

# **Alpine County State Route 4 Drainage System Restoration**

State Routes 4 and 207 in Alpine County

10-ALP-4,207- Post Miles Vary

EA 10-1L660 and Project Number 1020000171

## **Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration and Section 4(f) De Minimis Determination**

**Volume 1 of 2**



Prepared by the  
State of California Department of Transportation

**May 2024**



## General Information About This Document

### ***What's in this document:***

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has prepared this Initial Study, which examines the potential environmental impacts of alternatives being considered for the proposed project in Alpine County in California. The document explains why the project is being proposed, the alternatives being considered for the project, the existing environment that could be affected by the project, potential impacts of each of the alternatives, and proposed avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures.

### ***What you should do:***

- Please read the document. Additional copies of the document and the related technical studies are available for review at the Caltrans district office at 1976 East Doctor Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard, Stockton, California 95205 and the Markleeville Library at 270 Laramie St, Markleeville, California 96120. This document may be downloaded at the following website:  
<http://www.dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-10/district-10-current-projects/10-11660>.
- Tell us what you think. If you have any comments regarding the proposed project, please send your written comments to Caltrans by the deadline. Submit comments via U.S. mail to: Laura Cook, District 10 Environmental Division, California Department of Transportation, 1976 East Doctor Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard, Stockton, California 95205. Submit comments via email to: [Laura.Cook@dot.ca.gov](mailto:Laura.Cook@dot.ca.gov).
- Submit comments by the deadline: October 28, 2024.

### ***What happens next:***

After comments are received from the public and the reviewing agencies, Caltrans may 1) give environmental approval to the proposed project, 2) do additional environmental studies, or 3) abandon the project. If the project is given environmental approval and funding is appropriated, Caltrans could design and construct all or part of the project.

### ***Accessibility Assistance***

Caltrans makes every attempt to ensure our documents are accessible. Due to variances between assistive technologies, there may be portions of this document that are not accessible. Where documents cannot be made accessible, we are committed to providing alternative access to the content. Should you need additional assistance, please contact us at the phone number in the box below.

For individuals with sensory disabilities, this document can be made available in Braille, in large print, on audiocassette, or on computer disk. To obtain a copy in one of these alternate formats, please write to or call Caltrans, Attention: Laura Cook, District 10 Environmental Division, 1976 East Doctor Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard, Stockton, California 95205; 209-662-2261 (Voice), or use the California Relay Service 1-800-735-2929 (Teletype to Voice), 1-800-735-2922 (Voice to Teletype), 1-800-855-3000 (Spanish Teletype to Voice and Voice to Teletype), 1-800-854-7784 (Spanish and English Speech-to-Speech), or 711.

Rehabilitate existing drainage systems at 30 locations on  
State Routes 4 and 207 in Alpine County

**INITIAL STUDY  
with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration  
and Section 4(f) De Minimis Determination**

Submitted Pursuant to: (State) Division 13, California Public Resources Code

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
Department of Transportation

*C. Scott Guidi*

---

C. Scott Guidi  
Office Chief, District 10 Environmental  
California Department of Transportation  
CEQA Lead Agency

*05/17/2024*

---

Date

The following individual can be contacted for more information about this document:

Laura Cook, 1976 East Doctor Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard, Stockton, California  
95205, email: [Laura.Cook@dot.ca.gov](mailto:Laura.Cook@dot.ca.gov); phone: 209-662-2261





**DRAFT**  
**Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration**

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

**State Clearinghouse Number:** pending

**District-County-Route-Post Mile:** 10-ALP-4,207- Post Miles Vary

**EA/Project Number:** 10-1L660/1020000171

**Project Description**

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to rehabilitate existing drainage systems at 30 locations on State Routes 4 and 207 in Alpine County. Existing drainage systems at proposed locations have exceeded their design life and have deteriorated or failed. The project work includes replacing or rehabilitating existing culverts, and upgrading or replacing end treatments and headwalls as needed.

**Determination**

An Initial Study has been prepared by Caltrans District 10. On the basis of this study, it is determined that the proposed action with the incorporation of the identified mitigation measures will not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:

- BIO-21. Compensatory Mitigation – Wetlands and Other Waters of the United States: Loss of 0.01-acre of intermittent and ephemeral streams and 0.003-acre of wetlands potentially qualifying as waters of the United States will be compensated through the purchase of mitigation credits through the Sacramento United States Army Corps of Engineers' and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's in-lieu fee program.
- BIO-22: Compensatory Mitigation – Riparian Vegetation. Impacts to 0.01-acre of riparian vegetation will be compensated at a 3-to-1 ratio with the establishment of 0.03-acre of riparian vegetation at an undetermined onsite or offsite location.

---

C. Scott Guidi  
Office Chief, District 10 Environmental  
California Department of Transportation

---

Date



## Table of Contents

|                   |   |    |
|-------------------|---|----|
| <b>Chapter 1</b>  | Proposed Project .....  | 1  |
| 1.1               | Introduction.....   | 1  |
| 1.2               | Purpose and Need.....   | 1  |
| 1.2.1             | Purpose.....  | 1  |
| 1.2.2             | Need .....  | 1  |
| 1.3               | Project Description.....  | 1  |
| 1.4               | Project Alternatives.....   | 3  |
| 1.4.1             | Build Alternatives .....  | 3  |
| 1.4.2             | No-Build (No-Action) Alternative .....  | 8  |
| 1.5               | Standard Measures and Best Management Practices Included in All Build Alternatives..... | 9  |
| 1.6               | Discussion of the NEPA Categorical Exclusion .....                                      | 10 |
| 1.7               | Permits and Approvals Needed .....  | 11 |
| <b>Chapter 2</b>  | CEQA Evaluation .....   | 13 |
| 2.1               | CEQA Environmental Checklist .....  | 13 |
| 2.1.1             | Aesthetics .....  | 13 |
| 2.1.2             | Agriculture and Forestry Resources.....   | 15 |
| 2.1.3             | Air Quality .....   | 17 |
| 2.1.4             | Biological Resources.....   | 18 |
| 2.1.5             | Cultural Resources.....   | 27 |
| 2.1.6             | Energy.....   | 29 |
| 2.1.7             | Geology and Soils.....  | 30 |
| 2.1.8             | Greenhouse Gas Emissions .....  | 31 |
| 2.1.9             | Hazards and Hazardous Materials.....  | 32 |
| 2.1.10            | Hydrology and Water Quality .....   | 33 |
| 2.1.11            | Land Use and Planning.....  | 34 |
| 2.1.12            | Mineral Resources .....   | 35 |
| 2.1.13            | Noise.....  | 35 |
| 2.1.14            | Population and Housing.....   | 36 |
| 2.1.15            | Public Services .....   | 36 |
| 2.1.16            | Recreation .....  | 37 |
| 2.1.17            | Transportation.....   | 39 |
| 2.1.18            | Tribal Cultural Resources .....   | 40 |
| 2.1.19            | Utilities and Service Systems.....  | 42 |
| 2.1.20            | Wildfire.....   | 42 |
| 2.1.21            | Mandatory Findings of Significance .....  | 43 |
| <b>Chapter 3</b>  | Coordination .....  | 47 |
| <b>Appendix A</b> | Title VI Policy Statement.....  | 49 |
| <b>Appendix B</b> | Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures .....                                  | 51 |
| <b>Appendix C</b> | Section 4(f) Documentation .....  | 63 |





# **Chapter 1**      **Proposed Project**

---

## **1.1 Introduction**

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (known as CEQA) and the lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (known as NEPA). The proposed project will take place in a mountainous, forested region of Alpine County along State Route 4 and 207, and proposes to rehabilitate or replace culverts at 30 drainage system locations along these routes. The original proposal included 72 drainage system locations, but over the course of field reviews, Caltrans identified that the majority of these locations remained in good condition, and removed them from the scope of work.

## **1.2 Purpose and Need**

### **1.2.1 Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to maintain the serviceability of existing drainage systems by rehabilitating or replacing culverts in Alpine County that have exceeded their design life, deteriorated, or failed.

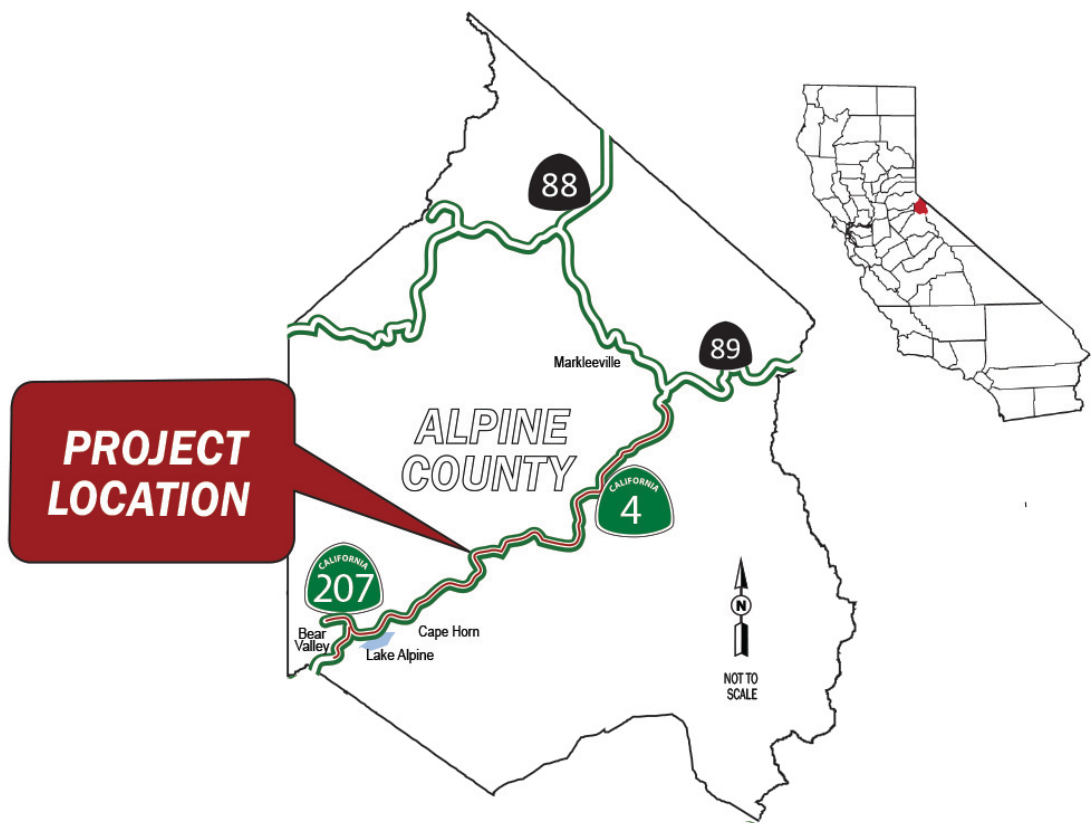
### **1.2.2 Need**

The project is needed because the Maintenance Engineering Culvert Inspection Team reported that several existing culverts are in need of repair or replacement. Many drainage systems have exceeded their design life and have deteriorated, corroded, and experienced damage as well as shape loss and joint separation. If these culverts are allowed to continue to deteriorate, the roadway will be undermined.

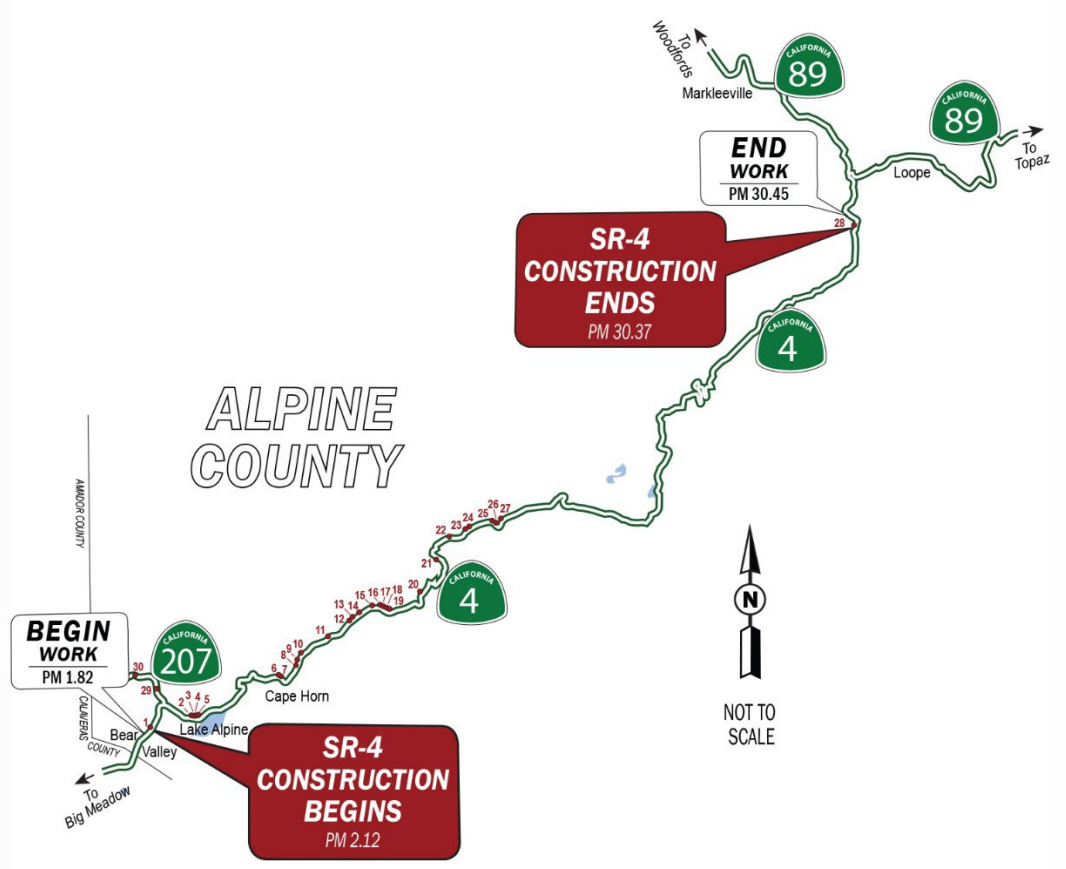
## **1.3 Project Description**

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to rehabilitate existing drainage systems at 30 locations on State Routes 4 and 207 in Alpine County. Existing drainage systems at proposed locations have exceeded their design life and have deteriorated or failed. The project work includes replacing or rehabilitating existing culverts, and upgrading or replacing end treatments and headwalls as needed.

Figure 1-1 Project Vicinity Map



**Figure 1-2 Project Location Map**



## 1.4 Project Alternatives

The proposed project has two alternatives under consideration—one Build Alternative and one No-Build Alternative.

### 1.4.1 Build Alternatives

The Build Alternative would rehabilitate 30 existing drainage systems in Alpine County by repairing or replacing existing culverts and upgrading or replacing end treatments and headwalls as needed.

The majority of culvert replacements will be performed with the cut-and-cover method, which involves trenching from above, removal of the old culvert, installing the new culvert, filling and compacting the trench, and paving over it. Vegetation removed during the process would be replanted as necessary. This method results in a smaller temporary disturbance area that extends along the culvert's length and includes a 10-foot by 10-foot area at the inlet and outlet of the pipe. However, for culverts deep enough to have 15 or more feet of cover, the jack-and-bore method may be required instead. This entails

excavating a sending pit and a receiving pit, and then boring under the roadway to replace or install the culvert pipe. This method would be used only where necessary, as it would result in a larger area of potential impacts. These impacts would include two 25-foot long, 10-foot wide, and 3-foot deep pits, as well as temporary disturbance areas of 10 feet around the pits and access routes.

The following work is proposed at the below drainage system locations.

- **Location 1 on State Route 4, post mile 2.12:** Replace 18-inch corrugated steel pipe with 24-inch reinforced concrete pipe with rubber gasket joint. Install concrete flared end section at inlet. Backfill with cement concrete along the length of the culvert under the roadway.
- **Location 2 on State Route 4, post mile 3.66:** Replace 18-inch corrugated steel pipe with 24-inch reinforced concrete pipe with rubber gasket joint. Regrade outlet channel within right-of-way. Backfill with cement concrete along the length of the culvert under the roadway.
- **Location 3 on State Route 4, post mile 3.99:** Replace 18-inch corrugated steel pipe with 30-inch span by 19-inch rise elliptical concrete pipe with rubber gasket joint. Add rock slope protection at outlet. Backfill with cement concrete along the length of the culvert under the roadway.
- **Location 4 on State Route 4, post mile 4.04:** Replace 18-inch corrugated steel pipe with 24-inch reinforced concrete pipe. Add rock slope protection at outlet. Backfill with cement concrete along the length of the culvert under the roadway.
- **Location 5 on State Route 4, post mile 4.40:** Replace 18-inch corrugated steel pipe with 30-inch span by 19-inch rise elliptical concrete pipe with rubber gasket joint. Add rock slope protection at outlet. Regrade outlet channel within right-of-way. Backfill with cement concrete along the length of the culvert under the roadway.
- **Location 6 on State Route 4, post mile 6.57:** Replace 18-inch corrugated steel pipe with 24-inch reinforced concrete pipe with rubber gasket joint. Install concrete flared end section at inlet and outlet. Regrade outlet channel within right-of-way. Backfill with cement concrete along the length of the culvert under the roadway. A temporary construction easement is required from United States Forest Service for this location.
- **Location 7 on State Route 4, post mile 6.61:** Replace 18-inch corrugated steel pipe with 24-inch reinforced concrete pipe with rubber gasket joint. Install concrete flared end section at inlet and outlet. Regrade outlet channel within right-of-way. Backfill with cement concrete along the length of the culvert under the roadway.

- **Location 8 on State Route 4, post mile 7.25:** Replace 24-inch corrugated steel pipe with 34-inch span by 22-inch rise elliptical concrete pipe with rubber gasket joint. Backfill with cement concrete along the length of the culvert under the roadway.
- **Location 9 on State Route 4, post mile 7.27:** Replace 18-inch corrugated steel pipe with 24-inch reinforced concrete pipe with rubber gasket joint. Backfill with cement concrete along the length of the culvert under the roadway.
- **Location 10 on State Route 4, post mile 7.35:** Replace 18-inch corrugated steel pipe with 24-inch reinforced concrete pipe with rubber gasket joint. Regrade inlet and outlet channel within right-of-way. Backfill with cement concrete along the length of the culvert under the roadway.
- **Location 11 on State Route 4, post mile 7.53:** Replace 18-inch corrugated steel pipe with 24-inch reinforced concrete pipe with rubber gasket joint. Grade inlet channel within right-of-way. Install concrete headwall at inlet. Remove tree trunk obstruction at the outlet. A temporary construction easement is required from United States Forest Service at this location.
- **Location 12 on State Route 4, post mile 8.34:** Replace 18-inch corrugated steel pipe with 30-inch span by 19-inch rise elliptical concrete pipe with rubber gasket joint. Backfill with cement concrete along the length of the culvert under the roadway. This location is in a blue line watershed and may experience constant water flows. Installation of cofferdam to pump water from upstream to downstream and temporarily drain a portion of the channel during construction may be necessary. A determination on whether the cofferdam is needed will be made by the end of the design phase of the project. A temporary construction easement is required from United States Forest Service at this location.
- **Location 13 on State Route 4, post mile 8.94:** Replace 18-inch corrugated steel pipe with 38-inch span by 24-inch rise elliptical concrete pipe with rubber gasket joint. Backfill with cement concrete along the length of the culvert under the roadway.
- **Location 14 on State Route 4, post mile 8.99:** Replace 18-inch corrugated steel pipe with 30-inch reinforced concrete pipe with rubber gasket joint. Install concrete headwall at inlet and outlet. Add additional rock slope protection at outlet. Backfill with cement concrete along the length of the culvert under the roadway. This location is in a blue line watershed and may experience constant water flows. Installation of cofferdam to pump water from upstream to downstream and temporarily drain a portion of the channel during construction may be necessary. A determination on whether the cofferdam is needed will be made by the end of the design phase of the project.

- **Location 15 on State Route 4, post mile 9.12:** Replace 24-inch corrugated steel pipe with 38-inch span by 24-inch rise elliptical concrete pipe with rubber gasket joint. Install stress reducing slab. Add additional rock slope protection on outlet embankment. Remove vegetation obstructing culvert outlet.
- **Location 16 on State Route 4, post mile 9.59:** Replace 18-inch corrugated steel pipe with 24-inch reinforced concrete pipe with rubber gasket joint. Install concrete headwall at inlet and outlet. Backfill with cement concrete along the length of the culvert under the roadway.
- **Location 17 on State Route 4, post mile 9.64:** Replace 18-inch corrugated steel pipe with 30-inch reinforced concrete pipe with rubber gasket joint. Grade inlet and outlet channel within right-of-way. Add rock slope protection at inlet within right-of-way. Backfill with cement concrete along the length of the culvert under the roadway.
- **Location 18 on State Route 4, post mile 9.73:** Replace 18-inch corrugated steel pipe with 34-inch span by 22-inch rise elliptical concrete pipe with rubber gasket joint. Add rock slope protection along inlet embankment and outlet. Regrade inlet and outlet channel within right-of-way.
- **Location 19 on State Route 4, post mile 9.89:** Replace 18-inch corrugated steel pipe with 24-inch reinforced concrete pipe with rubber gasket joint. Install stress-reducing slab. Install concrete flared end section at outlet. Regrade outlet channel within right-of-way.
- **Location 20 on State Route 4, post mile 10.93:** Replace 18-inch corrugated steel pipe with 34-inch span by 22-inch rise elliptical concrete pipe with rubber gasket joint. Install stress-reducing slab. Remove debris obstructing inlet.
- **Location 21 on State Route 4, post mile 12.26:** Replace 12-inch corrugated steel pipe with 18-inch reinforced concrete pipe with rubber gasket joint. Backfill with cement concrete along the length of the culvert under the roadway.
- **Location 22 on State Route 4, post mile 13.20:** Replace 36-inch corrugated steel pipe with 72-inch span by 48-inch rise concrete box culvert. Install concrete headwalls at inlet and outlet. Install light rock slope protection at outlet within right-of-way. Regrade inlet and outlet channels. This location is marked as an intermittent stream and may experience water flows during construction. Installation of cofferdam to pump water from upstream to downstream and temporarily drain a portion of the channel during construction may be necessary. A determination on whether the cofferdam is needed will be made by the end of the design phase of the project. A temporary construction easement is required from United States Forest Service at this location.

- **Location 23 on State Route 4, post mile 13.60:** Replace 24-inch corrugated steel pipe with 24-inch reinforced concrete pipe with rubber gasket joint. Add rock slope protection at inlet. Regrade outlet channel within right-of-way. Backfill with cement concrete along the length of the culvert under the roadway.
- **Location 24 on State Route 4, post mile 13.62:** Replace 24-inch corrugated steel pipe with 34-inch span by 22-inch rise elliptical concrete pipe with rubber gasket joint. Add additional rock slope protection at outlet drop. Backfill with cement concrete along the length of the culvert under the roadway. A temporary construction easement is required from United States Forest Service at this location.
- **Location 25 on State Route 4, post mile 14.16:** Replace 36-inch double barrel corrugated steel pipes with 48-inch reinforced concrete pipes with rubber gasket joints. Install concrete headwall at inlet. Backfill with cement concrete along the length of the culvert under the roadway. This location is in a blue line watershed and may experience constant water flows. Installation of cofferdam to pump water from upstream to downstream and temporarily drain a portion of the channel during construction may be necessary. A determination on whether the cofferdam is needed will be made by the end of the design phase of the project.
- **Location 26 on State Route 4, post mile 14.33:** Replace 24-inch corrugated steel pipe with 24-inch reinforced concrete pipe with rubber gasket joint. Replace rock slope protection at inlet. Backfill with cement concrete along the length of the culvert under the roadway.
- **Location 27 on State Route 4, post mile 14.61:** Replace 18-inch corrugated steel pipe with 18-inch reinforced concrete pipe with rubber gasket joint. Install concrete flared end section. Add rock slope protection at inlet. Backfill with cement concrete along the length of the culvert under the roadway.
- **Location 28 on State Route 4, post mile 30.37:** Replace 18-inch corrugated steel pipe with 24-inch reinforced concrete pipe with rubber gasket joint. Install concrete headwall at inlet. A temporary construction easement is required from United States Forest Service at this location.
- **Location 29 on State Route 207, post mile 0.38:** Install cured-in-place pipe liner in existing 18-inch corrugated steel pipe. Install concrete collar and replace last 3 feet at outlet with reinforced concrete pipe. Remove tree trunks and other obstructions from the inlet and outlet. A temporary construction easement is required from United States Forest Service at this location.
- **Location 30 on State Route 207, post mile 1.19:** Install cured-in-place pipe liner in existing 18-inch corrugated steel pipe. Install

concrete collar and replace last 3 feet at outlet with reinforced concrete pipe. A temporary construction easement is required from United States Forest Service at this location.

The temporary construction easements required for the project are at the following locations within United States Forest Service jurisdiction.

- Location 6 on State Route 4, post mile 6.57 (Stanislaus National Forest)
- Location 11 on State Route 4, post mile 7.53 (Stanislaus National Forest)
- Location 12 on State Route 4, post mile 8.34 (Stanislaus National Forest)
- Location 22 on State Route 4, post mile 13.20 (Stanislaus National Forest)
- Location 24 on State Route 4, post mile 13.62 (Stanislaus National Forest)
- Location 28 on State Route 4, post mile 30.37 (Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest)
- Location 29 on State Route 207, post mile 0.38 (Stanislaus National Forest)
- Location 30 on State Route 207, post mile 1.19 (Stanislaus National Forest)

This project contains a number of standardized project measures that are used on most, if not all, Caltrans projects and were not developed in response to any specific environmental impact resulting from the proposed project. These measures are listed later in this chapter under “Standard Measures and Best Management Practices Included in All Build Alternatives.”

#### **1.4.2 No-Build (No-Action) Alternative**

The No-Build Alternative would not rehabilitate or replace the existing drainage systems. It would not address the purpose or need of the project, as it would allow the drainage systems to continue to deteriorate and eventually undermine the roadway.



## **1.5 Standard Measures and Best Management Practices Included in All Build Alternatives**

The following best management practices are anticipated to be implemented on the project, where applicable. The final list of best management practices will be submitted by the contractor and approved for inclusion in the construction contract by Caltrans later in the project design phase as part of the preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan or Water Pollution Control Plan.

- SC-1 through SC-10: Temporary Sediment Control
- SS-1 through SS-10: Temporary Soil Stabilization
- NS-3: Paving, Sealing, Sawing, Grooving and Grinding Activities
- NS-6: Illegal Connection and Illicit Discharge Detection and Reporting
- NS-8: Vehicle and Equipment Cleaning
- NS-9: Vehicle and Equipment Fueling
- NS-10: Vehicle and Equipment Maintenance
- NS-12: Concrete Curing
- NS-13: Material and Equipment Use Over Water
- NS-14: Concrete Finishing
- TC-1 through TC-3: Temporary Tracking Control
- WM-1: Material Delivery and Storage
- WM-2: Material Use
- WM-3: Stockpile Management
- WM-4: Spill Prevention and Control
- WM-5: Solid Waste Management
- WM-6: Hazardous Waste Management
- WM-7: Contaminated Soil Management
- WM-8: Temporary Concrete Washouts

- WM-9: Sanitary and Septic Waste Management
- WM-10: Liquid Waste Management

The following measures from the 2023 Caltrans Standard Specifications will also be implemented in the project, where applicable:

- Section 4-1.13: Scope of Work—Cleanup
- Section 7-1.02A: General (Legal Compliance)
- Section 7 1.02C: Emissions Reduction
- Section 7-1.02K(6)(j)(iii): Earth Material Containing Lead
- Section 10-5: Dust Control
- Section 13: Water Pollution Control
- Section 14-2.03A: Previously Unidentified Archaeological Resources
- Section 14-8.02: Noise Control
- Section 14-9.02: Air Pollution Control
- Section 20-1.03C(3): Weed Control
- Section 72-2: Rock Slope Protection
- Section 90: Concrete

## **1.6 Discussion of the NEPA Categorical Exclusion**

This document contains information regarding compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and other state laws and regulations. Separate environmental documentation, supporting a Categorical Exclusion determination, has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act. When needed for clarity, or as required by CEQA, this document may contain references to federal laws and/or regulations (CEQA, for example, requires consideration of adverse effects on species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species by the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service—that is, species protected by the Federal Endangered Species Act).

## 1.7 Permits and Approvals Needed

The following permits, licenses, agreements, and certifications are required for project construction:

| Agency  | Permit/Approval  | Status   |
|---|--|--|
| Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board | Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification                                | The permit would be obtained during the design phase of the project.                           |
| Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board       | Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification                                | The permit would be obtained during the design phase of the project.                           |
| U.S. Army Corps of Engineers                        | Clean Water Act Section 404 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit     | The permit would be obtained during the design phase of the project.                           |
| California Department of Fish and Wildlife          | California Fish and Game Code Section 1600 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement     | The permit would be obtained during the design phase of the project.                           |
| United States Fish and Wildlife Service             | Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 Informal Consultation (Letter of Concurrence) | The Letter of Concurrence will be obtained before final environmental approval of the project. |
| State Historic Preservation Officer                 | Concurrence on Finding of No Adverse Effect (without Standard Conditions)              | Concurrence was obtained on November 28, 2023.   |
| United States Forest Service                        | Concurrence on Section 4(f) Finding of De Minimis Impact                               | Concurrence will be obtained before final environmental approval of the project.               |



# Chapter 2 CEQA Evaluation

---

## 2.1 CEQA Environmental Checklist

This checklist identifies physical, biological, social, and economic factors that might be affected by the proposed project. Potential impact determinations include Significant and Unavoidable Impact, Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated, Less Than Significant Impact, and No Impact. In many cases, background studies performed in connection with a project will indicate that there are no impacts to a particular resource. A “No Impact” answer reflects this determination. The questions in this checklist are intended to encourage the thoughtful assessment of impacts and do not represent thresholds of significance.

Project features, which can include both design elements of the project and standardized measures that are applied to all or most Caltrans projects such as best management practices and measures included in the Standard Plans and Specifications or as Standard Special Provisions, are considered to be an integral part of the project and have been considered prior to any significance determinations documented below.

“No Impact” determinations in each section are based on the scope, description, and location of the proposed project as well as the appropriate technical report (bound separately in Volume 2), and no further discussion is included in this document.

### 2.1.1 Aesthetics

Considering the information in the Scenic Resources Evaluation dated June 19, 2023 and the Natural Environment Study dated April 15, 2024, the following significance determinations have been made:

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099:

| Question—Would the project:  | CEQA Significance Determinations for Aesthetics |
|--|---|
| a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?  | No Impact                                       |
| b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway? | Less than Significant Impact                    |

| Question—Would the project:   | CEQA Significance Determinations<br>for Aesthetics |
|---|--|
| 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 a 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? | <b>No Impact</b>                                   |
| d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?   | <b>No Impact</b>                                   |

### ***Affected Environment***

The proposed project would take place along State Routes 4 and 207, in a forested area of Alpine County. State Route 4 is an Officially Designated State Scenic Highway in Alpine County, from post miles 0.0 to 31.7. The proposed project would involve work off the paved roadway along the State Route 4, as well as temporary construction easements at eight locations adjacent to the roadway and managed by the United States Forest Service, as discussed in Section 1.4.1 of this document. Additional permanent right-of-way acquisition is not anticipated.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

The proposed work would involve vegetation and tree removals where needed to clear obstructions to the drainage systems along the State Route 4. The majority of vegetation removal would result in temporary visual impacts, as the site would be revegetated after construction is complete. Additionally, 0.01-acre of riparian vegetation would be permanently lost as a result of the rehabilitation and replacement efforts for the drainage systems in the project area. However, the small footprint of this vegetation loss is considered a less than significant impact to the visual character of the State Route 4 and would be compensated for by the measures outlined in the following section.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

Potential less than significant impacts to aesthetic resources in the project area would be avoided or minimized with the following measures. Full descriptions of these measures are included in Appendix B of this document. Please note, BIO-22 is used as a minimization measure for Aesthetics and is not considered mitigation for this determination regarding Section 2.1.1.

- BIO-6. Limit Vegetation Removal.
- BIO-7. Restore and Revegetate Temporarily Disturbed Areas Onsite.
- BIO-22. Compensatory Mitigation – Riparian Vegetation. Impacts to 0.01-acre of riparian vegetation will be compensated at a 3-to-1 ratio with the establishment of 0.03-acre of riparian vegetation at an undetermined onsite or offsite location.

### 2.1.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment Project; and the forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board.

Considering the information in the Community Impact Memorandum dated February 5, 2024 and the Natural Environment Study dated April 15, 2024, the following significance determinations have been made:

| Question—Would the project:  | CEQA Significance Determinations for Agriculture and Forest Resources |
|--|---|
| 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 of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use? | <b>No Impact</b>  |
| b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?   | <b>No Impact</b>  |

| Question—Would the project:  | CEQA Significance Determinations<br>for Agriculture and Forest<br>Resources |
|--|---|
| c) Conflict with existing zoning, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))? | <b>No Impact</b>  |
| d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?   | <b>Less than Significant Impact</b>   |
| 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 forest land to non-forest use?  | <b>No Impact</b>  |

### ***Affected Environment***

The project would involve culvert replacement and drainage system improvement work at existing facilities along State Routes 4 and 207 in a forested area of Alpine County. The surrounding forest area is under the jurisdiction of the United States Forest Service. The majority of the proposed work would occur within Caltrans right-of-way, but temporary construction easements within the Stanislaus National Forest and Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest would be required at the following eight culvert locations adjacent to Caltrans right-of-way. See Section 1.4.1 for the eight locations.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

The proposed work would involve vegetation and tree removals where necessary to clear obstructions to the drainage systems. The majority of these removals would only result in minor, temporary impacts, and would be replanted after construction, per the 2023 Caltrans Standard Specifications, and would be included in the construction contract.

The project is also expected to result in a small area of permanent impacts from the trimming or removal of riparian trees and shrubs at the following four culvert locations. The vegetation removals at Location 25 on State Route 4, post mile 14.16 would only occur within Caltrans right-of-way. However, the work at Location 28 on State Route 4, post mile 30.37, Location 29 on State Route 207, post mile 0.38 and Location 30 on State Route 207, post mile 1.19 would involve vegetation removal within temporary construction easements



from the United States Forest Service. As a result, the work at these three locations would involve direct impacts to federal forest lands.

This riparian vegetation loss would only impact a small 0.01-acre area and is considered a less than significant impact. This less than significant impact would also be further minimized by the measures outlined in the following section.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

The following measures would be included in the construction contract to avoid and minimize potential impacts to forest land in the project area. Full descriptions of the measures are included in Appendix B of this document.

- BIO-6. Limit Vegetation Removal
- BIO-7. Restore and Revegetate Temporarily Disturbed Areas Onsite

The following measure would compensate for the less than significant loss of 0.01-acre of riparian vegetation in forest land. Full descriptions of the measure are included in Appendix B of this document. Please note, BIO-22 is used as a minimization measure for Agriculture and Forestry Resources and is not considered mitigation for this determination regarding Section 2.1.1.

- BIO-22. Compensatory Mitigation – Riparian Vegetation: Impacts to 0.01-acre of riparian vegetation will be compensated at a 3-to-1 ratio with the establishment of 0.03-acre of riparian vegetation at an undetermined onsite or offsite location.

### **2.1.3 Air Quality**

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations.

Considering the information in the Air Quality Memorandum dated February 12, 2024, the following significance determinations have been made:

| Question—Would the project:   | CEQA Significance Determinations for Air Quality |
|---|--|
| a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan? | <b>No Impact</b>                                 |

| <b>Question—Would the project:</b>  | <b>CEQA Significance Determinations for Air Quality</b> |
|---|---|
| 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? | <b>No Impact</b>  |
| c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?  | <b>No Impact</b>  |
| d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?   | <b>No Impact</b>  |

### 2.1.4 Biological Resources

Considering the information in the Natural Environment Study dated April 15, 2024, the following significance determinations have been made:

| <b>Question—Would the project:</b>   | <b>CEQA Significance Determinations for Biological Resources</b> |
|--|--|
| 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 Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries? | <b>Less Than Significant Impact</b>                              |
| b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?   | <b>Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated</b> |
| 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?   | <b>Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated</b> |

| Question—Would the project:  | CEQA Significance Determinations for Biological Resources |
|--|---|
| 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? | <b>Less Than Significant Impact</b>                       |
| e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?  | <b>No Impact</b>  |
| 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?   | <b>No Impact</b>  |

### ***Affected Environment***

The proposed project is located in Alpine County, on the western and eastern slopes of the California Sierra Nevada province. The area typically has warm dry summers and cold winters with occasional snowfall equivalent to 18.7 inches of rain per year. Field reviews were conducted in September 2023 to evaluate drainages, other surface water bodies, vegetation communities, wildlife and fish species, and potential habitat. Field surveys used resource-agency approved protocol methods where appropriate.

The project area has low potential to support migratory bird and raptor nests, tree-roosting bat species, Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog, Morrison bumble bee, and monarch butterfly. However, these species were not detected during field reviews.

The area may also support Davy's sedge, subalpine cryptantha, and three-bracted onion, but these plant species were not detected during botanical surveys and have low probability to occur within the project study limits. Some invasive plant species were identified during botanical surveys, including common ragwort, field mustard, and white sweet clover. Annual rabbitsfoot grass, which is an invasive plant and a wetland indicator, was also identified on the inlet side of the culvert at Location 28 on State Route 4, post mile 30.37.

Waters potentially qualifying as waters of the United States or waters of the State of California were observed at fifteen drainage system locations. Of these fifteen, eight locations have the potential to support ephemeral streams during the rainy season, five locations support intermittent streams, one location supports an intermittent stream and has riverine vegetation at the outlet (willows), and one location has a wetland at the inlet and an intermittent

stream at the outlet. All fifteen of these locations potentially fall under the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act Sections 401 and 404, as well as California Fish and Game Code Section 1600.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

#### ***Potentially Jurisdictional Waters***

The project is expected to cause approximately 7.67 cubic yards of permanent fill below the top of stream banks that potentially qualify as waters of the United States or waters of the State of California. This permanent fill would occur in an area of approximately 264.51 square feet (0.006-acre, rounded up to 0.01-acre) across multiple ephemeral, intermittent, and perennial streams from culvert end treatments.

The project would also result in approximately 143.29 square feet (0.003-acre) of temporary disturbance in potentially jurisdictional wetlands and waters of the United States from the installation of concrete headwalls at the culvert inlets and outlets at Location 11 on State Route 4, post mile 7.53 and Location 29 on State Route 207, post mile 0.38.

Additionally, 2,718.22 square feet (0.062-acre, rounded up to 0.10-acre) of these potentially jurisdictional streams would be temporarily disturbed by contractor equipment, crew access, and potential water diversion activities below the top of bank. Notably, the culverts at Location 14 on State Route 4, post mile 8.99, Location 22 on State Route 4, post mile 13.20, and Location 25 on State Route 4, post mile 14.16 are expected to have flowing or standing water during the seasonal in-channel work window and may require the use of temporary cofferdams for water diversion. The installation of the cofferdams is expected to also result in temporary fills of 13.87 cubic yards.

The project would require the trimming of riparian willow scrub at four culvert locations (Location 25 on State Route 4, post mile 14.16 and Location 28 on State Route 4, post mile 30.37, as well as Location 29 on State Route 207, post mile 0.38 and Location 30 on State Route 207, post mile 1.19). The temporary canopy impacts would total approximately 523.34 square feet. As this would result in temporary impacts to potentially jurisdictional riparian vegetation, a California Fish and Game Code Section 1600 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement would be required.

Because of temporary and permanent impacts to wetlands and other waters of the United States, the project would require a Clean Water Act Section 404 permit from the United States Army Corps of Engineers and Section 401 Certifications from both the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board and Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board. Because these waters also potentially qualify as waters of the State of California, the project would also require a California Fish and Game Code Section 1600 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement.

Impacts to wetlands and waters of the United States, waters of the State of California, and riparian vegetation would be avoided, minimized, and mitigated with the use of the measures outlined in the following section of this document.

### *Special-Status Plant Species*

Davy's sedge and subalpine cryptantha are both listed by the California Native Plant Society as not very threatened. Three-bracted onion is rated by the California Native Plant Society as moderately threatened.

These three plant species have been previously recorded in the California Natural Diversity Database as occurring in the vicinity of the project. However, they were not detected during botanical surveys and have a low probability to occur within the project limits. With the implementation of project avoidance measures discussed in the following section of this document, the project is not anticipated to adversely affect special-status plant species.

### *Monarch Butterfly*

Monarch butterflies are a candidate species for listing under the Federal Endangered Species Act. The California Natural Diversity Database records for monarch butterflies are concentrated along the California coastal ranges, far west of Alpine County. Additionally, no formal surveys were conducted for monarch butterflies, and none were observed during project site visits. The State Route 4 corridor in Alpine County does seasonally support the nectar and milkweed resources needed by monarch butterflies, so the project has the potential to temporarily impact monarch butterflies if it affects nectar or milkweed plants. However, these impacts would be avoided and minimized with the implementation of the measures outlined in the following section of this document.

### *Morrison Bumble Bee*

The Morrison bumble bee has no formal listing or protection status and appears in the California Natural Diversity Database due to their decreasing population trend. The project area is within the historic and current range of the species, with no recorded occurrences within the project limits. While plants potentially foraged by bumble bees do occur in the area, no formal surveys for bumble bees were conducted and none were observed during site visits. The project has the potential to adversely impact plants used as food sources for bumble bees, but the proposed activities are unlikely to result in take of the Morrison bumble bee with the implementation of the avoidance and minimization measures outlined in the following section of this document.

### *Sierra Nevada Yellow-Legged Frog*

The Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog is listed as endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act and threatened under the California Endangered Species Act. Eighteen drainage systems along State Route 4 between the 3.66 and 9.89 post miles fall within the limits of designated critical habitat for the species. However, the majority of these culverts are ephemeral or intermittent stream locations. These locations include the intermittent streams on State Route 4's Location 2 at post mile 3.66, Location 14 at post mile 8.99, and Location 17 at post mile 9.64, as well as the wetland and intermittent stream at Location 11 at post mile 7.53.

Impact analysis for Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog will involve separate determinations for impacts to the species—through direct impacts and impacts to suitable habitat—and impacts to primary constituents of its designated critical habitats.

Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frogs were not observed at any project location during field surveys. Furthermore, suitable breeding habitat for Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog is not present in the project area. The Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog's reproductive cycle involves tadpoles that overwinter for two to four seasons, and their breeding requires plunge pools that persist for that duration. While the project would result in temporary and permanent impacts to intermittent streams within the designated critical habitat area, these streams do not support long-term plunge pools and would not be suitable breeding habitat for these frogs.

The project may result in 3,042.84 square feet of temporary impacts to Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog upland habitat. This potential upland habitat occurs within a 25-foot buffer from the bank of the intermittent streams along culvert inlet and outlets. The culverts adjacent to this potential upland habitat are located on State Route 4's Location 11 at post mile 7.53, Location 14 at post mile 8.99, and Location 17 at post mile 9.64.

Caltrans Standard Specifications and best management practices would also be included in the construction contract to avoid or minimize other potential impacts from construction. These include standard measures and practices to minimize risk of contaminant or toxic chemical spills, and limit construction noise and vibrations. See Section 1.5 for a list of these measures and practices. The project would also be conducted during daylight hours, limited to between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m., and would avoid the use of nighttime artificial lighting that could potentially impact Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog.

With the implementation of the avoidance and minimization measures outlined in the following section, the project is **not likely to adversely affect** Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog and is **not expected to result in take** of the species.

The project's potential impacts to primary constituent elements of Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog designated critical habitat were also assessed. Aquatic habitat requirements for breeding and rearing are not present in the project area, as the intermittent streams in the project area do not support permanent plunge pools. However, aquatic non-breeding habitat is still available in these intermittent streams and may be temporarily or permanently affected by the proposed work. Because potential aquatic non-breeding habitat is present in the project area, associated upland habitat that supports Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog feeding or movement is also present and may be impacted by the proposed work.

However, the work impacting these primary constituents of designated critical habitat would be limited to Caltrans right-of-way or directly adjacent to the highway. As outlined in Section 1.4.1 of this document, the cut-and-cover culvert replacement method would be favored over the jack-and-bore method to minimize excavation and ground disturbance. Along with the use of the avoidance and minimization measures outlined in the following section, the project is considered **not likely to adversely affect** designated critical habitat for the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog.

Concurrence on these findings would be obtained from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service before final environmental approval of the proposed project.

### *Tree-Roosting Bats*

The project area may also contain suitable roosting habitat for several tree-roosting bat species. The proposed project work would require vegetation clearing and tree removals which may result in adverse effects to trees occupied by tree-roosting bats. However, with the implementation of avoidance and minimization measures outlined in the following section, the project would not result in the take, as defined by the California Fish and Game Code Section 86, of tree-roosting bats. Coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife may be required prior to environmental approval for the project.

### *Migratory Birds and Raptors*

Migratory birds and raptors may also attempt to nest in appropriate tree, shrub, or ground habitats in the project area during the nesting season between February 1 and September 30. However, with the implementation of avoidance and minimization measures outlined in the following section, the project would not result in the take, as defined by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, of any migratory birds or their nests.

### *Common Wildlife and Fish Passage*

Impacts to fish passage are not anticipated in the project area, as culverts that occur on or near perennial streams were not identified as needing repair within the project limits.

The proposed project impacts would be generally limited to roadway and near-roadway construction and would avoid impacts to natural vegetation communities and habitats supporting common wildlife species to the greatest extent feasible. The project is not expected to result in the take, as defined by Section 86 of the California Fish and Game Code, of common wildlife species.

### *Invasive Species*

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife Invasive Species Program website was reviewed for invasive animal species, and no species were identified that are expected to occur in the project limits. However, botanical surveys identified common ragwort, field mustard, white sweet clover, and annual rabbitsfoot grass as invasive plant species present in the project area.

The proposed project would not introduce new habitat for invasive animal species and would not break new ground that could spread invasive plant species. With the implementation of avoidance and minimization measures and construction best management practices as outlined in the following section, the project would not result in the propagation of invasive plant or animal species.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

The following avoidance and minimization measures would apply to all biological resources potentially impacted by the proposed project. Full descriptions of these measures are included in Appendix B of this document.

- BIO-1. Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) Designation.
- BIO-2. Designated Biologist.
- BIO-3. Containment Measures/Construction Site Best Management Practices.
- BIO-4. Worker Environmental Awareness Training for Construction Personnel.

### *Potentially Jurisdictional Waters*

The following measures would be required to avoid or minimize potential impacts to potential wetlands and waters of the United States, potential waters of the State of California, and riparian vegetation along non-federal



waters. Full descriptions of these measures are included in Appendix B of this document.

- BIO-5. Limited Operation Period – In Water Construction Activities.
- BIO-6. Limit Vegetation Removal.
- BIO-7. Restore and Revegetate Temporarily Disturbed Areas Onsite.

The following mitigation measures would be required to compensate for impacts to potential wetlands and waters of the United States, potential waters of the State of California, and riparian vegetation along non-federal waters. Full descriptions of these measures are included in Appendix B of this document.

- BIO-21. Compensatory Mitigation – Wetlands and Other Waters of the United States: Loss of 0.01-acre of intermittent and ephemeral streams and 0.003-acre of wetlands potentially qualifying as waters of the United States would be compensated through the purchase of mitigation credits through the Sacramento United States Army Corps of Engineers' and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's in-lieu fee program.
- BIO-22. Compensatory Mitigation – Riparian Vegetation: Loss of 0.01-acre of riparian vegetation would be compensated at a 3-to-1 ratio with the establishment of 0.03-acre of riparian vegetation at an undetermined onsite or offsite location.

### *Special-Status Plant Species*

The following measure would be required to avoid or minimize potential impacts to special-status plant species. Full descriptions of the measure are included in Appendix B of this document.

- BIO-8. Pre-Construction Surveys – Special-Status Plants.

### *Special-Status Animal Species*

The following measures would be required to avoid or minimize potential impacts to the monarch butterfly. Full descriptions of the measures are included in Appendix B of this document.

- BIO-6. Limit Vegetation Removal.
- BIO-7. Restore and Revegetate Temporarily Disturbed Areas Onsite.

- BIO-9. Weed Free Construction Equipment and Vehicles.
- BIO-10. Weed Control During Construction.
- BIO-11. Weed Free Erosion Control and Revegetation Treatments.
- BIO-12. Monarch Butterfly – Pre-Construction Surveys.

The following measures would be required to avoid or minimize potential impacts to the Morrison bumble bee. Full descriptions of the measures are included in Appendix B of this document.

- BIO-6. Limit Vegetation Removal.
- BIO-7. Restore and Revegetate Temporarily Disturbed Areas Onsite.
- BIO-9. Weed Free Construction Equipment and Vehicles.
- BIO-10. Weed Control During Construction.
- BIO-11. Weed Free Erosion Control and Revegetation Treatments.
- BIO-13. Bumblebee Hive Avoidance – Pre-Construction Surveys.
- BIO-14. Bumblebee Hive Avoidance – Avoid Active Hives.

The following measures would be required to avoid or minimize potential impacts to the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog. Full descriptions of the measures are included in Appendix B of this document.

- BIO-5. Limited Operation Period – In Water Construction Activities.
- BIO-6. Limit Vegetation Removal.
- BIO-7. Restore and Revegetate Temporarily Disturbed Areas Onsite.
- BIO-15. Pre-Construction Surveys and Construction Site Biological Monitoring – Sierra Nevada Yellow Legged Frog.

### *Invasive Species*

The following measures would be required to avoid or minimize potential impacts from the spread of invasive species. Full descriptions of the measures are included in Appendix B of this document.

- BIO-9. Weed Free Construction Equipment and Vehicles.

- BIO-10. Weed Control During Construction.
- BIO-11. Weed Free Erosion Control and Revegetation Treatments.

### *Tree-Roosting Bats*

The following measures would be required to avoid or minimize potential impacts to tree-roosting bats. Full descriptions of the measures are included in Appendix B of this document.

- BIO-6. Limit Vegetation Removal.
- BIO-16. Roosting Bat Avoidance – Pre-Construction Surveys.
- BIO-17. Roosting Bat Avoidance – Avoid Active Roosts.

### *Migratory Birds and Raptors*

The following measures would be required to avoid or minimize potential impacts to migratory birds and raptors. Full descriptions of the measures are included in Appendix B of this document.

- BIO-7. Restore and Revegetate Temporarily Disturbed Areas Onsite.
- BIO-18. Nesting Bird Avoidance – Limited Operation Period.
- BIO-19. Nesting Bird Avoidance – Pre-Construction Surveys.
- BIO-20. Nesting Bird Avoidance – Avoid Active Nests.

## **2.1.5 Cultural Resources**

Considering the information in the Historic Property Survey Report dated November 6, 2023 and the Archaeological Survey Report dated November 6, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

| Question—Would the project:  | CEQA Significance Determinations for Cultural Resources |
|--|---|
| a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?      | <b>No Impact</b>  |
| b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5? | <b>Less Than Significant Impact</b>                     |

| Question—Would the project:   | CEQA Significance Determinations<br>for Cultural Resources |
|---|--|
| c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries? | <b>No Impact</b>   |

### ***Affected Environment***

Cultural resource identification efforts on the project included: a review of the Central California Information Center record searches conducted for recent projects in the current project area; a review of the Caltrans Cultural Resources Database; literature review of previously recorded cultural resources identified within the proposed project's area of potential effect; archival historical research of the area; examination of Caltrans bridge as-builts; consultation with the Native American Heritage Commission and local Native American groups and individuals; and a field review.

A field review was conducted of the project's area of potential effect, with a total of 0.54 acres surveyed on foot. The area of potential effect includes an area of direct impact surrounding each of the drainage system locations, the temporary construction easements required at eight locations listed in Section 1.4.1, and the boundaries of the two previously recorded archaeological resources adjacent to the project area. The vertical area of potential effect ranges from three to seven feet, depending on the culvert location. This is to account for the maximum depth of potential ground disturbance work from the proposed culvert repair or replacement.

The cultural resource investigation also involved consultation outreach to the Alpine Community Development Department, Alpine County Museum, Native American Heritage Commission, six representatives from four Native American Tribes, and the United States Forest Service.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

The project area of potential effect includes the North Fork Mokelumne River Bridge (Bridge Number 31-0009), which was previously determined not eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, as described in the Historic Property Survey Report. The only other built environment resources present in the area of potential effect meet the National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 Programmatic Agreement criteria for properties exempt from evaluation. As such, the project is expected to have no impacts to built environment historic resources.

No new cultural resources were identified as a result of this study. However, two unevaluated but previously recorded archaeological resources or sites, were identified within the project's area of potential effect.

The project would involve culvert replacements, grading, and other potentially ground-disturbing work within the boundaries of one of the two previously unevaluated archaeological resources. This site would be considered eligible under the National Register of Historic Places Criteria A (Event) and D (Information Potential), due to the site's large size and limited potential for effects. However, archaeological surveys and previously recorded records of the culvert location within the site did not identify any archaeological or cultural deposits in the project's area of direct impact that contribute to the assumed historic eligibility of this site. Vertical and horizontal Environmentally Sensitive Area boundaries will be utilized at this location, along with construction monitoring by an archaeologist and Native American monitor.

The other archaeological site is outside but immediately adjacent to an area of direct impact. It would be considered eligible under the National Register of Historic Places Criterion D for this project only, as it would be protected in its entirety through the establishment of an Environmentally Sensitive Area. This site would require the use of horizontal Environmentally Sensitive Area boundaries.

The anticipated cultural resource impact determination for the proposed project is a Finding of No Adverse Effect without Standard Conditions. Caltrans will obtain the State Historic Preservation Officer's concurrence on this determination prior to final environmental approval.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

Impacts to the archaeological sites identified in the project's area of potential effect will be avoided or minimized with the use of the following standard measures. Full descriptions of the measures are included in Appendix B of this document.

- CU-1. Construction monitoring – Archaeologist and Native American Monitor.
- CU-2. Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) Designation – Cultural.
- CU-3. Special procedures for human remains.

### **2.1.6 Energy**

Considering the information in the Alpine County Energy Action Plan dated December 6, 2016, and the Energy Analysis Memorandum dated May 16, 2024, the following significance determinations have been made:

| <b>Question—Would the project:</b>   | <b>CEQA Significance Determinations for Energy</b> |
|--|--|
| a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during project construction or operation? | <b>No Impact</b>                                   |
| b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?  | <b>No Impact</b>                                   |

### 2.1.7 Geology and Soils

Considering the information in the Geotechnical Design Support Memorandum dated August 7, 2023 and the Paleontology Memorandum dated August 8, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

| <b>Question—Would the project:</b>  | <b>CEQA Significance Determinations for Geology and Soils</b> |
|---|---|
| a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul> | <b>No Impact</b>  |
| ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?  | <b>No Impact</b>  |
| iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?  | <b>No Impact</b>  |
| iv) Landslides?   | <b>No Impact</b>  |
| b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?   | <b>No Impact</b>  |
| 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 onsite or offsite landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?  | <b>No Impact</b>  |

| Question—Would the project:  | CEQA Significance Determinations for Geology and Soils |
|--|--|
| d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?                                     | No Impact  |
| e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water? | No Impact  |
| f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?  | No Impact  |

### 2.1.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Considering the information in the Climate Change Study dated February 20, 2024, the following significance determinations have been made:

| Question—Would the project:  | CEQA Significance Determinations for Greenhouse Gas Emissions |
|--|---|
| a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?      | Less Than Significant Impact                                  |
| b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases? | No Impact   |

### ***Affected Environment***

The proposed project is in a rural and forested area in Alpine County. State Route 4 is a major transportation route to and through the area. It is primarily used by automobile drivers but also sees considerable use by recreational bicyclists.

Traffic counts are generally low in this area due to the extremely low population density in the region. State Route 4 experiences seasonal changes in transportation use, peaking in the summertime and declining in the winter months due in-part to snow-related closures. Traffic congestion does occur during both summer and winter months but is usually limited to a few hours on a few peak days a year. State Route 207 connects to State Route 4 in Bear Valley, and exhibits similar use trends to State Route 4, with relatively infrequent traffic congestion.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

The purpose of the proposed project is to rehabilitate existing drainage systems and would not increase the vehicle capacity of the roadway. This type of project generally causes minimal or no increase in operational greenhouse gas emissions. As the project would not increase the number of travel lanes on State Routes 4 or 207, no increase in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) would occur. While some emissions during the construction period would be unavoidable, no increase in operational greenhouse gas emissions is expected.

Construction emissions for the project were calculated using the Caltrans' Construction Emissions Tool (CALCET v1.1). Project construction is expected to generate approximately 662 tons of carbon dioxide during the 120 working days duration.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

Standard conditions and best management practices would be implemented to reduce or eliminate construction Greenhouse Gas emissions. All construction contracts include Caltrans Standard Specifications Section 7-1.02A and 7 1.02C: Emissions Reduction, which require contractors to comply with all laws applicable to the project and to certify they are aware of and will comply with all California Air Resources Board emission reduction regulations. Additionally, Section 14-9.02: Air Pollution Control, requires contractors to comply with all air pollution control rules, regulations, ordinances, and statutes.

Additionally, the following project-specific measures would be included to reduce greenhouse gas emission impacts from temporary construction activities. Full descriptions of the measures are included in Appendix B of this document.

- GHG-1. Limit equipment idling.
- GHG-2. Schedule truck trips.
- GHG-3. Equipment fuel efficiency.
- GHG-4. Construction environmental training.

### **2.1.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials**

Considering the information in the Initial Site Assessment dated February 1, 2024, the following significance determinations have been made:



| Question—Would the project:   | CEQA Significance Determinations<br>for Hazards and Hazardous<br>Materials |
|---|--|
| a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?   | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| 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?   | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?   | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| 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?  | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| 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? | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?   | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?   | <b>No Impact</b>   |

### 2.1.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

Considering the information in the Preliminary Hydraulics Floodplain Analysis dated December 14, 2020, Preliminary Floodplain Study Addendum dated April 2, 2024, and the Water Compliance Study dated December 20, 2022, the following significance determinations have been made:

| Question—Would the project:   | CEQA Significance Determinations for Hydrology and Water Quality |
|---|--|
| a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface water or groundwater quality?   | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?   | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| 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:<br><br>(i) result in substantial erosion or siltation onsite or offsite; | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| (ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding onsite or offsite;  | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| (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; or   | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| (iv) impede or redirect flood flows?  | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?   | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?   | <b>No Impact</b>   |

### 2.1.11 Land Use and Planning

Considering the information in the Community Impact Memorandum dated February 5, 2024, the following significance determinations have been made:

| <b>Question—Would the project:</b>   | <b>CEQA Significance Determinations for Land Use and Planning</b> |
|--|---|
| a) Physically divide an established community?   | <b>No Impact</b>  |
| 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? | <b>No Impact</b>  |

### 2.1.12 Mineral Resources

Considering the information in the Geotechnical Design Support Memorandum dated August 7, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

| <b>Question—Would the project:</b>  | <b>CEQA Significance Determinations for Mineral Resources</b> |
|---|---|
| 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?                                | <b>No Impact</b>  |
| 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? | <b>No Impact</b>  |

### 2.1.13 Noise

Considering the information in the Noise Compliance Study dated January 20, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

| <b>Question—Would the project result in:</b>  | <b>CEQA Significance Determinations for Noise</b> |
|---|---|
| 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? | <b>No Impact</b>                                  |
| b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?   | <b>No Impact</b>                                  |

| Question—Would the project result in:   | CEQA Significance Determinations<br>for Noise |
|---|---|
| c) For a project located within the vicinity of a 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? | <b>No Impact</b>                              |

### 2.1.14 Population and Housing

Considering the information in the Community Impact Memorandum dated February 5, 2024, the following significance determinations have been made:

| Question—Would the project:   | CEQA Significance Determinations<br>for Population and Housing |
|---|--|
| a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)? | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?   | <b>No Impact</b>   |

### 2.1.15 Public Services

Considering the information in the Community Impact Memorandum dated February 5, 2024, the following significance determinations have been made:

| <b>Question:</b>  | <b>CEQA Significance Determinations<br/>for Public Services</b> |
|---|---|
| a) 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:<br><br>Fire protection? | <b>No Impact</b>  |
| Police protection?  | <b>No Impact</b>  |
| Schools?  | <b>No Impact</b>  |
| Parks?  | <b>No Impact</b>  |
| Other public facilities?  | <b>No Impact</b>  |

### 2.1.16 Recreation

Considering the information in the Community Impact Memorandum dated February 5, 2024 and the Alpine County General Plan dated March 2017, the following significance determinations have been made:

| <b>Question—Would the project:</b>   | <b>CEQA Significance Determinations<br/>for Recreation</b> |
|--|--|
| a) Would the project 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? | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?                        | <b>Less than Significant Impact</b>                        |

### ***Affected Environment***

The project would involve drainage system improvements along State Routes 4 and 207, with the majority of work occurring within Caltrans right-of-way. As

noted in Section 1.4.1 of this environmental document, the project will also require eight temporary construction easements from the United States Forest Service for work adjacent to Caltrans right-of-way.

Of the 30 proposed project locations, 17 locations are within 0.5 miles of United States Forest Service recreational resources, including multiple campgrounds and hiking trails in the vicinity of Lake Alpine, Mosquito Lakes, and North Fork Mokelumne River. For a full list of the recreational resources in the vicinity of the project, see Appendix C of this document.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

The proposed drainage system improvements would involve ground disturbance, temporary lane closures, and construction noise and vibration in the vicinity of multiple recreational resources.

However, the project would result only in minor, indirect, or temporary impacts to recreational resources during the 120-day construction working period. Public access along State Route 4 and 207 in the project area would not be blocked or impeded by the proposed work, as one traffic-through lane would be maintained throughout construction. Construction work and lane closures would also be limited to weekdays, which would limit impacts to the public during the weekend peak periods of travel and recreational use.

Additionally, construction impacts would also be temporary in nature, as the work at each location will average only four working days and any vegetation removed would be replanted after construction.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

The following measures from the 2023 Caltrans Standard Specifications included with the project would reduce potential impacts to recreational resources.

- Section 4-1.13: Scope of Work—Cleanup
- Section 10-5: Dust Control
- Section 13: Water Pollution Control
- Section 14-8: Noise Control
- Section 14-9.02: Air Pollution Control

The following avoidance and minimization measures would also reduce potential impacts to recreational resources. Full descriptions of these measures can be found in Appendix B of this document. Please note, BIO-21 and BIO-22 are used as minimization measures for recreational resources,

and are not considered mitigation for this determination regarding Section 2.1.16.

- BIO-3. Containment Measures/Construction Site Best Management Practices
- BIO-5. Limited Operation Period – In Water Construction Activities
- BIO-6. Limit Vegetation Removal
- BIO-7. Restore and Revegetate Temporarily Disturbed Areas Onsite
- BIO-21. Compensatory Mitigation – Wetlands and Other Waters of the United States
- BIO-22. Compensatory Mitigation – Riparian Vegetation
- CU-2. Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) Designation – Cultural

The project would also involve indirect improvements to recreational resources in the project area. Drainage system repair and replacements would improve road stability and reduce the likelihood of roadway flooding or collapse that could block public access to recreational areas.

As such, the potential impacts to recreational resources are anticipated to be less than significant.

### 2.1.17 Transportation

Considering the information in the Community Impact Memorandum dated February 5, 2024 and the Alpine County Regional Transportation Plan dated February 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

| Question—Would the project:  | CEQA Significance Determinations for Transportation |
|--|---|
| a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities? | <b>No Impact</b>                                    |
| b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?  | <b>No Impact</b>                                    |

| Question—Would the project:  | CEQA Significance Determinations for Transportation |
|--|---|
| c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)? | <b>No Impact</b>                                    |
| d) Result in inadequate emergency access?  | <b>No Impact</b>                                    |

### 2.1.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

Considering the information in the Historic Property Survey Report dated November 6, 2023 and the Archaeological Survey Report dated November 6, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code Section 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:

| Question:  | CEQA Significance Determinations for Tribal Cultural Resources |
|--|--|
| a) 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 Section 5020.1(k), or   | <b>Less Than Significant Impact</b>                            |
| b) 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 Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe. | <b>Less Than Significant Impact</b>                            |

### ***Affected Environment***

As described in Section 2.1.5 of this document, cultural resource identification efforts on the project included a review of several databases and record searches of the current project area, of the proposed area of potential effect, and a field review.



The cultural resource investigation also involved consultation outreach to the Native American Heritage Commission and six representatives from four Native American Tribes. Additional information about consultation efforts is contained in Chapter 3 of this document.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

No new cultural resources were identified as a result of the cultural studies referenced in this document. However, as mentioned in Section 2.1.5, there were two unevaluated, but previously recorded archaeological resources identified within the project's area of potential effect.

The project work would involve culvert replacements, grading, and other potentially ground-disturbing work within the boundaries of one of the two archaeological sites. This site would be considered eligible under the National Register of Historic Places Criteria A (Event) and D (Information Potential), due to the site's large size and limited potential for effects. The surveys and testing efforts of the area around the culvert did not identify any archaeological or cultural deposits in the project's area of direct impact that contribute to the assumed historic eligibility of this site. Vertical and horizontal Environmentally Sensitive Area boundaries would be utilized at this location, along with construction monitoring by an archaeologist and Native American monitor.

The other archaeological site is outside but immediately adjacent to an area of direct impact. It would be considered eligible under the National Register of Historic Places Criterion D for this project only, as it would be protected in its entirety through the establishment of an Environmentally Sensitive Area. This site would require the use of horizontal Environmentally Sensitive Area boundaries.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

Impacts to the tribal cultural resources would be avoided or minimized with the use of the following standard measures. Full descriptions of these measures are included in Appendix B of this document.

- CU-1. Construction monitoring – Archaeologist and Native American Monitor.
- CU-2. Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) Designation – Cultural.
- CU-3. Special procedures for human remains.

### 2.1.19 Utilities and Service Systems

Considering the information in the Water Compliance Study dated December 20, 2022, and the Initial Site Assessment dated February 1, 2024, the following significance determinations have been made:

| Question—Would the project:  | CEQA Significance Determinations for Utilities and Service Systems |
|--|--|
| a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects? | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?  | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| 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?  | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| 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?  | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?   | <b>No Impact</b>   |

### 2.1.20 Wildfire

Considering the information in the Community Impact Memorandum dated February 5, 2024, the following significance determinations have been made:

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones:

| <b>Question—Would the project:</b>   | <b>CEQA Significance Determinations for Wildfire</b> |
|--|--|
| a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?   | <b>No Impact</b>                                     |
| 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?  | <b>No Impact</b>                                     |
| 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? | <b>No Impact</b>                                     |
| 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 changes?  | <b>No Impact</b>                                     |

### 2.1.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

| <b>Question:</b>   | <b>CEQA Significance Determinations for Mandatory Findings of Significance</b> |
|--|--|
| 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? | <b>Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated</b>               |

| Question:  | CEQA Significance Determinations<br>for Mandatory Findings of<br>Significance |
|--|---|
| 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.) | <b>No Impact</b>  |
| c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?  | <b>No Impact</b>  |

### ***Affected Environment***

The project would affect environmental resources in the vicinity of State Route 4 in Alpine County from post miles 2.12 to 30.37 and State Route 207 in Alpine County from post miles 0.38 to 1.19. However, the scope of work is limited, and work would be limited mostly to Caltrans right-of-way. Temporary construction easements on United States Forest Service land would be needed at eight of the thirty project locations. See Section 1.4.1 for these locations. Project work consists of rehabilitating existing drainage systems that need to be repaired in order to maintain the integrity of the roadway.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

The project may cause impacts to aesthetics, cultural resources, forest resources, greenhouse gas emissions, and tribal cultural resources. With the implementation of avoidance and minimization measures as discussed in Chapter 2, the effects of these impacts would be less than significant.

The project may also impact forest resources and biological resources, but with the implementation of avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures as discussed in Chapter 2, the effects would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

With the implementation of avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures, the project would have a less than significant impact on the environment. All other impacts would be minimized through the implementation of Caltrans best management practices, Standard Specifications, and Standard Special Provisions. Therefore, the project would

not have a significant impact on species, habitat, or any other natural or historical resource.



## Chapter 3 Coordination

---

Coordination with the following agencies was conducted as part of the preparation of technical studies for this environmental document.

### *Biological Resources Consultation*

On February 22, 2024, a Biological Assessment for the project was sent to the District Supervisor of the Southern Sierra Division of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, as part of the Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 informal consultation process.

The anticipated response to the Biological Assessment would be a Letter of Concurrence, which would be obtained from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service before final environmental approval of the project.

### *Cultural and Native American Tribal Consultation*

On February 14, 2023, the Caltrans architectural historian sent a letter to the Director of the Alpine Community Development Department to inform them of the project and request any available information regarding cultural resources within the project's area of potential effect. No response has been received to date.

On February 14, 2023, the Caltrans architectural historian also sent a letter to the Alpine County Museum to inform them of the project and request any available information regarding cultural resources within the project's area of potential effect. No response has been received to date.

A sacred lands file search request was sent to the Native American Heritage Commission on May 26, 2023. A letter response was received on June 26, 2023 from the Cultural Resources Analyst of the Native American Heritage Commission. The response letter reported a negative record search of their Sacred Lands Inventory file and included a Native American contact list.

The Caltrans District Native American Coordinator emailed consultation outreach letters to representatives of the following Native American groups on September 7, 2022 and May 31, 2023:

- Wilton Rancheria
- Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians
- Nashville Enterprise Miwok-Maidu-Nishinam Tribe
- Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California

On August 14, 2023, the Caltrans Professionally Qualified Staff archaeologist contacted the Forest Heritage Resource and Tribal Relations Program Manager for the Stanislaus National Forest regarding cultural resources located on Forest Service-owned land in the project vicinity. They responded with a Forest Service records for sites near the project area.

The Caltrans archaeologist responded to the Forest Heritage Resource and Tribal Relations Program Manager by providing a draft copy of the Archaeological Survey Report and maps of the area of potential effects, along with the results of a Central California Information Center records search, which the Forest Heritage Resource and Tribal Relations Program Manager approved. Consultation with the Forest Service for archaeological and Native American Tribal resources in the project vicinity is ongoing.

The Historical Resources Survey Report was submitted to the Caltrans Cultural Studies Office for review on November 6, 2023, and it was approved on November 14, 2023. The approved report was then sent to the State Historic Preservation Officer on November 14, 2023, and the State Historic Preservation Officer provided their concurrence on November 28, 2023.



# Appendix A Title VI Policy Statement

---

CALIFORNIA STATE TRANSPORTATION AGENCY

GAVIN NEWSOM, GOVERNOR

## California Department of Transportation

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR  
P.O. BOX 942873, MS-49 | SACRAMENTO, CA 94273-0001  
(916) 654-6130 | FAX (916) 653-5776 TTY 711  
[www.dot.ca.gov](http://www.dot.ca.gov)



September 2023

### NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

The California Department of Transportation, under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, ensures *"No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."*

Caltrans will make every effort to ensure nondiscrimination in all of its services, programs and activities, whether they are federally funded or not, and that services and benefits are fairly distributed to all people, regardless of race, color, or national origin. In addition, Caltrans will facilitate meaningful participation in the transportation planning process in a non-discriminatory manner.

Related federal statutes, remedies, and state law further those protections to include sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, and age.

For information or guidance on how to file a complaint, or obtain more information regarding Title VI, please contact the Title VI Branch Manager at (916) 639-6392 or visit the following web page: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/civil-rights/title-vi>.

To obtain this information in an alternate format such as Braille or in a language other than English, please contact the California Department of Transportation, Office of Civil Rights, at PO Box 942874, MS-79, Sacramento, CA 94274-0001; (916) 879-6768 (TTY 711); or at [Title.VI@dot.ca.gov](mailto:Title.VI@dot.ca.gov).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Tavares'.

TONY TAVARES  
Director

"Provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment"



## Appendix B Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures

---

The following measures will avoid or minimize the project's potential impacts to biological resources as discussed in Section 2.1.4 of this document.

- **BIO-1. Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) Designation:** All areas outside of the proposed construction footprint or determined by a qualified biologist shall be considered as Environmentally Sensitive Areas and would be implemented as a first order of work and remain in place until all construction activities are complete. Environmentally Sensitive Area information would be shown on contract plans and discussed in Section 14-1.02 of the Caltrans 2023 Standard Specifications or any Special Provisions in Section 14-1.02. Contractor encroachment into Environmentally Sensitive Areas would be prohibited. If they are breached, immediate work stoppage and notification to the Caltrans resident engineer is required.
- **BIO-2. Designated Biologist:** One or more designated biologists with demonstrated field experience working with the regulated species or performing the specialized task and regulatory agency approval shall be on-site and monitoring any activities that have the potential to affect sensitive biological resources. They would immediately notify the Caltrans resident engineer of any take of regulated species, disturbances to regulated habitats, or breaches of Environmentally Sensitive Areas, and would prepare, submit, and sign notifications and reports. If the contractor supplies the biologist instead of Caltrans, Section 14-6.03D(1-3) of the Caltrans 2023 Standard Specifications or any Special Provisions in Section 14-6.03D(1-3) would specify the necessary qualifications, responsibilities, and submittals. Contractor-supplied biologists would prepare a "Natural Resources Protection Program" within 7 days of contract approval and must have it approved by Caltrans prior to the onset of construction activities.
- **BIO-3. Containment Measures/Construction Site Best Management Practices:** In order to contain construction related material, prevent debris and pollutants from entering receiving waters, and reduce the potential for discharge to receiving waters, the contractor shall follow all applicable guidelines and requirements in Section 13, Water Quality of the Caltrans 2023 Standard Specifications or any Special Provisions in Section 13 regarding water pollution control.

The project design team may specify best management practices to be utilized during construction in addition to, or in place of, other

temporary measures selected by the contractor. Prior to construction, the contractor would be required to submit either a Water Pollution Control Plan or a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan, as appropriate, for Caltrans review prior to construction onset. Caltrans staff and the contractor are required to perform routine inspections of the construction area to verify that field best management practices are properly implemented, maintained, and are operating effectively and as designed.

- **BIO-4. Worker Environmental Awareness Training for Construction Personnel:** Before any work occurs in the project area, a qualified designated biologist would conduct a mandatory contractor/worker environmental awareness training for construction personnel. The training would be provided to both contractors and subcontractors to brief them on the need to avoid and minimize effects to sensitive biological resources and the penalties for not complying with applicable state and federal laws and permit requirements. If a contractor-supplied biologist is used, then they would prepare and submit copies of the worker environmental awareness training and any associated training materials for Caltrans' review and approval prior to the onset of project construction activities, as per Caltrans 2023 Standard Specifications Section 14-6.03(D).
- **BIO-5. Limited Operation Period – In Water Construction Activities:** It is proposed that construction activities occurring at sites determined as potentially jurisdictional waters of the United States and waters of the State of California shall occur between June 1st and October 15th of any construction season, unless earlier or later dates for in channel construction activities are approved by California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.
- **BIO-6. Limit Vegetation Removal:** Clearing of herbaceous vegetation and/or trimming of woody vegetation may be required at some locations for culvert replacement activities. Vegetation removal shall be limited to the absolute minimum amount required for construction.
- **BIO-7. Restore and Revegetate Temporarily Disturbed Areas**  
**Onsite:** Disturbed areas within the construction limits would be graded to minimize surface erosion and siltation into receiving waters. Disturbed areas would be re-contoured to as close to pre-project condition as practicable and would be stabilized as soon as feasible as (and no later than October 15th of each construction season) to avoid erosion during subsequent storms and runoff. Permanent erosion control seeding would be performed at all disturbed sites by hydro-seeding over the course of construction as each site is completed, with all sites seeded by the completion of construction activities.

- **BIO-8. Pre-Construction Surveys – Special-Status Plants:** The qualifications of any proposed biological monitor(s) would be presented to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for review and written approval at least 2 weeks prior to conducting project activities at the project site. No more than 24 hours prior to any ground disturbance in a given location, pre-construction surveys would be conducted by a California Department of Fish and Wildlife-approved biologist for sensitive plant species using California Department of Fish and Wildlife-approved survey protocols. If sensitive plant species are detected within areas that would be disturbed by construction activities, then no work would take place at these locations until Caltrans has consulted with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. New sightings of sensitive plant species shall be reported to the California Natural Diversity Database. A copy of the reporting form and a topographic map clearly marked with the location of where the sensitive plant species were observed should also be provided to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.
- **BIO-9. Weed Free Construction Equipment and Vehicles:** To minimize the potential for the transport of weed propagules to the project area from sources outside of the project area, construction equipment and vehicles are recommended to be cleaned and washed at the contractor's facilities prior to arrival to the construction site. Any vehicle or equipment cleaning that occurs on-site during construction activities shall conform with Caltrans 2023 Standard Specifications or any Special Conditions under Section 13-4.03E(3) and Section NS-08 (Vehicle and Equipment Cleaning) of the Caltrans 2017 Construction Site Best Management Practices Manual, which require the contractor to contain and dispose of any waste resulting from vehicle or equipment cleaning.
- **BIO-10. Weed Control During Construction:** To minimize the potential for spreading weed propagules originating from within the project environmental study limits during the course of construction activities, including initial vegetation clearing and at onsite revegetation areas, weed control would be accomplished in accordance with Caltrans 2023 Standard Specifications or Special Provisions under Section 20- 1.03C(3). The use of herbicides for weed control activities would be discouraged but may be considered on a case-by-case basis depending upon the weed species, the extent of infestation, or any regulatory restrictions.
- **BIO-11. Weed Free Erosion Control and Revegetation Treatments:** To minimize the risk of introducing weed propagules to the project area from sources outside of the project area, only locally adapted plant species appropriate for the project area would be used in any erosion control or revegetation seed mix or stock. The Caltrans biologist would

consult with the Caltrans landscape architect to develop appropriate seed and planting palettes for use in revegetation and/or erosion control applications. Any compost, mulch, fiber, duff, tackifier, straw, topsoil, erosion control products, or seed must meet Caltrans 2023 Standard Specification or any Special Provisions under Section 21-2.02 for these materials. Any hydroseed used for revegetation activities must also be certified weed free as per Caltrans 2023 Standard Specifications Section 21-2.02F.

- **BIO-12. Monarch Butterfly – Pre-Construction Surveys:** The qualifications of any proposed biological monitor(s) would be presented to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service for review and written approval at least 2 weeks prior to conducting project activities at the project site. A United States Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist would be present during all construction-related activities that may affect bumblebee hives or monarch butterflies. Prior to any construction activities, a focused survey for all life stages of monarch butterfly shall be conducted by a qualified biologist within 7 days prior to the beginning to project-related activities. Pre-construction surveys for bumblebee hives shall be specified under Caltrans 2023 Standard Specification and/or Standard Special Provision 14-6.03A (Species Protection). Any observation of any life stage of monarch butterfly, including breeding, would be reported to the western monarch butterfly mapper or via iNaturalist ([http://xerces.org/milkweed survey/](http://xerces.org/milkweed_survey/)).
- **BIO-13. Bumblebee Hive Avoidance – Pre-Construction Surveys:** The qualifications of any proposed biological monitor(s) would be presented to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for review and written approval at least 2 weeks prior to conducting project activities at the project site. A California Department of Fish and Wildlife-approved biologist would be present during all construction-related activities that may affect bumblebee hives. Prior to any ground-breaking activities, a focused survey for bumblebee hives shall be conducted by a qualified biologist within 7 days prior to the beginning to project-related activities. Pre-construction surveys for bumblebee hives shall be specified under Caltrans 2023 Standard Specification and/or Standard Special Provision 14-6.03A (Species Protection).
- **BIO-14. Bumblebee Hive Avoidance – Avoid Active Hives:** If active bumblebee hives found, a protective no-work buffer of 20 feet would be established and Caltrans shall consult with California Department of Fish and Wildlife to comply with provisions of the Fish and Game Code of California. Protective buffers for bumblebee hives shall be specified under Caltrans 2023 Standard Specification and/or Standard Special Provision 14-6.03A (Species Protection). No work would commence within the buffer until authorization is received from the resident engineer. If construction requires activities that may potentially cause

hive destruction or hive abandonment, monitoring of the hive site by a qualified biologist would be required to ensure that protective radii are maintained.

- **BIO-15. Pre-Construction Surveys and Construction Site Biological Monitoring – Sierra Nevada Yellow Legged Frog:** -The qualifications of any proposed biological monitor(s) would be presented to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife for review and written approval at least 2 weeks prior to conducting project activities at the project site. A United States Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife-approved biologist would be present during all construction-related activities that may affect Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frogs or their habitats. The approved biologist would have the authority to halt work through coordination with the resident engineer or onsite project manager in the event that a Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog observed on the project footprint.

The resident engineer or onsite project manager would ensure construction activities remain suspended in any area where the biologist has determined that take of the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog could occur. Work would resume once the animal leaves the site of its own volition, once it is determined that the frog is not being harassed by or in danger due to construction activities. If a Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog is observed in the work area, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife-approved biologist(s) would notify the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife contact by telephone and electronic mail within twenty-four hours of the initial observation.

No more than 24 hours prior to any ground disturbance at a given location, preconstruction surveys would be conducted by a United States Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife-approved biologist for Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frogs using United States Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife-approved survey protocols. These surveys would consist of walking surveys of the project limits and accessible adjacent areas within at least 50 feet of the project limits. The biologist(s) would investigate all potential Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog cover sites. This includes thorough investigation of mammal burrows, appropriately soil cracks, and debris. Native vertebrates found in the cover sites would be documented and, if appropriate, relocated to an adequate cover site in the vicinity. The entrances and other refuge features within the project limits would be collapsed or removed following investigation and clearance.

New sightings of Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frogs shall be reported to the California Natural Diversity Database. A copy of the reporting form and a topographic map clearly marked with the location of where the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog was observed should also be provided to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

To the extent practicable, initial ground-disturbing activities would be avoided between October 16 and May 31 to avoid the period when adult Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frogs are most likely to be in torpor. When ground-disturbing activities must take place between October 16 and May 31, daily monitoring by a United States Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist(s) would occur for Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frogs.

If pumping is used for dewatering, intakes would be completely screened with wire mesh no larger than 0.2-inch to prevent any tadpoles from entering the pump. To prevent the inadvertent entrapment of the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog, all excavated, steep-walled holes or trenches more than 6 inches deep would be covered at the close of each working day by plywood or similar materials. If it is not feasible to cover an excavation, one or more escape ramps constructed of earthen fill or wooden planks would be installed. Before such holes or trenches are filled, they must be thoroughly inspected for trapped animals. If at any time a trapped animal is discovered, the biologist would immediately place escape ramps or other appropriate structures to allow the animal to escape, or the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife would be contacted by telephone for guidance. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife would be notified of the incident by telephone and email within one working day.

The following construction best management practices will also avoid or minimize impacts to Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog. During construction operations, stockpiling of construction materials, portable equipment, vehicles, and supplies would be restricted to the designated construction staging areas and all operations would be confined to the minimal area necessary. Project-related vehicle traffic would be restricted to established roads and construction areas. Access roads will be constructed to the minimum amount necessary. Project vehicles would observe a 20-mile-per-hour speed limit while in the action area. Dust control measures would be implemented if necessary. Plastic mono-filament netting (erosion control matting) or similar material would not be used at the project site. Acceptable substitutes include coconut coir matting or tackified hydro-seeding



compounds. Use of rodenticides and herbicides, including fumigation, the use of poison bait, or other means of poisoning nuisance animals in project areas shall be restricted. All food-related trash items such as wrappers, cans, bottles, and food scraps should be disposed of in securely closed containers and removed at least once a week from a construction or project site. No firearms shall be allowed on the project site. No pets, such as dogs or cats, should be permitted on the project site.

- **BIO-16. Roosting Bat Avoidance – Pre-Construction Surveys:** The qualifications of any proposed biological monitor(s) would be presented to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for review and written approval at least 2 weeks prior to conducting project activities at the project site. A California Department of Fish and Wildlife-approved biologist would be present during all construction-related activities that may affect tree-roosting bats or their habitats. Prior to any tree removal activities, a focused survey for tree-roosting bats shall be conducted by a qualified biologist within 15 days prior to the beginning of project-related activities. If a lapse in project related work of 15 days or longer occurs, another survey and, if required, consultation with California Department of Fish and Wildlife would be required before the work can be reinitiated. Pre-construction surveys for tree-roosting bats shall be specified under Caltrans 2023 Standard Specification and/or Standard Special Provision 14-6.03A (Species Protection).
- **BIO-17. Roosting Bat Avoidance – Avoid Active Roosts:** If active day roosts or maternity roosts are found, a protective no-work buffer of 50 feet would be established and Caltrans shall consult with California Department of Fish and Wildlife to comply with provisions of the Fish and Game Code of California. Protective buffers for tree-roosting bats shall be specified under Caltrans 2023 Standard Specification and/or Standard Special Provision 14-6.03A (Species Protection). No work would commence within the buffer until authorization is received from the resident engineer. During construction activities that may potentially cause roost destruction or roost abandonment, monitoring of the nest site by a qualified biologist would be required to ensure that protective radii are maintained.
- **BIO-18. Nesting Bird Avoidance – Limited Operation Period:** Performing ground-disturbance, vegetation removal, or other construction activities within nesting bird habitat during the non-nesting season (between October 1st and January 31st) would not require preconstruction surveys or nesting bird avoidance measures.
- **BIO-19. Nesting Bird Avoidance – Pre-Construction Surveys:** During Nesting Season: If ground-disturbance, vegetation removal, or other construction activities are scheduled during the nesting season of

protected raptors and migratory birds (February 1st to September 30th), a focused survey for active nests of such birds shall be conducted by a qualified biologist within 15 days prior to the beginning to project-related activities. If a lapse in project related work of 15 days or longer occurs, another survey and, if required, consultation with United States Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife would be required before the work can be reinitiated. Pre-construction surveys for nesting migratory birds and raptors shall be specified under Caltrans 2023 Standard Specification and/or Standard Special Provision 14-6.03A (Species Protection) and/or 14-6.03(B) (Bird Protection).

- **BIO-20. Nesting Bird Avoidance – Avoid Active Nests:** If active nests are found, a protective no-work buffer would be established and Caltrans shall consult with United States Fish and Wildlife Service regarding appropriate action to comply with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 and with California Department of Fish and Wildlife to comply with provisions of the Fish and Game Code of California. If nesting migratory birds or nesting raptors are detected by the designated biologist during the pre-construction survey, the appropriate no-work buffer would be established around the nest. No work would commence within the buffer until authorization is received from the resident engineer.

The appropriate no-work buffer for raptors would be 300 feet in radius, and for other migratory birds the radius would be 100 feet. Protective buffer radii for nesting migratory birds and raptors shall be specified under Caltrans 2023 Standard Specification and/or Standard Special Provision 14-6.03A (Species Protection) and/or 14-6.03B (Bird Protection). If construction or other project related activities which may potentially cause nest destruction, nest abandonment or forced fledging of migratory birds are necessary, monitoring of the nest site by a qualified biologist would be required to ensure that protective radii are maintained.

The following compensatory mitigation measures would also be required to mitigate for impacts to riparian vegetation, as discussed in Section 2.1.4 of this document.

- **BIO-21. Compensatory Mitigation – Wetlands and Other Waters of the United States:** Construction of the proposed project is expected to result in the permanent loss of up to approximately 370.50 square feet (0.0085-acre rounded to 0.01-acre) of intermittent and ephemeral streams and 143.29 square feet (0.003-acre) of wetlands potentially qualifying as waters of the United States.

The permanent loss of potentially jurisdictional waters of the United

States is proposed to be compensated by Caltrans' participation in the Sacramento United States Army Corps of Engineers' and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's in-lieu fee program to ensure no net loss of functions and values of potentially jurisdictional waters of the United States. The program operates by making available mitigation credits for purchase by permittees (with the approval of the applicable regulatory agencies), and the credits may be used to satisfy the compensatory mitigation requirements applicable to such permittees for their impacts to aquatic resources. Credits would be purchased in the Cosumnes/Mokelumne Rivers Watershed Service Area, the Calaveras/Stanslaus Rivers Watershed Service Area, and the Carson/Walker Rivers Aquatic Service Area.

- **BIO-22. Compensatory Mitigation – Riparian Vegetation:** Construction of the proposed project is expected to result in the trimming or removal of 0.01-acre of mainly streamside montane riparian willow scrub but may include black cottonwood and alder riparian vegetation. This loss of riparian vegetation is expected to require a 3-to-1 compensation ratio by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Caltrans therefore proposes to compensate for the loss of 0.01-acre of riparian vegetation with the establishment of 0.03-acre of riparian vegetation at an undetermined onsite (within the project limits) or offsite location.

The following measures will avoid or minimize the project's potential impacts to archaeological resources and tribal cultural resources, as discussed in Sections 2.1.5 and 2.1.18 of this document.

- **CU-1. Construction monitoring – Archaeologist and Native American Monitor:** Archaeological and, if requested, Native American monitoring will be required for all project areas indicated in the October 2023 Environmentally Sensitive Area Action and Monitoring Plan. All monitoring during construction activities within the Archaeological Monitoring Area would be conducted by Caltrans Professionally Qualified Staff (PQS) archaeologist, or qualified consultant archaeologist. The Caltrans archaeologist will coordinate with the Caltrans on-call cultural consultant, District 10 Native American coordinator, the Caltrans resident engineer, the District 10 environmental construction liaison, and the Stanislaus National Forest Archaeologist to schedule archaeological and Native American monitoring prior to construction and ensure monitors are onsite during construction.

The archaeological monitor would have the authority to temporarily halt construction operations within 60 feet of any significant or potentially significant cultural resources that are encountered during construction operations. In this event, the designated monitor would be responsible

for immediately informing the responsible Caltrans archaeologist and resident engineer. The contractor should not resume work within 60 feet of the find until a Caltrans Professionally Qualified Staff archaeologist or qualified consultant equivalent can appropriately consult and assesses the significance of the discovery or damage, and the contractor is authorized to resume work.

The archaeological monitor would consult with the Native American monitor and Stanislaus National Forest Archaeologist on any archaeological discoveries to make a determination of significance. The Native American monitor would have the authority to temporarily halt the excavation to examine potential cultural materials in consultation with the archaeological monitor.

- **CU-2. Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) Designation – Cultural:** A qualified archaeologist shall designate Environmentally Sensitive Areas for the protection of cultural resources within or near the project's area of potential effect. These boundaries will be recorded in and implemented through the October 2023 Environmentally Sensitive Area Action and Monitoring Plan and shown on project plans. These Environmentally Sensitive Area boundaries will be established as a first order of work and remain in place until all construction activities are complete. Contractor encroachment into Environmentally Sensitive Areas will be prohibited. If the Environmentally Sensitive Area boundaries are breached, all work within 60 feet of the boundary will be stopped, the area will be secured, and the Caltrans resident engineer must be notified. If the Environmentally Sensitive Area is damaged, Caltrans will determine the necessary remediation and the party to perform this work.

At the first archaeological site within the area of direct impacts, a horizontal Environmentally Sensitive Area will be utilized. At the second site adjacent to the area of direct impacts, a horizontal Environmentally Sensitive Area will be used. No high-visibility fencing is proposed for either location, as it may impede access to nearby recreational resources and draw unwanted attention to the archaeological sites.

- **CU-3. Special procedures for human remains:** If human remains are encountered during construction, work in the immediate area shall be halted within 60 feet of the find and arrangements made to protect the remains in place until their disposition has been arranged according to this section. The treatment of human remains and associated and unassociated funerary objects discovered during any ground-disturbing activity shall comply with applicable Federal and State laws. The remains will be uncovered sufficiently to identify them as human. If they are so identified, all provisions of California Health and Safety

Code Sections 7054 and 7050.5 and Public Resources Code Sections 5097.9 through 5097.99, as amended per Assembly Bill 2641, will be followed.

The on-site archaeologist (if not a Caltrans Professionally Qualified Staff archaeologist) will immediately communicate the find to the Caltrans archaeologist, who will contact the Alpine County Coroner and the Stanislaus National Forest Heritage Resource and Tribal Relations Program Manager. In the event of the coroner's determination that the human remains are Native American, they will contact the Native American Heritage Commission within 24 hours, who will designate a Most Likely Descendant (MLD) (PRC Section 5097.98). Because the project is within National Forest-owned land, Caltrans will defer to the Stanislaus National Forest and consulting Tribes for proposed treatment in the case of the discovery of human remains.

The following measures will avoid or minimize greenhouse gas emission impacts from temporary construction activities as discussed in Section 2.1.8 of this document.

- **GHG-1. Limit equipment idling:** The contractor would limit idling to 5 minutes for delivery and dump trucks and other diesel-powered equipment.
- **GHG-2. Schedule truck trips:** The contractor would schedule truck trips outside of peak morning and evening commute hours.
- **GHG-3. Equipment fuel efficiency:** The contractor would improve fuel efficiency from construction equipment by maintaining equipment in proper working condition, using the right size equipment for the job, and using equipment with new technologies where feasible.
- **GHG-4. Construction environmental training:** The contractor would provide construction environmental training that includes strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



## **Appendix C**   Section 4(f) Documentation

---

This document discusses the de minimis impact determinations under Section 4(f). Section 6009(a) of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users Extensions Acts amended Section 4(f) legislation at 23 U.S. Code 138 and 49 U.S. Code 303 to simplify the processing and approval of projects that have only de minimis impacts on lands protected by Section 4(f). This amendment provides that once the U.S. Department of Transportation determines that a transportation use of a Section 4(f) property, after consideration of any impact avoidance, minimization, and mitigation or enhancement measures, results in a de minimis impact on that property, an analysis of avoidance alternatives is not required, and the Section 4(f) evaluation process is complete. The Federal Highway Administration's final rule on Section 4(f) de minimis findings is codified in 23 Code of Federal Regulations 774.3 and Code of Federal Regulations 774.17.

Responsibility for compliance with Section 4(f) has been assigned to the Department (Caltrans) pursuant to 23 U.S. Code 326 and 327, including de minimis impact determinations, as well as coordination with those agencies that have jurisdiction over a Section 4(f) resource that may be affected by a project action.

### **C-1 Background**

#### *Project Description*

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to rehabilitate existing drainage systems at 30 locations on State Routes 4 and 207 in Alpine County. Existing drainage systems at proposed locations have exceeded their design life and have deteriorated or failed. The project work includes replacing or rehabilitating existing culverts and upgrading or replacing end treatments and headwalls as needed.

#### *Proposed Alternatives*

The proposed project has two alternatives under consideration—one Build Alternative and one No-Build Alternative. The No-Build Alternative would not address the purpose and need of the project, as it would leave the deteriorating culverts in their current condition.

The Build Alternative would rehabilitate 30 existing drainage systems in Alpine County by repairing or replacing existing culverts and upgrading or replacing end treatments and headwalls as needed. A full list of project locations and the proposed work at each location can be found in Chapter 1.4.1 of this document.

To keep the road open to traffic during construction, the project would maintain one through-traffic lane not less than 10 feet in width for use by both directions of travel. During construction work at each location, the lane closure will be in effect between the hours of 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. from Monday through Thursday, and 6:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Friday. Construction of the proposed project is anticipated to begin in summer 2027 and work is expected to take approximately 120 working days to complete. The work at each location is anticipated to take an average of four working days to complete.

The temporary construction easements required for the project are all directly adjacent to Caltrans right-of-way and located within the jurisdiction of the United States Forest Service within the Stanislaus National Forest and the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest.

The following locations would require temporary construction easements in the jurisdiction of the Stanislaus National Forest.

- Location 6 on State Route 4, post mile 6.57: Temporary construction easement of 450 square feet along the east edge of State Route 4.
- Location 11 on State Route 4, post mile 7.53: Temporary construction easement of 750 square feet along the south edge of State Route 4.
- Location 12 on State Route 4, post mile 8.34: Temporary construction easement of 900 square feet along the south edge of State Route 4.
- Location 22 on State Route 4, post mile 13.20: Temporary construction easements of 600 square feet along the north edge and 450 square feet along the south edge of State Route 4.
- Location 24 on State Route 4, post mile 13.62: Temporary construction easement of 600 square feet along the south edge of State Route 4.
- Location 29 on State Route 207, post mile 0.38: Temporary construction easements of 2,100 square feet along the west edge and 1,050 square feet along the east edge of State Route 207.
- Location 30 on State Route 207, post mile 1.19: Temporary construction easements of 600 square feet along the north edge and 600 square feet along the south edge of State Route 207.

The following location would require a temporary construction easement in the jurisdiction of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest.

- Location 28 on State Route 4, post mile 30.37: Temporary construction easement of 3,000 square feet along the south edge of State Route 4.



## **C-2 Section 4(f) Recreational Resources**

Of the 30 proposed project locations, 17 locations are within 0.5 miles of potential Section 4(f) recreational resources. The project locations and the nearby recreational resources are listed as follows:

- Location 1 on State Route 4, post mile 2.12: Approximately 300 feet southwest of the Alpine Ranger Station. Approximately 1,700 feet southwest of the Lodgepole Group Campground and Overflow Campground.
- Location 2 on State Route 4, post mile 3.66: Approximately 1,000 feet west of Lake Alpine and associated recreational areas, including the Lake Alpine Campground, Lake Alpine Recreation Area, and Slick Rock Road Trail.
- Location 3 on State Route 4, post mile 3.99: Within 200 feet of the Lake Alpine shoreline and approximately 1,500 feet east of associated recreational areas, including the Lake Alpine Campground, Lake Alpine Recreation Area, and Slick Rock Road Trail.
- Location 4 on State Route 4, post mile 4.04: Within 200 feet of the Lake Alpine shoreline and approximately 1,500 feet east of associated recreational areas, including the Lake Alpine Campground, Lake Alpine Recreation Area, and Slick Rock Road Trail.
- Location 5 on State Route 4, post mile 4.40: Within 200 feet of the Lake Alpine shoreline and approximately 2,000 feet west of associated recreational areas, including Backpackers Campground, Pine Marten Campground, and Silver Valley Campground.
- Location 6 on State Route 4, post mile 6.57: Approximately 1,000 feet northwest of the Cape Horn Vista Point. Temporary construction easement of 450 square feet required along the east edge of State Route 4.
- Location 7 on State Route 4, post mile 6.61: Approximately 650 feet northwest of the Cape Horn Vista Point.
- Location 15 on State Route 4, post mile 9.12: Approximately 2,000 feet southwest of Sandy Meadow Trailhead.
- Location 16 on State Route 4, post mile 9.59: Within 200 feet of the Sandy Meadow Trailhead.
- Location 17 on State Route 4, post mile 9.64: Within 250 feet of the Sandy Meadow Trailhead.

- Location 18 on State Route 4, post mile 9.73: Approximately 900 feet east of the Sandy Meadow Trailhead.
- Location 19 on State Route 4, post mile 9.89: Approximately 1,700 feet east of the Sandy Meadow Trailhead.
- Location 20 State Route 4, post mile 10.93: Approximately 1,300 feet northeast of Mosquito Lake and associated recreational areas, including Mosquito Lakes Campground. Approximately 2,000 west of the Pacific Valley Campground.
- Location 21 on State Route 4, post mile 12.26: Approximately 2,200 feet south of Mokelumne River Trail.
- Location 22 on State Route 4, post mile 13.20: Approximately 500 feet east of Hermit Valley Campground, and approximately 900 feet east of the Deer Valley Trailhead. Temporary construction easements of 600 square feet required along the north edge and 450 square feet required along the south edge of State Route 4.
- Location 29 on State Route 207, post mile 0.38: Approximately 1,000 feet northwest of Round Valley SNO-PARK, and approximately 2,200 feet northwest of Lake Alpine SNO-PARK and Silvertip Campground. Temporary construction easements of 2,100 square feet required along the west edge and 1,050 square feet required along the east edge of State Route 207.

The following recreational facilities are within 0.5-miles of the above listed project locations and may be considered Section 4(f) resources or relevant to the recreational use of the surrounding forests.

### *Alpine Ranger Station*

While not a strictly recreational resource, the Alpine Ranger Station along State Route 4 is a government office for the United States Forest Service, which manages the forests, campgrounds, and other recreational resources within the surrounding Stanislaus National Forest.

### *Lake Alpine*

Lake Alpine is the largest recreational resource along State Route 4 in the project vicinity, spanning around 180 acres. It is the primary draw for many of the surrounding campgrounds and recreational land uses in the area. During the warm season, visitors use the lake recreation area for swimming, boating, hiking, camping, fishing, picnicking, biking, and outdoor learning programs. Furthermore, during the winter months, the area from the closure gate 2.5 miles east of Bear Valley to the top of Ebbetts Pass (approximately 15 miles)

and to Highland Lakes is closed, and the lake becomes part of the Lake Alpine SNO-PARK and Round Valley SNO-PARK. During this period, visitors use the area for snowmobiling, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing.

#### *Lake Alpine - Associated Campgrounds and Recreation Areas*

There are numerous campgrounds and recreational land uses related to Lake Alpine in the surrounding area. These include Lake Alpine Campground, as well as Silver Tip, West Shore, Pine Marten, Silver Valley and Backpackers Campgrounds. The Slick Rock Road Trailhead is also located adjacent to the west shore of the lake. The Lodgepole Group and Overflow Campgrounds are further from Lake Alpine than the others, situated approximately one mile to the west, but are also used by visitors participating in recreational activities at the lake.

#### *Cape Horn Vista Point*

The Cape Horn Vista Point is a small, scenic overlook and recreational area with a picnic table, and is situated along State Route 4 near the project locations Location 6 at post mile 6.57 and Location 7 at post mile 6.61. While the area is only large enough for a few automobiles, it is a popular rest stop and visitor destination.

#### *Sandy Meadow Trailhead*

The Sandy Meadow Trailhead is located approximately 0.75 miles west of Mosquito Lake. It serves as a parking area and hiking point for the visiting public. It is a longer but flatter hiking trail for those wishing to access Wheeler Lake, which is around 4.2 miles to the west.

#### *Mosquito Lakes*

Mosquito Lakes are a series of smaller adjacent water bodies located around 5 miles northeast of Lake Alpine, and are often used for camping, picnicking, and fishing.

#### *Mosquito Lakes - Associated Campgrounds and Recreation Areas*

Of the recreational areas within the general project vicinity, there are two located near Mosquito Lakes. This includes Mosquito Lakes Campground, adjacent to State Route 4 near Mosquito Lakes, and Pacific Valley Campground, located to the east along Pacific Valley Road and used for access to Mosquito Lakes, Mokelumne River, and Pacific Creek.

#### *Mokelumne River Trailhead*

The Mokelumne River Trailhead is adjacent to State Route 4 and North Fork Mokelumne River, and also located near Hermit Valley Campground and

Deer Valley Trailhead. The Mokelumne River Trailhead is a notoriously long and challenging hike, spanning 25.5 miles and taking over 12 hours to complete.

#### *Deer Valley Trailhead*

The Deer Valley Trailhead is located near Hermit Valley Campground and the North Fork Mokelumne River. It is used to access the Mokelumne wilderness. Accessing this wilderness requires a Wilderness Permit, and the trail is typically used in the fall for hunting.

#### *Hermit Valley Campground*

The Hermit Valley Campground is located near several trails and the North Fork Mokelumne River. It is used as a camping and staging area for hikers, hunters, and other visitors.

### **C-2 De Minimis Determination**

The majority of project locations would involve drainage system improvements adjacent to the roadway that can be performed within Caltrans right-of-way and would not involve significant impacts to any Section 4(f) resources outside of Caltrans right-of-way.

Of the eight project locations requiring temporary construction easements, only three are within the vicinity of Section 4(f) recreational resources (Location 6 on State Route 4, post mile 6.57, Location 22 on State Route 4, post mile 13.20, and Location 29 on State Route 207, post mile 0.38). These easements would be located approximately 1,000 feet from Cape Horn Vista Point, 500 feet from Hermit Valley Campground, 900 feet from Deer Valley Trailhead, 1,000 feet from Round Valley SNO-PARK, and 2,200 feet from Lake Alpine SNO-PARK and Silvertip Campground.

The project would result only in minor, indirect, or temporary impacts to recreational resources during the 120-day construction working period. Public access along State Route 4 and 207 in the project area would not be blocked or impeded by the proposed work, as one traffic-through lane would be maintained throughout construction. Construction work and lane closures would also be limited to weekdays, which would limit impacts to the public during the weekend peak periods of travel and recreational use. Additionally, construction impacts would also be temporary in nature, as the work at each location will average only four working days and any vegetation removed would be replanted after construction.

The following measures from the 2023 Caltrans Standard Specifications included with the project would reduce potential impacts to Section 4(f) recreational resources.

- Section 4-1.13: Scope of Work—Cleanup
- Section 10-5: Dust Control
- Section 13: Water Pollution Control
- Section 14-8: Noise Control
- Section 14-9.02: Air Pollution Control

The following avoidance and minimization measures would also reduce potential impacts to Section 4(f) recreational resources. Full descriptions of these measures can be found in Appendix B of this document:

- BIO-3. Containment Measures/Construction Site Best Management Practices
- BIO-5. Limited Operation Period – In Water Construction Activities
- BIO-6. Limit Vegetation Removal
- BIO-7. Restore and Revegetate Temporarily Disturbed Areas Onsite
- BIO-21. Compensatory Mitigation – Wetlands and Other Waters of the United States
- BIO-22. Compensatory Mitigation – Riparian Vegetation
- CU-2. Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) Designation – Cultural:

The project would also involve indirect improvements to Section 4(f) recreational resources in the project area. Drainage system repair and replacements would improve road stability and reduce the likelihood of roadway flooding or collapse that could block public access to recreational areas.

Caltrans, on behalf of FHWA, is proposing a de minimis determination under Section 4(f) for impacts to the Section 4(f) recreational resources in the Stanislaus and Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forests. Impacts to the protected activities, features, and attributes of the Section 4(f) resources would be reduced to a de minimis level with implementation of the minimization measures detailed above.

Concurrence from the United States Forest Service on Caltrans' de minimis impact determination will be sought out during the public circulation period of the environmental document and would be obtained before the project can receive final environmental approvals.



## **List of Technical Studies Bound Separately (Volume 2)**

Air Quality Memorandum  
Noise Compliance Study  
Water Compliance Study  
Natural Environment Study  
Preliminary Hydraulics Floodplain Analysis  
Preliminary Floodplain Study Addendum  
Historical Property Survey Report  
Archaeological Survey Report  
Initial Site Assessment  
Scenic Resource Evaluation  
Paleontology Memorandum  
Geotechnical Design Report Memorandum  
Community Impact Memorandum  
Climate Change Study  
Energy Analysis Memorandum

To obtain a copy of one or more of these technical studies/reports or the Initial Study, please send your request to:

Laura Cook  
District 10 Environmental Division  
California Department of Transportation  
1976 East Doctor Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard, Stockton, California 95205

Or send your request via email to: [Laura.Cook@dot.ca.gov](mailto:Laura.Cook@dot.ca.gov)

Or call: 209-662-2261

Please provide the following information in your request:

Project title: Alpine County State Route 4 Drainage System Restoration  
General location information: In Alpine County, along State Routes 4 and 207  
District number-county code-route-post mile: 10-ALP-4,207-Post Miles Vary  
Project ID number: 10-1L660 / 1020000171