and/or businesses) or indirectly (e.g., through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**DISCUSSION:** The most recent census for Mendocino County was in 2020, with an estimated population of 87,497. The county has undergone cycles of population boom followed by periods of slower growth. For example, the county population increased by approximately 25 percent between 1950 and 1960, but barely grew from 1960 to 1970. Between 1990 and 2000, the population of Mendocino County increased 7.4 percent, a much slower rate of growth than the 20 percent increase from 1980 to 1990. Population growth slowed further from 2000 to 2007, increasing only 4.6 percent.

Mendocino County's Housing Element is designed to facilitate the development of housing adequate to meet the needs of all County residents. The Mendocino Council of Government's (MCOG) Regional Housing Needs Plan assigned the County a production goal of 2,552 housing unit for the unincorporated area between 2009 and 2014. Goals and policies were set forth in order to facilitate the development of these housing units at a range of sizes and types to address this need.

- a) **No Impact:** The project does not propose any new dwelling structures that could contribute directly to unplanned growth, nor does it propose any items that could indirectly induce unplanned growth.
- b) **No Impact:** The project does not propose any development that would displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing that would necessitate the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. No impact would occur.

**MITIGATION MEASURES:** None

**FINDINGS:** The proposed project would have **NO IMPACT** on Population and Housing.

## 5.15 PUBLIC SERVICES

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:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**DISCUSSION:** The Mendocino County Office of Emergency Services (OES) is the primary local coordination agency for emergencies and disasters affecting residents, public infrastructure, and

government operations in the Mendocino County Operational Area. The subject parcel is serviced by the Ukiah Unified School District and Ukiah Valley Fire.

- a-e) **No Impact:** The proposed project will not result in adverse impacts associated with provision of governmental facilities or need for new or physically altered governmental facilities that may result in environmental impacts in order to maintain acceptable service ratios and response times for public services. Any future development would be required to secure Building Permits for the proposed work. These Building Permits are subject to review by local agencies, who may impose impact fees to offset impacts to local infrastructure. Development of a solar farm would not increase the need for any services or facilities.

**MITIGATION MEASURES:** None

**FINDINGS:** The proposed project would have **NO IMPACT** on Public Services.

### 5.16 RECREATION

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**DISCUSSION:** The County of Mendocino manages a variety of public recreation areas including the Low Gap Park in Ukiah, Bower Park in Gualala, Mill Creek Park in Talmage, Faulkner Park in Boonville, Indian Creek Park and Campground in Philo, and the Lion’s Club Park in Redwood Valley, all of which are operated by the Mendocino County Cultural Services Agency. Additionally, the County is host to a variety of state parks, reserves, other state protected areas used for the purpose of recreation, with 13 located along the coast and 8 located throughout inland Mendocino County. The closest protected area to the proposed project is the Mendocino National Forest, located 9± miles east of the subject parcel.

- a) **No Impact:** The project does not propose a use that would require increased use of recreational facilities. The nearest recreational site to the project area is the South Boat Ramp area of Lake Mendocino, approximately 0.85± miles to the north.
- b) **No Impact:** The project does not include any recreational facilities or require the construction of expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

**MITIGATION MEASURES:** None

**FINDINGS:** The proposed project would have **NO IMPACT** on Recreation.

### 5.17 TRANSPORTATION

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<b>WOULD THE PROJECT:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**DISCUSSION:** Since the site is currently undeveloped, there will be an increase in traffic to and from the site for any future development of the land. It is expected that construction of any project will result in a slight increase in traffic to and from the site, as construction workers arrive and leave the site at the beginning and end of the day, in addition to minor interruption of traffic on adjacent streets, when heavy equipment necessary for project construction is brought to and removed from the site. Once construction is complete, these workers would no longer be required at the site. While the project would contribute incrementally to traffic volumes on local and regional roadways, such incremental increases were considered when the land use designations were assigned to the site. The development proposed on-site is not expected to significantly impact the capacity of the street system, level of service standards established by the County, or the overall effectiveness of the circulation system, nor substantially impact alternative transportation facilities, such as transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, as a substantial increase in traffic trips or use of alternative transportation facilities is not anticipated. A less than significant impact would occur.

- a) **No Impact:** The project does not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The Project would not incur additional traffic demand beyond the initial construction phase and subsequent intermittent service and inspection.
- b) **No Impact:** The project would be considered a commercial use, but offers no commercial facilities on site. Less than 110 trips per day is generally assumed to cause a less-than-significant transportation impact per California Office of Planning & Research Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA, and the project site can be expected to come in significantly below this threshold, as zero trips from the site will be generated due to no new residential development or commercial access being developed.
- c) **No Impact:** The project does not require any changes to existing transportation infrastructure, nor create any impact to existing infrastructure through design or location. The entrance to the property is not a blind driveway, nor does it involve a sharp curve or otherwise hazardous feature. A less than significant impact is anticipated.
- d) **No Impact:** No expected impacts to emergency access are anticipated from project approval. The site is accessed via a public road and access will be maintained throughout construction and operation. Minimal impacts to public services are expected, with the highest likelihood being fire suppression. The project will not require permanent on-site presence, so impacts to law enforcement and medical are negligible.

**MITIGATION MEASURES:** None

**FINDINGS:** The proposed project would have **NO IMPACT** on Transportation.

## 5.18 TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code §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:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
i) 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 §5020.1(k)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ii) 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 §5024.1? In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code §5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**DISCUSSION:** Public Resources Code Section 21074 defines Tribal cultural resources as sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe that are either included or determined to be eligible for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) or included in a local register of historical resources, or a resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant. A cultural landscape that meets these criteria is a tribal cultural resource to the extent that the landscape is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape. Historical resources, unique archaeological resources, or non-unique archaeological resources may also be tribal cultural resources if they meet these criteria.

The area known now as Mendocino County has a long history of occupation and use by Native American groups. Notably the Russian and Eel Rivers as well as other watercourses, valleys, and coastal areas provided rich and varied habitat for early human occupation. The first dated chronological periods and related cultural patterns within the region were developed by David A. Fredrickson in his 1973 Ph.D. dissertation<sup>2</sup> and 1984 regional synthesis.<sup>3</sup> This research provides a baseline archaeological information for the area, but there still remains significant gaps in archaeological data for the region that affects our understanding of regional cultural history.

From this understanding, ten (10) Native American tribes had territory within the County's current borders. The southern third of the County was the home Native Americans speaking the Central Pomo languages. To the north of the Central Pomo groups were the Northern Pomo, who controlled a strip of land extending from the coast to Clear Lake in Lake County. The Coast Yuki occupied a portion of the coast extending from Fort Bragg north to an area slightly north of Rockport. They were linguistically related to a small group, called the Huchnom, living along the South Eel River north of Potter Valley. Both of these smaller groups were related to the Yuki, who were centered in Round Valley. At the far northern end of the county, several groups extended south from Humboldt County. The territory of the Cahto was bounded by Branscomb, Laytonville, and Cummings. The North Fork Wailaki was almost entirely in Mendocino County, along the North Fork of the Eel River. Other groups in this area included the Shelter Cove Sinkyone, the Eel River, and the Pitch Wailaki.

<sup>2</sup> Fredrickson, David, A. 1973. *Early Cultures of the North Coast of the North Coast Ranges, California*, UC Davis

<sup>3</sup> Fredrickson, David, A. 1984. *The North Coastal Region*, California Archaeology



- a) **No Impact:** The project site has not been identified as the location of any significant historical resources. A field survey was performed by Kleinfelder on January 10, 2023 and did not identify any cultural resources within the project area. Referrals sent by Kleinfelder to the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) indicated the Pinoleville Pomo Nation as the most likely to recognize the project area as a sensitive site. Kleinfelder sent referrals and requests for comment to 17 tribes and tribal liaisons in the region including Pinoleville. No response was received from any of these agencies save one, who respond that the project site was outside of their tribal territory.

**MITIGATION MEASURES:** None

**FINDINGS:** The proposed project would have **NO IMPACT** on Tribal Cultural Resources.

### 5.19 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**DISCUSSION:** Public sewer systems in Mendocino County are provided by cities, special districts, and some private water purveyors. There are 13 major wastewater systems in the county, four of which primarily serve the incorporated cities, but also serve some unincorporated areas. Sewage collected by the Brooktrails Township Community Services District and Meadowbrook Manor Sanitation District is treated at the City of Willits Wastewater Treatment Plant. The City of Ukiah's Wastewater Treatment Plant also processes wastewater collected by the Ukiah Valley Sanitation District. Sewage disposal in the remainder of the county is generally handled by private onsite facilities, primarily septic tank and leach field systems, although alternative engineered wastewater systems may be used.

Solid waste management in Mendocino County has undergone a significant transformation from waste disposal in landfills supplemented by transfer stations to a focus on transfer stations and waste stream diversion. These changes have responded to rigorous water quality and environmental laws, particularly the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (AB 939). The Act required each city and county to divert 50 percent of its waste stream from landfill disposal by the year 2000 through source reduction, recycling, composting, and other programs. Chapter 3 (Development Element) of the Mendocino County General Plan (2009) notes there are no remaining operating landfills in Mendocino County, and as a result, solid waste generated within the County is exported for disposal to the Potrero Hills Landfill in Solano County. The Potrero Hills Landfill has a maximum permitted throughput of 4,330 tons per day and a remaining capacity of 13.872 million cubic yards and is estimated to remain in operation until February 2048.

Mendocino County's Development Goal DE-21 (Solid Waste) states: *Reduce solid waste sent to landfills by reducing waste, reusing materials, and recycling waste.* Solid Waste and Hazardous Waste and Material Management Policy DE-201 states the County's waste management plan *shall include programs to increase recycling and reuse of materials to reduce landfilled waste.* Mendocino County's Environmental Health Division regulates and inspects more than 50 solid waste facilities in Mendocino County, including: 5 closed/inactive municipal landfills, 3 wood-waste disposal sites, 2 composting facilities, and 11 transfer stations.

- a) **No Impact:** The proposed project will be a new source of renewable energy for the region, and will tie into the existing electrical infrastructure on site. No expansion of utilities will be required as a result of project approval.
- b) **No Impact:** The project proposes installation of a large solar array and does not require a water source for daily or routine use.
- c) **No Impact:** The project proposes installation of a large solar array and does not generate wastewater or require installation of or connection to a wastewater system.
- d) **No Impact:** The project proposes installation of a large solar array and will not generate solid waste as part of its routine operations.
- e) **No Impact:** The project proposes installation of a large solar array and will not generate solid waste as part of its routine operations.

**MITIGATION MEASURES:** None

**FINDINGS:** The proposed project would have **LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT** on Utilities and Service Systems.

## 5.20 WILDFIRE

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, <b>WOULD THE PROJECT:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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 challenges?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**DISCUSSION:** The County of Mendocino County adopted a *Mendocino County Operational Area Emergency Operations Plan* (County EOP) on September 13, 2016, under Resolution Number 16-119. As noted on the County's website, the County EOP, which complies with local ordinances, state law, and stated and federal emergency planning guidance, serves as the primary guide for coordinating and responding to all emergencies and disasters within the County. The purpose of the County EOP is to *"facilitate multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional coordination during emergency operations, particularly*

between Mendocino County, local and tribal governments, special districts as well as state and Federal agencies” (County of Mendocino – Plans and Publications, 2019).

- a) **No Impact:** The location of the proposed project is a vacant site formerly used as a commercial vineyard. Access is provided by the adjacent county road and will be maintained for the life of the project. No impacts to any adopted emergency response or evacuation plans will occur as a result of project approval, as the site will not contribute to an increase in traffic, utility use or landscape change.
- b) **No Impact:** The project site is mostly flat, lying on an existing river terrace approximately 1600 feet east of the Russian River, and consists of an unmanned solar array. The project will not have occupants, so no impacts to occupants will occur.
- c) **Less than Significant with Mitigation:** The project proposes installation of a large solar array and associated equipment, including lithium ion and acid batteries. While solar arrays themselves are unlikely to lead to a fire, sparks from failing electrical cabinets and wiring may be more likely. Although a recent study found that fewer than 1% of solar power systems catch fire<sup>4</sup>, including small residential solar arrays, mitigation of possible fires through vegetation maintenance and regular equipment inspections can further reduce this chance.
- d) **Less Than Significant Impact:** Should the site be affected by wildfire, the most likely impacts would be to air quality as a result of combustion of solar arrays and supporting infrastructure and their hazardous components. Maintenance off the vegetation around the project will help mitigate the spread of wildfire to and from the site, and regular inspection of project components will help reduce the chances that failing equipment causes a fire. In the event of a destructive fire on site, minimal impacts to downstream flooding or erosion are expected, due to the overall flat composition of the project area.

**MITIGATION MEASURES:** FIRE-1: During fire season (as defined by CAL FIRE), all vegetation around the solar array and its supporting infrastructure shall be maintained to a minimum height above ground to prevent spread of wildfires caused by electrical discharge or heat.

**FINDINGS:** The proposed project would have a **LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION** on Wildfire.

## 5.21 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.firetrace.com/fire-protection-blog/can-solar-farms-cause-fires>

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Does the project have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**DISCUSSION:** Certain mandatory findings of significance must be made to comply with CEQA Guidelines §15065. The proposed project has been analyzed and it has been determined that it would not:

- Substantially degrade environmental quality;
- Substantially reduce fish or wildlife habitat;
- Cause a fish or wildlife population to fall below self-sustaining levels;
- Threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community;
- Reduce the numbers or range of a rare, threatened, or endangered species;
- Eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or pre-history;
- Achieve short term goals to the disadvantage of long term goals;
- Have environmental effects that will directly or indirectly cause substantial adverse effects on human beings; or
- Have possible environmental effects that are individually limited but cumulatively considerable when viewed in connection with past, current, and reasonably anticipated future projects.

- a) **Less than Significant with Mitigation:** As discussed in the previous sections, the project has some potential for impacts. While no sensitive species have been identified on the project site, the study was done outside of the regular vegetation bloom period. Additional mitigations proposed by the applicant will provide protection to any sensitive plant species that may be subsequently found on the project site, as well as provide an option to terminate the project if avoidance of sensitive species become so significant that it inhibits functional development of the site. No other sensitive species or habitat were identified on the site per the biological assessment.
- b) **No Impact:** The project proposes installation of a 20-acre solar array in order to generate clean power to sell back into the grid. Impacts associated with development of the site will be minor and likely limited to grading and incidental noise. Overall impacts resulting from the project are likely to be a net negative, as the project will increase the amount of renewable energy created and will not have any impacts associated with housing, resource usage, utilities, transportation, or greenhouse gas emissions.
- c) **Less Than Significant with Mitigation:** The proposed solar array will see minimal to no impacts on a day to day basis so long as everything is functioning correctly. However, impacts related to faulty equipment or installation can be significant, specifically as they related to release of hazardous materials into the environment or accidental ignition of wildfires. Mitigation measures HAZ-1 and FIRE-1 are recommended to minimize the chances of these impacts to a less-than-significant level, and routine maintenance and proper installation will additionally support long term operation and benefits from the project.

**MITIGATION MEASURES:** BIO-1 through BIO-7, HAZ-1 and FIRE-1 as noted in the sections above.

**FINDINGS:** The proposed project would have **A LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION** on Mandatory Findings of Significance.