



**CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION  
DETERMINATION FORM (rev. 06/2022)**

**Project Information**

**Project Name (if applicable):** Prairie Creek South Curve Realignment

**DIST-CO-RTE:** 01-HUM-101     **PM/PM:** 125.20-126.62

**EA:** 01-0K150     **Federal-Aid Project Number:**

**Project Description**

Caltrans is proposing a safety project to improve an existing, non-standard compound curve on State Route (SR) 101 from post mile (PM) 125.20 to 125.62 north of the town of Orick in Humboldt County. The scope of work consists of a superelevation improvement, minor shoulder widening on the north bound (NB) and south bound (SB) shoulders, drainage work on five existing culvert systems and construction of one new system, minor vegetation removal, traffic control via a temporary traffic signal, installation of erosion control and treatment best management practices (TBMPs) and landscaping. The purpose of the project is to improve the non-standard compound curve primarily through superelevation and shoulder widening. The project is needed in order to reduce the frequency and severity of traffic collisions at this location, which experiences a higher rate of collisions than the statewide average. Federal and state funds will be used. All work will be within temporary construction easements (TCE) and Caltrans right of way (ROW).

DLM

**Caltrans CEQA Determination** (Check one)

- Not Applicable** – Caltrans is not the CEQA Lead Agency
- Not Applicable** – Caltrans has prepared an IS or EIR under CEQA

Based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, the project is:

- Exempt by Statute.** (PRC 21080[b]; 14 CCR 15260 et seq. – 15269[d])
- Categorically Exempt. Class 1.** (PRC 21084; 14 CCR 15300 et seq.)
  - No exceptions apply that would bar the use of a categorical exemption (PRC 21084 and 14 CCR 15300.2). See the [SER Chapter 34](#) for exceptions.
- Covered by the Common Sense Exemption.** This project does not fall within an exempt class, but it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity may have a significant effect on the environment (14 CCR 15061[b][3].)

**Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief**

Dominic Vitali		12/29/2023
Print Name	Signature	Date

**Project Manager**

David L. Melendrez	<i>David L. Melendrez</i>	12/29/2023
Print Name	Signature	Date



**CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM**

**Caltrans NEPA Determination** (Check one)

**Not Applicable**

Caltrans has determined that this project has no significant impacts on the environment as defined by NEPA, and that there are no unusual circumstances as described in 23 CFR 771.117(b). See [SER Chapter 30](#) for unusual circumstances. As such, the project is categorically excluded from the requirements to prepare an EA or EIS under NEPA and is included under the following:

**23 USC 326:** Caltrans has been assigned, and hereby certifies that it has carried out the responsibility to make this determination pursuant to 23 USC 326 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated April 18, 2022, executed between FHWA and Caltrans. Caltrans has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion under:

**23 CFR 771.117(c): activity (c)(26)**

**23 CFR 771.117(d): activity (d)(Enter activity number)**

**Activity (Enter activity number) listed in Appendix A of the MOU between FHWA and Caltrans**

**23 USC 327:** Based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, Caltrans has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion under 23 USC 327. The environmental review, consultation, and any other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by Caltrans pursuant to 23 USC 327 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated May 27, 2022, and executed by FHWA and Caltrans.

**Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief**

Dominic Vitali

Print Name

Signature

12/29/2023

Date

**Project Manager/ DLA Engineer**

David L.Melendrez

Print Name

Signature

12/29/2023

Date

**Date of Categorical Exclusion Checklist completion (if applicable):** N/A

**Date of Environmental Commitment Record or equivalent:** 10/17/2023



**CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION  
DETERMINATION FORM**

**Continuation sheet:**

**Environmental Considerations:**

Biological, cultural, visual, and hazardous waste reviews have been completed by qualified specialists and there are no anticipated impacts on these resources with incorporation of measures listed in the ECR and included in permits once acquired.

**Environmental permits and agreements:**

California Department of Fish and Wildlife 1602 LSAA  
North Coast Regional WQ Control Board 401 Certification  
United States Army Corps of Engineers 404 Nationwide #14  
National Marine Fisheries Service Programmatic Biological Opinion  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Letter of Concurrence



## Environmental Commitments Record (ECR)

**DIST-CO-RTE:** 01 - HUM - 101 **PM/PM:** 125.200/125.620    **EA/Project ID:** 01-0K150\_ / 0120000035

**Project Description:** CURVE IMPROVEMENT

**Date (Last modification):** 10/17/2023

**Environmental Planner:** Morgan Kipf

**Phone:** 707-492-0167

**Construction Liaison:** James McIntosh

**Phone:** 707-496-4347

**Resident Engineer:**

**Phone:**

### PERMITS

Permit	Agency	Application Submitted	Permit Received	Permit Expiration	Permit Requirements Completed by	Permit Requirements Completed on	Comments
1600	California Department of Fish & Wildlife						
401	Regional Water Quality Control Board						
404 Nationwide Verification	US Army Corps of Engineers						
Programmatic BO	National Marine Fisheries Service						
Programmatic LOC	US Fish and Wildlife						

### ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS

#### PS&E/BEFORE RTL

Category	Task and Brief Description	Source	Included in PS&E Package	Responsible Branch/Staff	Action to Comply	Due Date	Task Completed by	Task Completed on	Remarks	Mitigation for significant impacts under CEQA
Biology	Straw, straw bales, seed, mulch, or other material used for erosion control or landscaping which would be free of noxious weed seed and propagules.	NES		Bio/ Landscape					BR-3	
Biology	Temporary High Visibility Fencing (THVF) and/or flagging will be included in Plans and Specs to protect sensitive resources as necessary. No work will occur within these areas fenced/flagged areas	NES		ENV/design						
Biology	The structural root zone will be identified around each large diameter tree (>2 feet diameter at breast-height [DBH]) directly adjacent to project	NES		ENV/design						

## Environmental Commitments Record for Prairie Creek Curve Improvement

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activities, and work within the zone would be limited.

Biology	Where applicable, sinusoidal rumble strips would be installed in place of traditional rumble strips to reduce potential auditory disturbance to sensitive animal species, if approved by District Traffic Safety.	NES		PE/Traffic Safety						
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Landscape	The site will be restored by regrading and stabilizing with a hydroseed mixture of native species along with fast growing sterile erosion control seed, as required by the Erosion Control Plan.	NES		Stewardship/Landscape						
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### PRE-CONSTRUCTION

Category	Task and Brief Description	Source	Included in PS&E Package	Responsible Branch/Staff	Action to Comply	Due Date	Task Completed by	Task Completed on	Remarks	Mitigation for significant impacts under CEQA
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Biology	A qualified biologist will conduct a pre-construction survey of the ESL to locate and identify potential presence of special status mammal species. The survey should occur no more than 14 days prior to the implementation of construction activities (including staging and equipment access). If a lapse in construction activities for 14 days or longer occurs between those dates, another pre-construction survey will be performed. If an active nest/den is found, a qualified biologist will determine the extent of a construction-free buffer zone to be established around the nest and any additional conservation measures to be implemented (e.g., seasonal restrictions) to avoid or minimize impacts on the species.	NES		CSB, RE	Refer to SSP 14-6.03- Species protection					
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Biology	A qualified biologist will provide environmental awareness training to construction personnel prior to onset of work. The training will instruct construction personnel on how to recognize potentially occurring special status species and next steps if any are encountered.	NES		RE, CSB	Refer to SSP 14-6.03D: BRIP					
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Biology	Before start of work, as required by permit or consultation conditions, a Caltrans biologist, ECL or coordinator would meet with the contractor to brief them on environmental permit conditions and requirements relative to each stage of the project, including but not limited to, work windows, drilling site management, and how to identify and report regulated species within the project areas.	NES		RE/ECL/Bio					BR-1	
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Biology	If vegetation removal is to occur during the Ringtail	NES		CSB, RE	Refer to SSP 14-6.03-					
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	maternal denning period (May 1–June 30),a qualified biologist will conduct a pre-construction survey of the ESL to attempt to locate maternity dens and identify measures to protect and observed maternity dens from disturbance. The pre-construction survey will be performed no more than 14 days prior to the vegetation removal.				Species protection					
Biology	Pre-construction surveys for active raptor nests within one-quarter mile of the construction area would be conducted by a qualified biologist within one week prior to initiation of construction activities. Areas to be surveyed would be limited to those areas subject to increased disturbance because of construction activities (i.e., areas where existing traffic or human activity is greater than or equal to construction-related disturbance need not be surveyed). If any active raptor nests are identified, appropriate conservation measures (as determined by a qualified biologist) would be implemented. These measures may include, but are not limited to, establishing a construction-free buffer zone around the active nest site, biological monitoring of the active nest site, and delaying construction activities near the active nest site until the young have fledged.	NES		RE/CSB						
Biology	Within 24 hours prior to clearing/grubbing or disturbance related construction in a previously undisturbed area, a qualified biologist will conduct a pre-construction survey for special status amphibians within the disturbance footprint. Any special status amphibians found will be relocated to nearby suitable habitat outside of the disturbance footprint if determined to be practicable.	NES		CSB, RE	Refer to SSP 14-6.03- Species protection					
Water Quality	Before any ground-disturbing activities, the contractor would prepare a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) (per the Construction General Permit Order 2009-0009-DWQ) or Water Pollution Control Program (WPCP) (projects that result in a land disturbance of less than one acre) that includes erosion control measures and construction waste containment measures to protect Waters of the State during project construction. The SWPPP or WPCP would identify the sources of pollutants that may affect the quality of stormwater; include construction site BMPs to control sedimentation, erosion,	NES		RE/ Stormwater						

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and potential chemical pollutants; provide for construction materials management; include non-stormwater BMPs; and include routine inspections and a monitoring and reporting plan. All construction site BMPs would follow the latest edition of the Caltrans Storm Water Quality Handbooks: Construction Site BMPs Manual to control and reduce the impacts of construction-related activities, materials, and pollutants on the watershed. The project SWPPP or WPCP would be continuously updated to adapt to changing site conditions during the construction phase.

### **CONSTRUCTION**

Category	Task and Brief Description	Source	Included in PS&E Package	Responsible Branch/Staff	Action to Comply	Due Date	Task Completed by	Task Completed on	Remarks	Mitigation for significant impacts under CEQA
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Biology	Artificial night lighting may be required. To reduce potential disturbance to sensitive resources, lighting would be temporary, and directed specifically on the portion of the work area actively under construction. Use of artificial lighting would be limited to Cal/OSHA work area lighting requirements.	NES		RE						
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Biology	If a Western pond turtle nest is discovered during Pre-construction surveys or construction activities, a qualified biologist will flag the site and establish a construction-free buffer zone.	NES		CSB, RE	Refer to SSP 14-6.03- Species protection					
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Biology	If special status species are encountered within the ESL during construction and could be harmed by construction activities, work will stop in the area. Work will not resume until the species has left the work area on its own, or a qualified biologist has been contacted to implement appropriate avoidance measures.	NES		CSB, RE	Refer to SSP 14-6.03- Species protection					
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Biology	No human activities (including use of drones) will occur within a visual line-of sight of 328 feet (100 meters) or less from a known nest site (USFWS 2020), or from unsurveyed suitable nesting habitat containing potential murrelet nest trees within 328 feet (100 meters) of proposed activities or, for NSO, from unsurveyed suitable nesting/roosting habitat containing potential owl nest trees. These visual disturbance restrictions would be lifted after September 15; after which the USFWS considers visual disturbance as having "no effect" on nesting adults or dependent young. The	Letter of Concurrence		RE						
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	328-foot (100 meters) visual disturbance distance may be reduced or eliminated through technical assistance with the USFWS if site-specific information suggests that ambient visual disturbance within the action area is already high enough to likely preclude species from nesting within 328 feet (100 meters) of the project footprint, or vegetation near the roadway is sufficiently dense to shield the view from habitat farther from the roadway.									
Biology	No proposed activity generating sound levels 20 or more dB above ambient sound levels or with maximum sound levels (ambient sound level plus activity-generated sound level) above 90 dB (excluding vehicle back-up alarms) may occur within suitable MAMU nesting habitat or owl nesting/roosting habitat during the majority of the nesting seasons (February 1-August 6). Between August 6 and September 15, work that generates sound levels equal to or greater than 10 dB above ambient sound levels or above 90 dB max would observe a daily work window beginning two hours post-sunrise and ending two hours pre-sunset. Sound-related work windows would be lifted between September 16 and January 31.	Letter of Concurrence		RE/ contractor						
Biology	No suitable owl nesting/roosting habitat will be removed or altered during the nesting season (i.e., from 1 February through 15 September). No potentially suitable owl or murrelet nest trees can or will be removed or altered as part of this project.	NES, LOC		RE/Contractor						
Biology	Prior to the start of work, Temporary High Visibility Fencing (THVF) and/or flagging would be installed per plans. No will occur within fenced/flagged areas	NES		RE						
Biology	To prevent attracting corvids (birds of the Corvidae family which include jays, crows, and ravens), no trash or foodstuffs would be left or stored on-site. All trash would be deposited in a secure container daily and disposed of at an approved waste facility at least once a week. Also, on-site workers would not attempt to attract or feed any wildlife.	Letter of Concurrence, NES	SSP	RE/Contractor	LOC					



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Biology	To protect migratory and nongame birds (occupied nests and eggs), vegetation removal would be limited to the period outside of the bird breeding season (removal would occur between September 16 and January 31). If vegetation removal is required during the bird breeding season, a nesting bird survey would be conducted by a qualified biologist within one week prior to vegetation removal. If an active nest is located, the biologist would coordinate with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to establish appropriate species-specific buffer(s) and any monitoring requirements. The buffer(s) would be delineated around each active nest and construction activities would be excluded from these areas until birds have fledged, or the nest is determined to be unoccupied.	NES	Std. Spec	RE	Refer to SSP 14-6.3B					
Biology	To protect Northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet; No construction activities generating sound levels 20 or more decibels (dB) above ambient sound or with maximum sound levels (ambient sound level plus activity-generated sound level) above 90 dB (with the exception of backup alarms) would occur between February 1 and August 5. Between August 6 and September 15, work that generates sound levels equal to or greater than 10 dB above ambient sound levels or above 90 dB max would observe a daily work window beginning two hours post-sunrise and ending two hours pre-sunset. Sound-related work windows would be lifted between September 16 and January 31.	Letter of Concurrence		RE						
Biology	Upon completion of construction, all superfluous construction materials would be completely removed from the site	NES		RE						
Biology	When possible, excavation of roots of large-diameter trees (>2 feet DBH) would not be conducted with mechanical excavator or other ripping tools. Instead, roots would be severed using a combination of root-friendly excavation and severance methods (e.g., sharp-bladed pruning instruments or chainsaw). At a minimum, jagged roots would be pruned away to make	NES		RE						

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	sharp, clean cuts.									
Hazardous Waste	The use of SSP 7-1.02K(6)(j)(iii) EARTH MATERIALS CONTAINING LEAD will be required for legal relations and responsibilities to the public .	Env Doc	SSP	RE	Follow SSP 7-1.02K(6)(j)(iii) EARTH MATERIALS CONTAINING LEAD.					
Hazardous Waste	The use of SSP 84-9.03B REMOVE TRAFFIC STRIPES AND PAVEMENT MARKINGS CONTAINING LEAD will be required for pavement delineation removal, if this method is preferred.	Env Doc	SSP	RE	Follow SSP 84-9.03 B					
Hazardous Waste	Thermoplastic paint may contain lead of varying concentrations Have a lead compliance plan	Env Doc	SSP	RE	Follow SSP 36-4 CONTAINING LEAD FROM PAINT AND THERMOPLASTIC and have a lead compliance plan					
Hazardous Waste	Treated Wood Waste (TWW) will be generated from guardrail and sign post removal. This can be addressed with SSP 14-11.14 TREATED WOOD WASTE management in the construction contract and a TWW disposal item.	Env Doc	SSP	RE	Follow SSP 14-11.14					
Visual Resources	Collect duff and topsoil and store during construction, then place back after construction	Env Doc		RE	collect and replace duff and topsoil					
Visual Resources	Color Vegetation Control (Minor Concrete) under guardrail black to reduce visual contrast with roadway asphalt color	Env Doc	SSP	RE	color vegetation control concrete Follow SSP 83-2.01B					
Visual Resources	Seed and/or plant disturbed soil areas with California native species that are regionally appropriate (reference plans once available)	Env Doc		RE	seed any disturbed areas with regional native species					

**PS&E/BEFORE RTL AND**

Category	Task and Brief Description	Source	Included in PS&E Package	Responsible Branch/Staff	Action to Comply	Due Date	Task Completed by	Task Completed on	Remarks	Mitigation for significant impacts under CEQA
Biology	All equipment would be thoroughly cleaned of all dirt and vegetation prior to entering the job site to prevent importing invasive non-native species. Project personnel would adhere to the latest version of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife Aquatic Invasive Species Cleaning/Decontamination Protocol (Northern Region) for all field gear and equipment in contact with water.	NES		Bio, RE					BR-3	






# 0K150\_FINAL\_CE CE\_wECR\_240104

Final Audit Report

2024-01-04

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