Initial Study/
Mitigated Negative Declaration

for the

Wentworth Springs Road at Gerle Creek Bridge Low Water Crossing Conversion Project

November 2010

El Dorado County
Department of Transportation
El Dorado County
2850 Fairlane Court
Placerville, CA 95667

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PROJECT INFORMATION

1. Project Title: Wentworth Springs Road at Gerle Creek Bridge Low Water Crossing Conversion Project

2. Lead Agency Name and Address: El Dorado County
Department of Transportation
2850 Fairlane Court
Placerville, CA 95667

3. Contact Person and Phone Number: Ms. Janet Postlewait, Principal Planner
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4. Project Location: Wentworth Springs Road at Gerle Creek is located in the Sierra Nevada Mountains in northeastern El Dorado County, approximately 3.5 mi north of the intersection of paved Wentworth Springs Road and Ice House Road.

5. Description of Project:
The El Dorado County (County) Department of Transportation (DOT) proposes to construct the Wentworth Springs Road at Gerle Creek Bridge Low Water Crossing Conversion Project (Project) which includes installation of a new 16 ft wide, prefabricated, steel-truss bridge immediately upstream of the existing low-water crossing through Gerle Creek on Wentworth Springs Road. The Project area is 1.74 acre. The Project is proposed for construction in 2011 or 2012.

6. General plan designation: NR: Natural Resources

7. Zoning: TPZ: Timberland Preserve Zone District

8. Surrounding Land Uses and Setting:

The Project is located in the Sierra Nevada Mountains in northeastern El Dorado County, approximately 3.5 mi north of the intersection of paved Wentworth Springs Road and Ice House Road. The Project is located on a parcel owned by Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) surrounded by U.S. Forest Service Eldorado National Forest (ENF) land. Unpaved Wentworth Springs Road and Gerle Creek are the main physical features in the Project area. Gerle Creek flows in a southwesterly direction through the Project area. Cleared areas used for parking and recreational activities occur at the northwestern and central portions of the Project area. Three dirt roads provide access to undeveloped campsites cross through the northern and southeastern portion of the Project area (Figure 2). Elevation in the Project area ranges from approximately 5,825 to 5,855 ft above sea level.

9. Other Public Agencies Whose Approval May Be Required (e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement):

The Project may require permits or approvals from the following:

- California Department of Transportation — National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers — Section 404 Clean Water Act Nationwide Permit
- Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board — Section 401 Water Quality Certification
- State Water Resources Control Board — Statewide General Permit for Discharges of Storm Water Associated with Construction Activity
- California Department of Fish and Game — Streambed Alteration Agreement
- El Dorado County Air Quality Management District — Fugitive Dust Plan Approval

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1. INTRODUCTION

The El Dorado County (County) Department of Transportation (DOT) is conducting a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review of the proposed Wentworth Springs Road at Gerle Creek Low Water Crossing Project (Project). The County DOT is the CEQA lead agency and has prepared this Initial Study to consider the potential for the project to result in one or more significant impacts to the environment pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as amended (Public Resources Code, Section 21000, et seq.). Measures have been incorporated into the Project to avoid or mitigate the potential environmental effects. Therefore the County may complete the project CEQA review with a Mitigated Negative Declaration.

The remainder of this document is organized into the following sections:

- **Section 2, Project Description**—Provides a detailed description of the proposed Project;
- **Section 3, Initial Study Checklist and Supporting Documentation**—Provides CEQA Initial Study Resource impact checklists and supporting documentation. Identifies the thresholds of significance, evaluates potential impacts, and describes mitigation necessary to reduce impact significance;
- **Section 4, Initial Study Findings**—Provides a determination of the County's CEQA findings;
- **Section 5, Supporting Information Sources**—Identifies the personnel responsible for the preparation of this document and provides a list of the references cited throughout the document.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1. Location

The Project is located approximately 3.5 miles (mi) north of the intersection of Wentworth Springs Road and Ice House Road (Figure 1 and 2; figures are provided at the end of the chapter). This unpaved portion of Wentworth Springs Road is used by off-highway vehicles (OHV) and serves as an access route to the Rubicon Trail. An existing bridge across Gerle Creek in the Project area was washed out in 1986. Since then, vehicles have crossed by fording the creek.

The Project area consists of the areas in the immediate vicinity of the bridge, along Wentworth Springs Road, and an associated staging area to be used for temporary vehicle parking and storage of construction materials and equipment (Figure 3). The Project occurs on the Bunker Hill U.S. Geological Survey 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle (T13N, R14E, section 2).

2.2. Project Purpose and Objectives

County DOT, in conjunction with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is proposing to construct a new bridge on Wentworth Springs Road over Gerle Creek. The proposed Project is to construct a new, 16 ft wide, prefabricated steel truss bridge immediately upstream of the existing Gerle Creek low water crossing.

The increase in the numbers and types of vehicles using Wentworth Springs Road has resulted in a need for greater management in order to provide both environmental protection and vehicle safety. There is a need to provide a bridge crossing at Gerle Creek to reduce the amount of sediment and petroleum products that enter this creek from vehicle crossings as well as from trail approaches.

In addition to federal funding, El Dorado County received a grant from the California Department of Parks and Recreation Division of Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation to plan a new crossing for Wentworth Springs Road at Gerle Creek that would reduce pollution of sediment and petroleum products in Gerle Creek. On 30 April 2009 the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Valley Region, adopted a Cleanup and Abatement Order (CAO; No. R5-2009-0030) requiring El Dorado County and the Eldorado National Forest to cease the discharge of sediment and other wastes due to motorized use of Rubicon Trail. One of the actions specifically required by the CAO is the construction of a bridge at Gerle Creek.

2.3. Project Description

A 16 ft wide, prefabricated, steel-truss bridge design was chosen because unpaved Wentworth Springs Road is primarily an OHV road that carries relatively low traffic volumes and low speeds. A 16 ft wide bridge minimizes the Project construction footprint. The bridge abutments will be located in the uplands outside the ordinary high watermark (OHWM) of Gerle Creek in order to obtain the bridge height and span length necessary to pass 100-year flows. The new bridge will be 16 ft wide and approximately 130 ft long. The County will acquire right of way in easement or fee title for the bridge and road approaches within the Project area.

Rock slope protection (RSP) may be placed around the bridge abutments to prevent scour. The RSP would extend from the bridge abutments to the toe of the Gerle Creek bank below the OHWM. Rock slope protection (RSP) will be placed around the bridge abutments and upstream of the proposed bridge along the outside curve of Ellis Creek to prevent scour. The RSP would extend from the bridge abutments to the toe of the Ellis Creek bank below the OHWM. Large boulders will be placed at both sides of both bridge approaches to guide vehicles to the bridge and protect the bridge from being damaged by errant vehicles.

The County considered other low water crossing conversions. Leaving the current low-water crossing in Gerle Creek does not meet the County's need to improve water quality in Gerle Creek. Construction of an improved low-water crossing alternative would involve paving the existing low-water crossing in Gerle Creek. This was rejected because it would not meet the County's need to stop vehicles from crossing through the creek to improve water quality. It also has the potential to change the hydraulic gradient of the creek. The low arch bridge design would involve constructing a bridge at the existing low-water crossing in Gerle Creek within the 100-year floodplain. The bridge would be above water levels during the summer low-flow months and would be overtopped during the winter and spring high-flow periods. This alternative was rejected because the bridge would not be able to pass large woody debris during high-flow periods and would be at increased risk of washing out. This bridge design would not meet Caltrans' design load requirements and requirements by Caltrans and the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment to be able to pass 100-year flows and debris.

2.4. Construction Methods

Construction vehicles will access both sides of Gerle Creek using the existing western and eastern road approaches. Construction vehicles may use the existing low-water crossing in Gerle Creek to access the east side of the creek. The use of the low-water crossing is consistent with the existing disturbance in the creek from OHV crossing at this location. Driving through the creek at this location is part of the baseline conditions and is not considered in-water work. Wentworth Springs Road will be minimally re-aligned to access the new bridge and will conform to the existing overall alignment. The new bridge will be brought to the site in segments on a flatbed truck and will be assembled on-site and set into place using cranes.

The County is evaluating the use of a staging area at Loon Lake where the bridge could be assembled. The assembled bridge may be transported via helicopter to the bridge site and lowered into place over Gerle Creek. One potential staging area would be at the Loon Lake Dam outfall, where the Ellis Creek intertie begins. This site is a previously disturbed parking area atop granite rock, with an on-site restroom and good access. This staging area is accessed from the end of Ice House Road, which is all paved except the final 0.75 miles is gravel. A second potential staging area is on a quarry/helispot near the Loon Lake Chalet. These staging areas are located approximately 3.9 mi and 3 mi (straight line), respectively, to the Gerle Creek bridge site.

Construction of the bridge may require water diversions on Gerle Creek. Temporary diversion systems shall be constructed, maintained, and later removed at the locations shown on the approved Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) in conformance with water pollution control practices for non-storm water management.

If dewatering is required, it is expected that it will only occur at the abutments. The majority of Gerle Creek would be left to flow in its natural alignment. The de-watered area would be blocked off using methods such as water pillows, rock, sandbags, sheet piling, pipes or coffer dams, or other structural methods approved by the Project Engineer and DFG. Groundwater and seepage in the dewatered area will be removed in accordance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (CWA). Best management practices (BMPs) will be implemented during construction to prevent concrete or other materials from entering the channel.

Upon completion of construction activities within the creek bed, any temporary diversion structures will be removed. The dams will be removed, beginning downstream and progressing upstream. Any gravel bags will be removed in their entirety from the Project site, and the creek bed returned to its pre-project conditions.

During construction, the entire length of the old, unpaved portion of Wentworth Springs Road will be closed. A traffic detour will be provided along the modern, paved Wentworth Springs Road. Construction is anticipated to take approximately three months. Construction staging will be located at existing cleared areas at the west end of the Project area and on the west side of Gerle Creek in the central

portion of the Project area. After the bridge has been installed, the old road alignment approaching the low water crossing will be abandoned and revegetated. The abutments from the bridge that washed out in 1986 will be left in place.

No utilities exist within the study area. No water or waste water services exist within the study area.

Construction is anticipated to take approximately three months. General bridge construction equipment expected to be used includes, but is not limited to, haul trucks, cranes, excavators, gradalls, backhoes, dump delivery trucks, concrete boom pump, and service vehicles.

2.5. Construction Contract

The County DOT would retain a construction contractor to construct the proposed improvements. The contractor would be responsible for compliance with all applicable rules, regulations, and ordinances associated with proposed Project activities and for implementing construction-related mitigation measures. County DOT would provide construction contractor oversight and management and would be responsible for verifying implementation of the mitigation measures. The contractor would construct the proposed Project in accordance with the Public Contracts Code of the State of California, the State of California Department of Transportation Standard Plans and Standard Specifications, and the Contract, Project Plans, and Project Special Provisions under development by the County DOT. The following are a combination of standard and project-specific procedures/requirements applicable to project construction:

- Construction contract special provisions will require that a traffic management plan be prepared. The traffic management plan will include construction staging and traffic control measures to be implemented during construction to maintain and minimize impacts to traffic during construction. Minor traffic stoppages or delays may be allowed if necessary during project construction. County DOT is planning to fully close the portion of Wentworth Springs Road in the project area during construction;
- Contract special provisions will require compliance with El Dorado County Air Quality Management District (AQMD) Rules 223 and 223-1 to minimize fugitive dust emissions.
- Compliance with the California Air Resources Board Airborne Toxic Control Measure at Title 17 Section 93105 addressing Construction, Grading, Quarrying, and Surface Mining activities and with the Asbestos ATCM for Surfacing Applications (California Code of Regulations, Title 17, Section 93106);
- Contract provisions will require notification of County DOT and compliance with California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 and California Public Resources Code Sections 5097.5, 5097.9 et seq., regarding the discovery and disturbance of cultural materials or human remains should any be discovered during project construction;
- Contract provisions will require compliance with the El Dorado County Grading Ordinance and Storm Water Management Plan for Western El Dorado County and implementation of Best Management Practices as identified in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit and/or Storm Water Management Plan;
- Contract provisions will require a fire safety plan to prevent fires from construction operations (including welding);
- County DOT or its construction contractors will conduct early coordination with ENF, law enforcement and emergency service providers to ensure minimal disruption to service during construction;

- County DOT and its construction contractors will comply with the State of California Standard Specifications (May 2006), written by the State of California Department of Transportation, for public service provision;
- Access to adjacent private properties will remain open at all times during the construction period; and
- The Project would comply with General Plan Policy 6.5.1.11 pertaining to construction noise.

2.6. Project Schedule

The Project is scheduled to commence in either 2011 or 2012 and is expected to be completed in a single construction season. Due to snow cover, construction will likely start after June 1. County DOT anticipates that Project construction will take 3 months to complete.

2.7. Required Permit Approvals

Based on the environmental conditions of the Project area and the analysis of potential impacts provided in Section 4, Project implementation will require compliance with the Clean Water Act and issuance of other approvals, as listed in the table below:

Table 2-1. Required Permit Approval

Approving Agency	Required Permit/Approval	Required For
Federal Agencies		
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Nationwide Section 404 Discharge Permit. (Clean Water Act, 33 USC 1341)	Discharge of dredge/fill material into "Waters of the United States," including wetlands.
State Agencies		
California Department of Transportation	Project Approval/ NEPA Compliance	Funding through the Federal Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (FSTIP)
State Water Resources Control Board, Regional Water Quality Control Board	General Construction Activity Storm Water Permit. Notice of Intent. (Clean Water Action Section 402; 40 CFR Part 122)	Storm water discharges associated with construction activity. for greater than 1 acre of land disturbance
State Water Resources Control Board, Regional Water Quality Control Board	Water Quality Certification (Clean Water Act), if project requires Army Corps of Engineers 404 permit.	Discharge into "Waters of the U.S.," including wetlands (see Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 Permit above).
Department of Fish and Game	Streambed Alteration Agreement. (Fish and Game Code 1602)	Change in natural state of river, stream, lake (includes road or land construction across a natural streambed) which affects fish or wildlife resource.
Local Agencies		
El Dorado County	Project Approval/CEQA Compliance	Project implementation and funding
El Dorado County Air Quality Management District	Fugitive Dust Plan	District Rule 223-1 (Fugitive Dust, Construction Activities)

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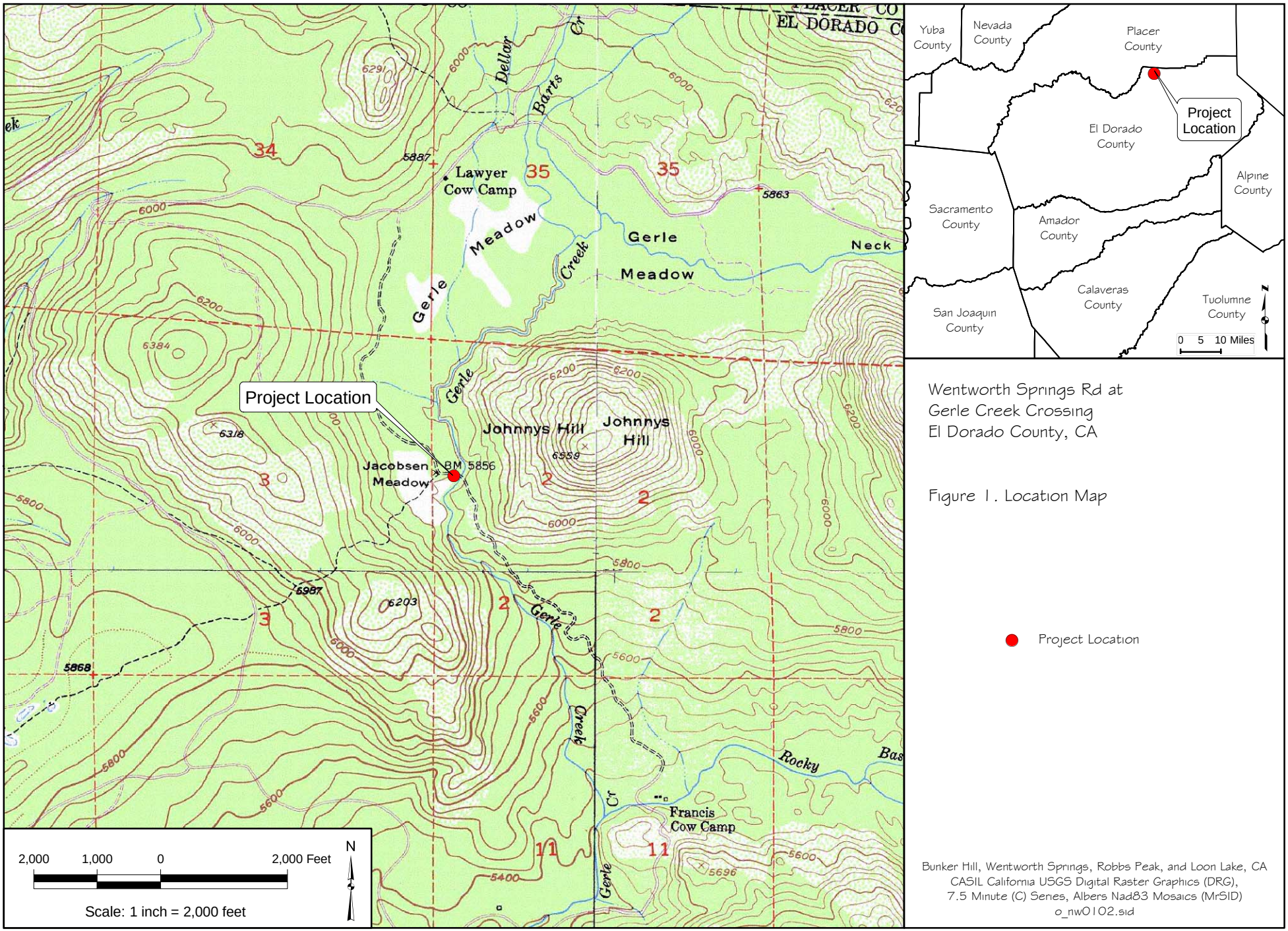

Wentworth Springs Rd at
Gerle Creek Crossing
El Dorado County, CA

Figure 1. Location Map

Project Location

Bunker Hill, Wentworth Springs, Robbs Peak, and Loon Lake, CA
CASIL California USGS Digital Raster Graphics (DRG),
7.5 Minute (C) Series, Albers Nad83 Mosaics (MrSID)
o_nw0102.sid

08108WentworthSpringsRdGerleCk_Fig1LocationMap.mxd

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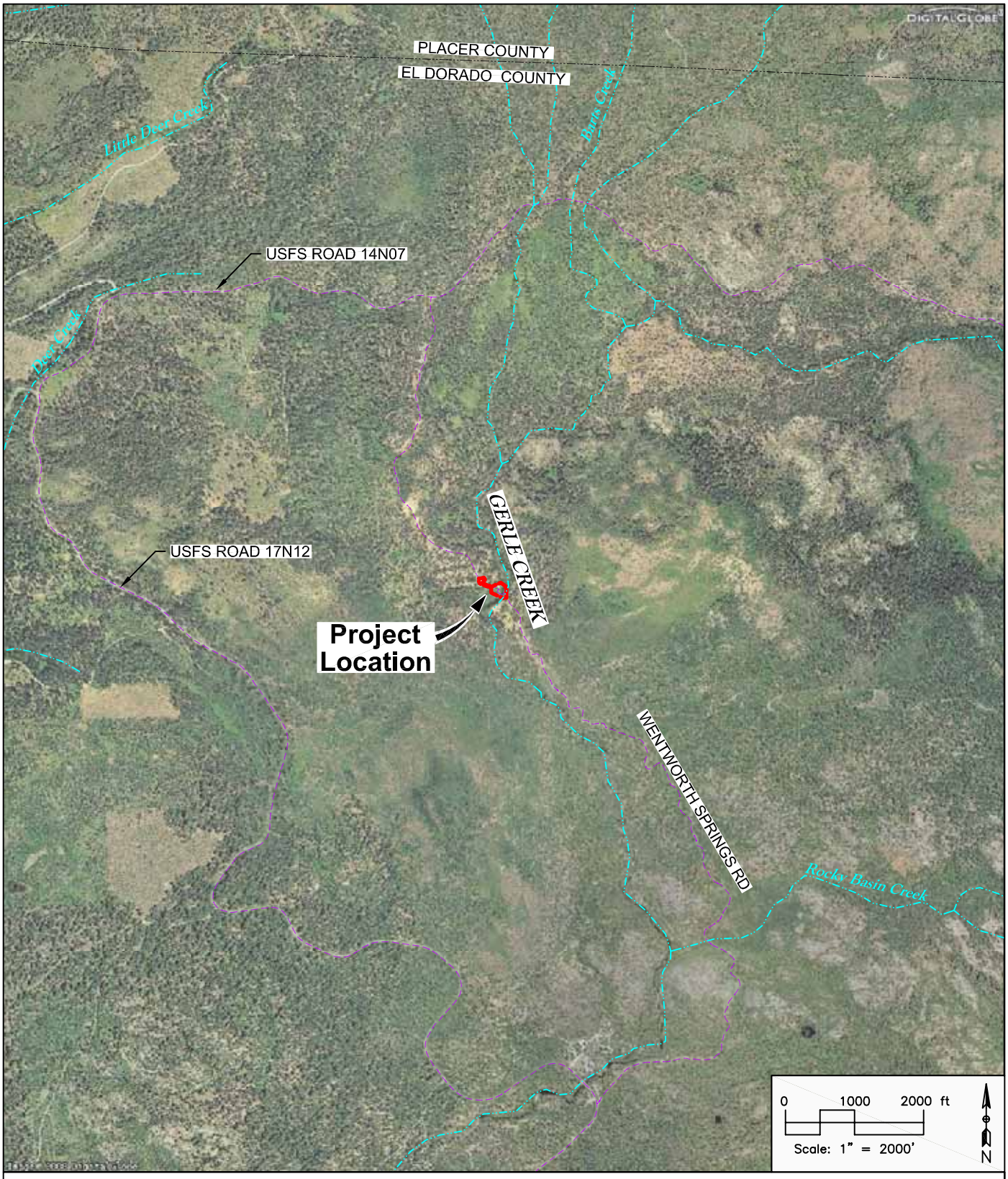

Wentworth Springs Road at
Gerle Creek Crossing
El Dorado County, CA

Project Study Area (PSA)

Creek

OMV Trail

Aerial Photograph
1 July 2003

NHD PLUS Data Extension Hi-res Flowlines
North Fork American, CA (18020128)

Figure 2. Aerial Photograph

08108WentworthSpringsRdGerleCk_Aerial-v2.dwg

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Wentworth Springs Road at
Gerle Creek Crossing
El Dorado County, CA

Figure 3. Project Design

Biological Resources in the Project Study Area		Summary of Impacts		
Community	**Area (ac)**	**Temporary (ac)**	**Permanent (ac)**	**Total (ac)**
Mixed Conifer Forest	0.89	0.27	0.01	0.28
Dirt Road/ Cleared Areas	0.35	n/a	n/a	n/a
Gerle Creek	0.24	0.09	0.02	0.11
Mountain Alder Riparian Scrub	0.18	0.05	0.04	0.09
Scrub Shrub Wetland	0.05	0.01	less than 0.01	0.01
Seasonal Wetlands	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	**1.74**	**0.42**	**0.07**	**0.49**

CONSTRUCTION STAGING AREA
PROPOSED ESA FENCE LINE AROUND SW 1
SW 1
SW 2
BEGIN NEW TRAIL ALIGNMENT
CONSTRUCTION STAGING AREA
WENTWORTH SPRINGS ROAD
GERLE CREEK
PROPOSED ESA FENCE LINE AROUND SW 2
PROPOSED BRIDGE (125' X 16')
NEW ROCK SLOPE PROTECTION
ABANDON AND REVEGETATE OLD TRAIL ALIGNMENT
PROPOSED ESA FENCE LINE ALONG SCRUB SHRUB WETLAND
END NEW TRAIL ALIGNMENT
PROPOSED ESA FENCE LINE AROUND *Ceanothus* sp.
MCF
MARS

LEGEND

- Project Study Area (PSA)
- Proposed Bridge
- New Rock Slope Protection
- Construction Staging Area
- Existing Dirt Road / Cleared Areas
- Gerle Creek
- Seasonal Wetland (SW)
- Scrub Shrub Wetland
- Mountain Alder Riparian Scrub (MARS)
- Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA)
- Temporary Impact Area
- Permanent Impact Area
- 2701 Tree Location and Tag Number
- 2701 Tree to be Removed

40 0 20 40 ft

Scale: 1 inch = 40 feet

Basemap:
Preliminary Layout Sheet (30%)
WENTWORTH SPRINGS ROAD at GERLE CREEK
BRIDGE REPLACEMENT
By El Dorado County Dept. of Transportation
L-1.dwg (Recv'd 9 June 2010)

Aerial Photo: July 2003,

08108WentworthSpringsRdGerleCk_APE-Delin-Biores_v15.dwg

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3. INITIAL STUDY CHECKLIST AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

3.1. Initial Study Checklist

This section of the Initial Study incorporates the Environmental Checklist contained in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. Each resource topic section provides a determination of potential impact and an explanation for the checklist impact questions. The following 16 environmental categories are addressed in this section:

- Aesthetics
- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation/Traffic
- Utilities

Each of the above listed environmental categories was fully evaluated and one of the following four determinations was made for each checklist question:

- **"No Impact"** means that no impact to the environment would occur as a result of implementing the Project.

- **"Less than Significant Impact"** means that implementation of the Project would not result in a substantial and/or adverse change to the environment and no mitigation is required.

- **"Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation is Incorporated"** means that the incorporation of one or more mitigation measures would reduce the impact from potentially significant to less than significant.

- **"Potentially Significant Impact"** means that there is either substantial evidence that a project-related effect would be significant or, due to a lack of existing information, could have the potential to be significant.

3.2. Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

I. AESTHETICS—Would the project:	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Environmental Setting

The Project is located on a parcel owned by Sierra Pacific Industries surrounded by Eldorado National Forest land in the Sierra Nevada Mountains in northeastern El Dorado County. Elevation of the Project area ranges from approximately 5,825 to 5,855 ft above sea level. Cleared areas used for parking and recreational activities occur at the northwestern and central portions of the Project area. Three dirt roads that provide access to undeveloped campsites cross through the northern and southeastern portion of the Project area.

Potential Environmental Effects

a) ***No Impact.*** A scenic vista refers to the view of an area that is visually or aesthetically pleasing. Aesthetic components of a scenic vista include 1) scenic quality, 2) sensitivity level, and 3) view access.

Table 5.3-1 of the General Plan Draft EIR identifies multiple scenic views and resources. Wentworth Springs Road, east of Georgetown, is listed in Table 5.3-1 of the General Plan Draft EIR as an Important Public Scenic Viewpoint in all directions (El Dorado County 2003). Exhibit 5.3-1 of the General Plan Draft EIR shows the scenic viewpoint extending along Wentworth Springs Road to approximately the eastern edge of Stumpy Meadows Lake. The Project is located along a section of Wentworth Springs Road many miles to the northeast of the scenic viewpoint area. The Project occurs in a forested area with limited views and would have no impact on scenic vistas.

b) ***No Impact.*** The Project would not affect aesthetic resources within the proximity of a state scenic highway.

c) ***No Impact.*** Construction of a new 16 ft wide bridge over Gerle Creek would not degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site. The design of the new bridge would be visually consistent with the character of an off-road, unpaved rural road.

d) ***No Impact.*** The Project does not introduce any new source of light or glare.

II. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES—Would the project:	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Environmental Setting

The Project is located in a mountainous area surrounded by Eldorado National Forest land. No Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or lands under Williamson Act contracts occur in the Project area (California Department of Conservation 2007).

Potential Environmental Effects

a) ***No Impact.*** No Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance would be affected by the Project.

b) ***No Impact.*** No lands either zoned for agricultural uses or subject to a Williamson Act contract exist within or adjacent to the Project area.

c) ***No Impact.*** Farmland and agricultural uses do not occur on or in the vicinity of the Project. The Project will not result in the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use.

III. AIR QUALITY— Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) 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 (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐

g) Conflict with any applicable plan, policy or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emission of greenhouse gases?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Environmental Setting

The Project is located in the Mountain Counties Air Basin (MCAB). The San Francisco Bay Area Air Basin and the Sacramento Valley Air Basin are located to the west, and the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin is located to the south. The air quality of a region is determined by the air pollutant emissions (quantities and type of pollutants measured by weight) and by ambient air quality (the concentration of pollutants within a specified volume of air). Air pollutants are characterized as primary and secondary pollutants. Primary pollutants are those emitted directly into the air, for example carbon monoxide (CO), and can be traced to a single pollutant source. Secondary pollutants are those pollutants that form through chemical reactions in the atmosphere, for example reactive organic gasses (ROG) and nitrogen oxides (NO_X) combine to form ground level ozone, or smog.

The Federal Clean Air Act of 1977 established national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS). These standards are divided into primary and secondary standards. Primary standards are designed to protect public health and secondary standards are designed to protect other values. Because of the health-based criteria identified in setting the NAAQS, the air pollutants are termed "criteria" pollutants. California has adopted its own, more stringent, ambient air quality standards (CAAQS). The MCAB is in nonattainment for Ozone and PM10 pollutants. The MCAB is in attainment for CO, SO_2, NO_2, and lead.

The El Dorado County Air Quality Management District (AQMD) administers the state and federal Clean Air Acts in accordance with state and federal guidelines. The AQMD regulates air quality through its district rules and permit authority. The AQMD was former called the Air Pollution Control District (APCD) when it released the Guide to Air Quality Assessment in 2002. It also participates in planning review of discretionary project applications and provides recommendations.

The following District rules apply to the Project:

- Rule 223 Fugitive Dust – General Requirements
- Rule 223-1 Fugitive Dust – Construction Requirements

These rules regulate fugitive dust (including that potentially containing naturally occurring asbestos, or NOA) generated by construction activities and require appropriate mitigation measures to reduce air quality impacts to less than significant.

El Dorado County's Guide to Air Quality Assessment (APCD 2002) specifies specific daily emissions thresholds that can be used to determine the significance of project emissions. Thresholds of significance for specific pollutants of concern are as follows:

- ROG: 82 lbs/day
- NO_x: 82 lbs/day
- PM10: AAQS

Potential Environmental Effects

The Project would result in short-term, temporary air pollutant emissions from construction activities. Construction emissions were estimated for the Project using the Sacramento Air Quality Management District's Road Construction Emissions Model, Version 6.3.2 as recommended in the El Dorado County's Guide to Air Quality Assessment (APCD 2002). The results are in Table 4-1.

Table 3-1. Estimated construction emissions

Project Phases	ROG lbs/day	CO lbs/day	NO_x lbs/day	PM10 lbs/day	Exhaust PM10 lbs/day	Fugitive Dust PM10 lbs/day
Grubbing/land clearing	8	37	40	12	2	10
Grading/excavation	8	40	45	12	2	10
Drainage/utilities/sub-grade	9	38	40	12	2	10
Paving	3	15	19	1	1	0
Maximum lbs/day	9	40	45	12	2	10
Significance Threshold	82	AAQS	82	AAQS	N/A	N/A
Significant?	NO	NO	NO	NO	N/A	N/A

Notes. Data entered to emissions model: Project Start Year: 2011; Project Length (months): 3; Total Project Area (acres): 1.74; Total Soil Imported/Exported (yd3/day): 100. PM_{10} estimates assume 50% control of fugitive dust from watering and associated dust control measures.0. Total PM_{10} emissions are the sum of *exhaust* and *fugitive dust* emissions.

a) ***No Impact.*** The Project is listed in the Sacramento Area Council of Government's 2009/12 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP; SACOG 2008). All projects included in the MTIP are consistent with the long-term Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Because it was evaluated for, and included in, the MTIP, the Project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the Plan.

b) ***Less Than Significant.*** El Dorado County is in nonattainment status for both federal and state ozone standards and the state PM10 standard. Construction activities would result in short-term increases in emissions from the use of heavy equipment that generate dust, exhaust, and tire-wear emissions. Project construction would create short-term increases in ROG, NO_x, and PM10 emissions from vehicle and equipment operation. None of the estimated emissions exceed the El Dorado County AQMD's significance thresholds (Table 3-1).

For projects with ROG and NO_x emissions below the significance thresholds, the AQMD also deems construction exhaust emissions of CO and PM10 to be less than significant. The project will adhere to AQMD Rules 223 and 223-1, which regulate fugitive dust emissions during construction.

c) ***No Impact.*** Cumulative net increases of criteria pollutants have been evaluated in the SACOG 2009/12 MTIP. This Project is referenced and evaluated in the MTIP.

d) ***No Impact.*** There are no sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the Project. The Project is not located within an area "more likely to contain naturally occurring asbestos" (California Department of Conservation 2000).

e) ***Less Than Significant.*** Construction activities would involve the use of construction equipment, which have distinctive odors. Odors are considered less than significant because of the limited number of the public affected and the short-term nature of the emissions.

f) ***Less Than Significant.*** Assembly Bill 32, adopted in 2006, established the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 which requires the State to reduce greenhouse gases (GHGs) to 1990 levels by 2020. Senate Bill 97, adopted in 2007, requires the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) to develop draft CEQA guidelines "for the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions or the effects of greenhouse gas emissions." OPR is required to "prepare, develop, and transmit" the guidelines to the Resources Agency on or before July 1, 2009. The Resources Agency must certify and adopt the guidelines on or before January 1, 2010.

GHGs are recognized by wide consensus among the scientific community to contribute to global warming/climate change and associated environmental impacts. The major GHGs that are released from human activity include carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide (OPR 2008). The primary sources of

GHGs are vehicles (including planes and trains), energy plants, and industrial and agricultural activities (such as dairies and hog farms).

GHG emissions from the Project would be produced from the materials used in the new bridge and road construction as well as construction-related equipment emissions. The Project would not result in the generation of additional vehicle trips after construction is complete. GHG emissions resulting from construction activity are short-term in nature and limited in scope. Thus, while the Project would have an incremental contribution within the context of the County and region, the individual impact is considered less than significant.

g) ***No Impact.*** The Project will not generate significant emissions of greenhouse gases and, therefore, will not conflict with any applicable plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing the emission of greenhouse gases.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES—Would the project:	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐
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 Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☒	☐	☐
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Environmental Setting

Wentworth Springs Road and Gerle Creek are the main physical features in the 1.74 ac Project area. Gerle Creek flows in a southwesterly direction through the Project. Cleared areas used for parking and recreational activities occur in the northwestern and central portions of the Project area. Three dirt roads that provide access to undeveloped campsites cross through the northern and southeastern portion of the Project area (Figure 2). The Project is surrounded by undeveloped land on all sides.

The Project is on the Bunker Hill U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) topographic quadrangle (quad; T13N, R14E, section 2). The Project elevation ranges from approximately 5,825 to 5,855 ft above sea level. The Project is in the North Fork American hydrologic unit (hydrologic unit code 18020128) and its centroid is 39.0039º north, -120.3836º west, UTM coordinate 726,500 meters E, 4,320,400 meters N, Zone 10N (1983 NAD). The Project is located in a generally flat to gently sloping terrain adjacent to Gerle Creek. The entire Project area drains to Gerle Creek. Soils in the Project are derived primarily from alluvial material and granitic rock.

Biological communities in the Project area include mixed conifer forest, dirt roads and cleared areas, Gerle Creek, mountain alder (*Alnus incana*) riparian scrub, scrub shrub wetland, and two seasonal wetlands. The Project area does not occur in the County designated important biological corridor (IBC) overlay (El Dorado County 2004). Sensitive biological communities are Gerle Creek, mountain alder riparian scrub, scrub shrub wetland, and the two seasonal wetlands. Sensitive biological communities are discussed in more detail under items b and c below.

Wentworth Springs Road is an unimproved dirt road that runs northwest-southeast through the center of the BSA. Remnant bridge abutments occur on both sides of the creek, upstream of the existing low-water crossing in Gerle Creek. Dirt roads and cleared areas occupy 0.35 ac in the study area.

There are 0.89 ac of mixed conifer forest in the study area. Mixed conifer forest is the primary community in the upland areas. Dominant trees include white fir (*Abies concolor*), California red fir (*Abies magnifica* var. *magnifica*), Jeffrey pine (*Pinus jeffreyi*), and lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta* ssp. *murrayana*). Incense cedar (*Calocedrus decurrens*) saplings occur infrequently in the understory. Common shrub species present in the understory are manzanita (*Arctostaphylos* sp.), huckleberry oak (*Quercus vaccinifolia*), and Sierra gooseberry (*Ribes roezlii* var. *roezlii*). The herbaceous layer is sparse and primarily composed of native forbs.

Mixed conifer forest is classified by DFG (2007) as the *Abies magnifica-Abies concolor* vegetation alliance (88.520.00). and as Sierran mixed conifer by the El Dorado County General Plan EIR (2004). . This community type is given no special designation by DFG (2007) or El Dorado County (2004).

Gerle Creek is a perennial channel that flows southwest through the Project area. Gerle Creek originates at Loon Lake approximately 4.5 river miles upstream of the crossing. A spillway at Loon Lake regulates the water flow in Gerle Creek. Hydrology for Gerle Creek originates from Loon Lake and upstream tributaries, including Dellar Creek, Barts Creek, and Jerrett Creek. Gerle Creek is tributary to the South Fork Rubicon River, which is tributary to the Middle Fork American River.

Gerle Creek in the Project area consists of a mix of riffles over large rocks and cobble and slower runs with pools over 5 ft deep. The bed of Gerle Creek is composed mud, large rocks, and cobble. A corridor of riparian vegetation dominated by mountain alder occurs along both sides of Gerle Creek.

The Project will have no effect on federal listed species or critical habitat. Gerle Creek is not designated as essential fish habitat (EFH) for Pacific salmon. Gerle Creek is a tributary to the Middle Fork American River upstream of the Nimbus and Folsom dams. Both dams are impassable barriers; Nimbus Dam represents the upstream limit of EFH for Pacific salmon on the American River.

Potential impacts to biological and wetlands resources were evaluated in a Natural Environment Study (NES; Sycamore Environmental 2010). The NES is a standard Caltrans format for documenting project impacts; the NES was reviewed and approved by Caltrans. The NES determined that habitat for the following species could be occupied at the time of construction. Item a) of this biological resources section evaluates potential project impacts on the following species:

- Foothill yellow-legged frog
- Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog

- Northwestern pond turtle
- Migratory birds and birds of prey

Potential Environmental Effects

a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?
Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigation Incorporated.

Foothill yellow -legged frog (FYLF; *Rana boylii*)

FYLF were not observed during the general biological surveys conducted for the NES. Gerle Creek in the BSA provides potential habitat for FYLF. The BSA occurs at the upper elevation limit of its range (Zeiner et al. 1988).

Mitigation Measures BIO-1.
The following avoidance and minimization measures will be implemented to protect FYLF:

- Temporary orange construction barrier fencing (or sedimentation fencing where required by permits) shall be installed at the upstream and downstream limits of the BSA along the creek. The fencing shall be installed after initial clearing of vegetation but prior to any further work on the Project.
- The Project shall prepare and follow a storm water pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) in order to obtain and comply with a Section 401 CWA water quality certification. The purpose of the SWPPP is to avoid and minimize Project impacts to water quality.
- A preconstruction survey for FYLF shall occur immediately prior to the initiation of construction activities within the riparian scrub or in Gerle Creek. The preconstruction survey shall be conducted by a biologist experienced with ranid surveys in California. If FYLF are not found, construction will proceed. If FYLF are found, construction will not proceed in the riparian scrub or Gerle Creek until either the frog has left the area of construction or the biologist contacts DFG and USFS for permission to move the frog.
- A qualified biologist will be present during the grubbing and clearing activities in the riparian and aquatic habitat in the BSA.

Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog (SNYLF; *Rana sierrae*)

Gerle Creek in the BSA provides potential habitat for SNYLF. Protocol-level surveys were conducted in the vicinity of the BSA for SNYLF in July 2004 for the Draft Rubicon Trail Master Plan (ESP 2007b). Surveys were conducted in the shallow perimeters of Loon Lake, Mud Lake, and Buck Island Lake, in Ellis Creek at the Rubicon Trail crossing, in four small ponds and a large wet meadow near the Rubicon Trail, and in the Rubicon River at the trail crossing. No SNYLF were observed during the protocol surveys (ESP 2007b). SNYLF were not observed during the general biological surveys conducted for the NES. The avoidance and minimization measures described for FYLF will also protect SNYLF.

Northwestern Pond Turtle (NWPT; *Clemmys marmorata marmorata*)

NWPT is a state species of concern. NWPT were not observed during the general biological surveys conducted for the NES. The BSA is located near the upper elevation limit of its range (Zeiner et al. 1988). It is unlikely that NWPT will occur in the BSA. The avoidance and minimization measures for FYLF (Mitigation Measures BIO-1) will also protect NWPT.

Migratory Bird and Birds of Prey

Migratory birds are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918 (16 U.S.C. 703-711). Migratory birds, including cliff swallow, barn swallow, and phoebe, nest on bridges and other man-made structures. The breeding season for these species occurs between March 1st and August 31st. Under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, nests of migratory birds that contain eggs are not to be disturbed during the breeding season.

Construction is scheduled to occur during the nesting season for swallows and other migratory birds, and raptors. If a nest becomes active after construction has started, then the bird is considered adapted to construction disturbance. An active nest is one with breeding pair nesting behavior, attended eggs, or unfledged young. The following mitigation measures will be implemented to reduce potential impacts to a level of less than significant:

Mitigation Measures BIO-2.

- If construction begins between February15th and September 15th, a biologist shall conduct a survey for active nests in the BSA and within 250 ft of the BSA within 30 days prior to construction. If no active nest of a bird of prey or MBTA bird is found, then no further action is necessary.
- If an active nest of a bird of prey or MBTA bird is found, then the biologist shall establish a minimum 250-ft Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) around the nest if the nest is of a bird of prey, and a minimum 100-ft ESA around the nest if the nest is of a MBTA bird other than a bird of prey.
- No construction activity shall be allowed in the ESA until the biologist determines that the nest is no longer active, or unless monitoring determines that a smaller ESA will protect the active nest.
- The ESA may be reduced if the biologist monitors the construction activities and determines that no disturbance to the active nest is occurring. The size of suitable buffers depends on the species of bird, the location of nest relative to the project, project activities during the time the nest is active, and other project specific conditions.

Fresno ceanothus (*Ceanothus fresnensis*)

Fresno ceanothus is an evergreen shrub (CNPS 2009) that occurs on dry ridges and volcanic soils in yellow pine forest from 4,000 to 6,000 ft (USFS 2008b). Blooms May through July (CNPS 2009). This species is known from Robb's Peak and Bunker Hill in the Eldorado National Forest (USFS 2008b).

Fresno ceanothus is evaluated because several ceanothus plants were observed in the BSA that could not be identified conclusively to species. Fresno ceanothus is also listed as a species observed in the Rubicon Trail Master Plan (ESP 2007b). At the time of botanical surveys in the BSA, the ceanothus plants did not have flowers or fruit available for examination. These ceanothus plants occur on the east side of Wentworth Springs Road, south of Gerle Creek. Mountain whitethorn (*Ceanothus cordulatus*) occurs elsewhere in the BSA.

The most accurate identification based on the condition of the specimen at the time of surveys is buck brush (*Ceanothus cuneatus* var. *cuneatus*), a common plant. This determination is based primarily on the absence of stems rooting at the nodes on the specimens examined in the field. However, the BSA is near the upper elevation limit of buck brush according to Hickman, ed. (1993) and online specimen records available at Consortium of California Herbaria (2009). In addition, the growth form of the specimens is more prostrate than typical for buck brush, but within the extremes of variability. Buck brush is a variable taxon and Fresno ceanothus is reported to hybridize (Munz 1973, Hickman, ed. 1993). The specimens in the BSA may be hybrids or descendants of a hybridization event.

The Project avoids the Ceanothus plants that were not conclusively identified to subspecies. The plants will be protected during construction with temporary fencing around the edge of the plants. A qualified biologist will determine the placement of the fencing. Signs will be posted on the fencing notifying the construction crew that the area beyond is an ESA and that no personnel or equipment shall pass beyond the fencing. The temporary fencing will be installed prior to commencement of construction. With incorporation of the avoidance and minimization efforts, the Project will not affect the Ceanothus plants.

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 Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service? ***Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigation Incorporated.***

Sensitive habitats include those that are of special concern to resource agencies and those that are protected under CEQA, the California Fish and Game Code, or the Clean Water Act. Sensitive habitats in the Project area include mountain alder riparian scrub, scrub-shrub wetland, two seasonal wetlands, and Gerle Creek. Impacts to scrub-shrub wetland, two seasonal wetlands, and Gerle Creek are discussed under question c below.

Mountain Alder Riparian Scrub

There are 0.18 ac of mountain alder riparian scrub in the Project area. This shrub/small tree riparian community occurs along both sides of Gerle Creek in the study area and is dominated by mountain alder (*Alnus incana ssp. tenuifolia*). Other species present include arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*), American dogwood (*Cornus sericea* ssp. *sericea*), spiraea (*Spiraea densiflora*), and thimbleberry (*Rubus parviflorus*).

Mountain Alder Riparian Scrub is classified by DFG (2007) as the *Alnus incana* vegetation alliance (63.210.00). The composition of vegetation in this community is classified as montane riparian by the El Dorado County General Plan EIR (2004). Montane riparian is considered a sensitive natural community in the El Dorado County General Plan EIR (2004).

The mountain alder riparian scrub cannot be completely avoided during construction. The final tree removal determination will be made by El Dorado County Department of Transportation (DOT). The bid specifications and contract will specify that the contractor will comply with the following avoidance and minimization measures which are included in the NES:

- Mark the limits of construction with temporary fencing to identify the limits of vegetation removal.
- Trucks and other vehicles will not be allowed to park beyond, nor shall equipment be stored beyond, the fencing.
- No vegetation removal, ground disturbing activities, or burning will be permitted beyond the fencing.

The Project will result in 0.04 ac of permanent impacts and 0.05 ac of temporary impacts to the mountain alder riparian scrub. The Compensatory Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (Appendix G of the NES; Sycamore Environmental 2010) describes the revegetation proposed for Gerle Creek. The plantings are identified in the table below:

Table 1. Revegetation Plantings

Planting	Quantity	Size	Approx. Density
Mountain alder (*Alnus incana* ssp. *tenuifolia*)	6	1 gallon or equivalent	10 ft centers
Thimbleberry (*Rubus parviflorus*)	6	1 gallon or equivalent	10 ft centers
American dogwood (*Cornus sericea* ssp. *sericea*) and/or Arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*)	17	Pole cutting	10 ft centers
Baltic rush (*Juncus balticus*)	20	Liner	1 per linear ft of channel edge

Restoration and revegetation of mountain alder riparian scrub in the Project area will ensure that impacts to this resource are less than significant.

Mitigation Measures BIO-3.

- Restore 0.01 ac of mountain alder riparian scrub in the abandoned portion of Wentworth Springs Road and 0.03 ac of mountain alder riparian scrub in the RSP around the new bridge.
- Revegetate graded areas and replant native riparian trees in the study area in accordance with the Compensatory Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (Appendix G of the NES; Sycamore Environmental 2010).

c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means? ***Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated.***

Gerle Creek

Gerle Creek is a perennial channel that flows southwest through the Project area. Gerle Creek originates at Loon Lake approximately 4.5 river miles upstream of the BSA. A spill way at Loon Lake regulates the water flow in Gerle Creek. Hydrology for Gerle Creek originates from Loon Lake and upstream tributaries. Gerle Creek in the in the Project area consists of a mix of riffles over large rocks and cobble and slower runs with pools over 5 ft deep. The bed of Gerle Creek is composed mud, large rocks, and cobble. A corridor of riparian vegetation dominated by mountain alder occurs along both sides of Gerle Creek in the study area.

Construction vehicles may use the existing low-water crossing in Gerle Creek to access the east side of the creek. The use of the low-water crossing is consistent with the existing disturbance in the creek from OHV crossing at this location. Driving through the creek at this location is part of the baseline conditions and is not considered in-water work. The Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) should address best management practices (BMPs) as outlined in the Stormwater BMP Handbook (California Stormwater Quality Association 2003) for application when crossing Gerle Creek.

The construction of the abutments and installation of the rock slope protection (RSP) may require a temporary water diversion. The majority of Gerle Creek would be left to flow in its natural alignment. The de-watered area would be blocked off using methods such as water pillows, rock, sandbags, sheet piling, pipes or coffer dams, or other structural methods approved by the Project Engineer and DFG. Water quality will be protected by implementation of BMPs to minimize the potential for siltation and downstream sedimentation of Gerle Creek and to prevent concrete or other materials from entering the

channel. Groundwater and seepage in the de-watered area will be removed in accordance with the SWPPP.

Minimization efforts will include marking the limits of construction with temporary fencing to prevent affecting Gerle Creek unnecessarily. If in-water work is required, impacts will be minimized by conducting in-water work between 15 April and 15 October, unless DFG provides approval of work outside that period.

The abutments of the new bridge will be located outside the OHWM of Gerle Creek. RSP will be placed around the abutments and will extend below the OHWM of Gerle Creek. Placement of the RSP would result in 0.02 ac of permanent impact to Gerle Creek. The Project may result in the temporary disturbance of 0.09 ac of Gerle Creek. Temporary impacts to Gerle Creek will occur if water is diverted.

The impacts to wetlands and waters may be permitted under Section 404 Nationwide 23 permit, a Section 401 Water Quality Certification, and a DFG 1600 Streambed Alteration Agreement. These permits will be obtained prior to commencement of construction. The bid specifications and contract will specify that the contractor will comply with the terms and conditions outlined in the permits.

These permits require revegetation of the temporarily disturbed areas of the bed and bank of Gerle Creek. The planting of replacement trees and native vegetation in the riparian corridor ensure that impacts to this resource are less than significant.

Mitigation Measures BIO-4.

- Restore 0.02 ac in the Gerle Creek bed where the road will be abandoned.

Scrub-Shrub Wetland

The scrub shrub wetland abuts the west side of Gerle Creek, adjacent the mountain alder riparian scrub. Overstory vegetation in the scrub shrub wetland is similar to the alder riparian scrub, with a dense growth of mountain alder in the tree and shrub stratums. In the understory, dominant vegetation is weak mannagrass (*Torreyochloa pallida* var. *pauciflora*) and common horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*). Hydrology for the scrub shrub wetland is provided by overflow from Gerle Creek during high flow events and by the capillary fringe from Gerle Creek during normal circumstances. Recent alluvial deposits ranging in size from coarse sand to boulders indicate recent and frequent flooding of the area.

Wentworth Springs Road crosses through the scrub shrub wetland at the current creek crossing. The scrub shrub wetland is devoid of vegetation in this area due to disturbance from vehicles and road maintenance.

The composition of vegetation in this community is classified as the *Alnus incana* vegetation alliance (63.210.00) by DFG (2007). The composition of vegetation in this community is classified as montane riparian by the El Dorado County General Plan EIR (2004). Montane riparian is considered a sensitive natural community in the El Dorado County General Plan EIR (2004).

Except where the existing road crosses through the scrub shrub wetland, construction will avoid this natural community. Avoidance and minimization measures described for the mountain alder riparian scrub will also protect the scrub shrub wetland. After construction, the portion of Wentworth Springs Road that currently crosses through the scrub shrub wetland will be abandoned and revegetated with native species. The Project will not impact the scrub shrub wetland.

Seasonal Wetland

Two seasonal wetlands (SW) occur in the Project area on either side of Wentworth Springs Road, west of Gerle Creek. SW 1 occurs in a depression approximately 3 feet north of Wentworth Springs Road. The dominant hydrophytic species in SW 1 is sedge (*Carex vesicaria* var. *major*). Other species occurring in SW 1 include rush (*Juncus balticus* and *J. oxymeris*) and *Scirpus diffusus*. Hydrology for SW 1 is provided by runoff from surrounding uplands.

SW 2 is a small depression approximately 5 ft south of Wentworth Springs Road. Dominant hydrophytic species in SW 2 are sedge (*Carex vesicaria* var. *major*) and mountain strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*). Hydrology for SW 2 is provided by runoff from surrounding uplands.

No construction will occur within the seasonal wetlands. Construction vehicles will use Wentworth Springs Road between the seasonal wetlands for site access. To protect the seasonal wetlands, the bid specifications and contract will specify that the contractor will comply with the following avoidance and minimization measures:

- Temporary fencing will be installed around the edge of the seasonal wetlands in the BSA. Placement of the fencing will be at the discretion of a qualified biologist. Signs will be posted on the fencing notifying the construction crew that the area beyond is an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) and that no personnel or equipment shall pass beyond the fencing. The temporary fencing will be in place prior to commencement of construction.
- Water-permeable erosion control measures will be installed along the entire temporary fence line to ensure that sediment does not enter the seasonal wetland from the construction area. The erosion control measures will be in place prior to commencement of construction.

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? ***No Impact.***

The Project area is not located within a County-designated Important Biological Corridor (IBC) as defined in Policy 7.4.2.9 of the El Dorado County General Plan (El Dorado County 2004). If water diversion is required for construction, the Project will maintain adequate fish passage.

e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance? ***Less Than Significant.***

The El Dorado County Oak Woodland Management Plan (Plan) governs the conservation of native oaks in the County. The Management Plan states that when oak canopy removal is necessary to complete County capital improvement projects, such projects are exempt from the canopy retention and replacement standards. This exemption applies to road widening and realignments which are necessary to increase capacity, to protect the public's health, and to improve the safe movement of people and goods in existing public road rights-of-way, as well as acquired rights-of-way necessary to complete the project.

The El Dorado County Oak Woodland Management Plan does call for the County to minimize, where feasible, the impacts to oaks through the design process and right-of-way acquisition for such projects. As this Project is a component of the capital improvement plan and is necessary to protect the health and to improve the safe movement of people and goods in existing public road rights-of-way as well as acquired rights-of-way necessary to complete the Project, the Project meets the exemption criteria.

There are only a few California black oaks in the study area. None were identified for removal. Huckleberry oak, a shrub, occurs in the riparian area along Gerle Creek. Some huckleberry oak shrubs may be pruned for construction access.

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? ***Less Than Significant.***

The Project is consistent with the El Dorado County Oak Woodland Management Plan as it meets the criteria for exemption from the plan because it consists of a capital improvement project necessary to protect the health and to improve the safe movement of people and goods in existing public road rights-of-way as well as acquired rights-of-way necessary to complete the Project.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES—Would the project:	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Environmental Setting

The Project Area of Potential Effect (APE) and vicinity are characterized by Late Pleistocene glacial tills, moraines, and outwash deposits composed of sand, gravel, cobbles, and boulders (Saucedo and Wagner 1992; Hanes 1994:226, 357, Tahoe City, California Sheet). A moderately deep and moderately well drained soils also occur from weathered glacial outwash. Very Gravelly sandy loam extends from 0 to 56 cm (0 to 22 inches). Below to 107 cm (42 inches) is extremely gravelly loam. Weakly cemented glacial till is at approximately 104 cm (41 inches). Soil development is shallow. This and the general erosional setting make the likelihood for encountering buried deposits low.

Presented below is a brief discussion of the Project areas history in relation to Wentworth Springs Road/ Rubicon Trail. The following information is from the *DRAFT Archaeological Survey Report* for the Project (Tremaine 2010)

In 1857 U.S. government 1857, decided to create an east-west wagon trail through Sierras. George H. Goddard, a civil engineer, had surveyed the area the previous year and noted that Lake Tahoe was the lowest pass in the region (Deal 2006). This wagon road would eventually extend from Lake Tahoe and continue through to Georgetown. The road was utilized as a cattle/sheep/turkey drive route from the 1880s to the 1940s. Although El Dorado County declared this route as a public highway in 1887, it was still considerably rugged.

Today, a portion of the Georgetown to Lake Tahoe Road (from roughly the Airport Flat Campground to McKinney Lake), known as the Rubicon Trail, is primarily traveled for recreational purposes.

The Jacobsen's Ranch, located immediately west of the Gerle Ranch, was owned and operated by Jacob "Johnny" Jacobsen. Jacobsen applied for 80-acres of land along the Gerle Creek in 1891, eventually opening a dairy (in the area now known as Jacobsen's Meadow; Johnny's Hill is also named after him).

Access to the dairy was had using the Georgetown-Tahoe wagon road, necessitating the fording of Gerle Creek until 1922 when the first bridge (wooden) was constructed at this location. Although the bridge survived for many years, high waters eventually destroyed it. In 1944 the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors built a concrete bridge (referred to as Jacobsen's bridge); however, it too was lost to high waters during the winter of 1963/64. One other attempt at building a bridge took place, using an old railroad flat car, but it was also washed away (winter of 1980/1981). At this time, the County had paved a road which bypassed the old Wentworth Springs Road (i.e., a portion of the Georgetown to Lake Tahoe Road), thus abandoning any plans to construct a new bridge, once again leaving people to ford Jacobsen's Crossing.

Potential Environmental Effects

a) ***No Impact.*** A pedestrian survey and records search were conducted in support of the Archaeological Survey Report (ASR). The records search identified one previously recorded resource within the APE, a segment of the old wagon road (the Rubicon Trail) from Georgetown to Lake Tahoe (FS No. 05-03-55-545). An intensive survey of the APE was conducted on October 5, 2009. No other historic resources were found. (Tremaine 2010).

The historic wagon road, first recorded in 1997 and updated by Deal in 2006, has not been formally evaluated. The road segment crossing the Project area appears to be heavily disturbed by off-road vehicular traffic and camping activities over the past 50 years. There are no important features associated with the road that might be impacted. Thus, if the road, itself, is ever listed to the NRHP, this small segment would not be considered an element contributing to its significance.

b) ***Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigation Incorporated.*** An intensive pedestrian survey and records search were conducted in support of the Archaeological Survey Report (Tremaine 2010). A bedrock milling station was recorded on the south side of Gerle Creek. Impacts to the bedrock mortar feature can be avoided through creation of an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA). See mitigation measure CUL-1.

There is the possibility of accidental archaeological discoveries during construction-related ground-disturbing activities. This is considered a less-than-significant impact because the Project would implement County policies and state law to protect archaeological resources. These policies include stopping all work in the vicinity of the discovered resources and requiring that a professional archaeologist complete a determination of their significance prior to resuming any work in the area of the discovery.

Mitigation Measures CUL-1.

- Create an ESA around the bedrock mortar using construction fencing. The location of the ESA fence is shown in the Archaeological Survey Report (Tremaine 2010).

c) ***No Impact.*** Paleontological resources in El Dorado County are associated with limestone cave deposits, occurrences of the Mehrten formation, and Pleistocene channel deposits (El Dorado County 2003). Because these resources do not occur in the Project area, no impact will occur. The site does not contain any other unique geologic features.

d) ***Less Than Significant.*** The ASR for this Project documents that no known cemeteries or burials occur within the Project area (Tremaine 2010). Should human remains be discovered during the excavation portion of the Project, the Project description includes contract provisions that will require notification of the El Dorado County DOT and compliance with California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 and California Public Resources Code Section 5097.94 et seq.

VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS—Would the project:	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv) Landslides?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Environmental Setting

El Dorado County is located in the Sierra Nevada geomorphic province of California, east of the Great Valley province and west of the Range and Basin provinces. Steep-sided hills and narrow rocky stream channels characterize the Sierra Nevada province. This province consists of Pliocene and older deposits that have been uplifted as a result of plate tectonics, granitic intrusion, and volcanic activity. Subsequent glaciation and additional volcanic activity are factors that led to the east-west orientation of stream channels. (El Dorado County 2003.)

The southwestern foothills of El Dorado County are composed of rocks of the Mariposa Formation that include amphibolite, serpentine, and pyroxenite. The northwestern areas of the county consist of the Calaveras Formation, which includes metamorphic rock such as chert, slate, quartzite, and mica schist. The higher peaks in the County consist primarily of igneous and metamorphic rocks with granite intrusions, a main soil parent material at the higher elevations. (El Dorado County 2003.)

Potential Environmental Effects

a-i) ***Less Than Significant.*** No earthquake fault zones are mapped in El Dorado County or adjacent Placer County on the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones Map (Bryant and Hart 2007). The nearest active fault is the West Tahoe–Dollar Point fault, approximately 16.5 mi (26.6 km) east of the Project area. Because the Project is not within 25 km of an active fault, Caltrans structure design practice does not require fault proximity adjustments to the Seismic Design Criteria seismic response curves (Taber Consultants 2009).

a-ii) ***Less Than Significant.*** The Project is not in a mapped Seismic Hazard Zone (California Department of Conservation 2009). "Based on historical seismic activity and fault and seismic hazards mapping, El Dorado County is considered to have relatively low potential for seismic activity" (El Dorado County 2003). Current AASHTO and Caltrans design standards utilize the anticipated Maximum Credible Earthquake (MCE) to define the safety evaluation event for bridge design.

a-iii) ***Less Than Significant.*** Liquefaction is a phenomenon in which the strength and stiffness of a soil is reduced by earthquake shaking or other rapid loading. Soils in the Project area are subject to liquefaction (Taber 2009). Settlement in the order of 0.5 to 2 inches is considered possible at the site (Taber 2009). Design recommendations in the Foundation Investigation report reduce potential liquefaction impacts to less than significant.

a-iv) ***No Impact.*** Slopes on the site are not high and steep enough to be subject to landslides. No impacts are anticipated.

b) ***Less Than Significant.*** The Project could temporarily disturb approximately 1 acre. The maximum erosion hazard on the Aquepts and Umbrepts, 0 to 15% slopes, soil unit is low, and the maximum erosion hazard on the Gerle-Tallac complex, 5 to 30 percent slopes, soil unit is moderate (USDA 1985). The Project requires the preparation of a construction-related Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), consistent with section 402 of the Clean Water Act, and construction activities will include implementation of stormwater runoff best management practices (BMPs) identified in the SWPPP. Implementation of the BMP in the SWPPP would prevent substantial erosion or topsoil loss. Following construction, all disturbed areas would be revegetated to ensure long-term stabilization.

c) ***Less Than Significant.*** Soils in the Project area are subject to liquefaction (Taber 2009). Settlement in the order of 0.5 to 2 inches is considered possible at the site (Taber 2009). Design recommendations in the Foundation Investigation report reduce potential liquefaction impacts to less than significant. Soils on the site have a low shrink-swell potential and are not susceptible to landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, or collapse (USDA 1985).

d) ***No Impact.*** Soils in the Project area have a low shrink-swell potential (USDA 1985).

e) ***No Impact.*** Neither septic tanks nor alternative wastewater disposal systems are part of the Project.

VII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS—Would the project:	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated*	***Less Than Significant Impact***	*No Impact*
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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 for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Environmental Setting

A material is considered hazardous if it appears on a list of hazardous materials prepared by a Federal, State, or local agency, or if it has characteristics defined as hazardous by such an agency. A hazardous material is defined in Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR) as follows:

> A substance or combination of substances which, because of its quantity, concentration, or physical, chemical or infectious characteristics, may either (1) cause, or significantly contribute to, an increase in mortality or an increase in serious irreversible, or incapacitating reversible, illness; or (2) pose a substantial present or potential hazard to human health or environment when improperly treated, stored, transported or disposed of or otherwise managed. (California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Section 66261.10)

Chemical and physical properties cause a substance to be considered hazardous. Such properties include toxicity, ignitability, corrosivity, and reactivity. CCR, Title 22, Sections 66261.20-66261.24 define the aforementioned properties. The release of hazardous materials into the environment could potentially contaminate soils, surface water, and groundwater supplies. Under Government Code Section 65962.5, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) maintains a list of hazardous substance sites. This list, referred to as the "Cortese List", includes CALSITE hazardous material sites, sites with leaking underground storage tanks, and landfills with evidence of groundwater contamination. In addition, the El Dorado County Environmental Management Department (EMD) maintains records of toxic or hazardous material incidents, and the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) keeps files on hazardous material sites.

Most hazardous materials regulation and enforcement in El Dorado County is overseen by the El Dorado County EMD, which refers large cases of hazardous materials contamination or violations to the RWQCB and the State DTSC. Other agencies, such as the El Dorado County AQMD and the Federal and State Occupational Safety and Health Administrations (OSHA), may also be involved when issues related to hazardous materials arise.

Potential Environmental Effects

a) ***Less Than Significant.*** Small amounts of hazardous materials would be used during construction activities (e.g., equipment maintenance, fuel, and solvents). Hazardous materials would only be used during construction of the Project, and any hazardous material uses would be required to comply with all applicable local, state, and federal standards associated with the handling and storage of hazardous materials. Use of hazardous materials in accordance with applicable standards ensures that any exposure of the public to hazard materials would have a less-than-significant impact.

b) ***Less Than Significant.*** The Project would result in a less than significant impact associated with the use and potential accidental release of hazardous materials during construction (see item “a”, above).

c) ***No Impact.*** There are no schools within one-quarter mile of the Project area.

d) ***No Impact.*** There are no Cortese List sites within the Project area (California EPA 2009).

e) ***No Impact.*** The Project is not located in an Airport Land Use Plan area or in the vicinity of an airport.

f) ***No Impact.*** The Project is not located in the vicinity of a private airstrip.

g) ***No Impact.*** The Project would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. The entire unpaved portion of Wentworth Springs Road would be closed during Project construction. There are no residences along this stretch of road that would require emergency services.

h) ***Less Than Significant.*** The new bridge over Gerle Creek could be at risk of damage in a wildland fire. The risk to people from wildland fires would remain the same as the pre-project risk.

VIII.HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY—Would the project:	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	☐	☐	☐	☒
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☐	☒
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	☐	☐	☒	☐
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Environmental Setting

The Project is located in the North Fork American hydrologic unit (hydrologic unit code 18020128). Seasonal surface runoff within the Project area drains to Gerle Creek. The proposed bridge location is on FEMA Flood Insurance Map Community Panel Number 06017C0325E (Effective Date: 26 September 2008). The staging area at the end of 14N05 is on Panel No. 06061C0375F. The potential staging area at Loon Lake is on Panel No. 06017C0100E (Effective Date: 8 June 1998). The map panels have not been printed by FEMA. The panels are designated as "Zone D" meaning, areas in which flood hazards are undetermined.

Potential Environmental Effects

a) ***Less Than Significant.*** The Project will not violate water quality or waste discharge requirements. Water quality objectives will be met through adherence to construction provisions, precautions, and stipulations as described in the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit,

Section 404 CWA permit, Section 401 Water Quality Certification, and 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement. Coverage under the current Statewide General Permit for Discharges of Storm Water Associated with Construction Activity will be obtained. In accordance with the provisions of the General Permit, the County will require the contractor to prepare and implement a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) to reduce or minimize discharge of pollutants from construction activities.

b) ***No Impact.*** The Project would not involve any withdrawals from an aquifer or groundwater table.

c) ***No Impact.*** The Project would not substantially alter the drainage pattern of the site. Wentworth Springs road will be slightly realigned at the new bridge crossing. Rain and snow runoff in the Project area will continue to drain to Gerle Creek. The Project would not realign Gerle Creek.

d) ***No Impact.*** The Project would not alter the course of Gerle Creek or substantially alter drainage patterns within the Project area that would cause flooding on- or off-site.

e) ***No Impact.*** Installation of the new bridge would not provide additional sources of runoff. Water quality will be protected during Project construction by adherence to construction provisions, precautions, and stipulations as described in the NPDES, Section 404, Section 401, and 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement permits.

f) ***No Impact.*** No additional impacts are anticipated.

g) ***No Impact.*** The Project is a roadway improvement project, and no housing development is associated with the Project.

h) ***No Impact.*** The bridge deck is designed to pass 100-year flood flows and debris. The western abutment of the bridge would be located within the 100-year floodplain; however, flood flows would continue to be constrained to the current 100-year floodplain.

i) ***No Impact.*** The Project is within the Loon Lake Dam Failure Inundation Zone. The Project will not expose people to higher levels of risk involving flooding. General Plan Policy 6.4.2.2 protects the life and property of County residents below dams by not allowing new critical or high occupancy structures (e.g., schools, hospitals) to be located within the inundation area resulting from failure of dams. The bridge is not a critical or high occupancy structure.

j) ***No Impact.*** The Project is not in an area subject to seiche or tsunami.

IX. LAND USE AND PLANNING—Would the project:	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
a) Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Environmental Setting

The applicable land use plan in the Project area is the 2004 El Dorado County General Plan. The Project is located on a privately owned parcel surrounded by the Eldorado National Forest.

Potential Environmental Effects

a) ***No Impact.*** The Project would not divide a community.

b) ***No Impact.*** The Project would not conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the Project.

c) ***Less Than Significant.*** The El Dorado County General Plan requires the County to prepare an Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP) that identifies important habitat in the County and establishes a program for effective habitat preservation and management. The INRMP is still in process it is not anticipated to be adopted until after this Project has been completed.

X. MINERAL RESOURCES—Would the project:	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Environmental Setting

El Dorado County is considered a mining region capable of producing a wide variety of mineral resources. Metallic mineral deposits, gold in particular, are considered the most significant extractive mineral resources. No mineral extraction activities occur on or in the vicinity of the Project area.

Potential Environmental Effects

a) ***No Impact.*** The Project is not within or adjacent to any important mineral resource areas (El Dorado County 2004, Figure CO-1); therefore, the Project would not impact the availability of mineral resources that would be of value to the region or the state.

b) ***No Impact.*** The Project does not occur at a locally important mineral resource recovery site.

XI. NOISE—Would the project:	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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 expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?				
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Environmental Setting

The Project is located in an uninhabited area with no noise-sensitive land uses in the vicinity. There is an existing helicopter landing area near the Loon Lake Chalet.

Potential Environmental Effects

a) ***No Impact.*** The Project is located in an uninhabited area.

b) ***No Impact.*** The Project is located in an uninhabited area.

c) ***No Impact.*** The Project is not traffic or growth-inducing and will not result in a permanent increase in ambient noise levels.

d) ***No Impact.*** The project description and construction methods section of this document identifies the type of activities that would temporarily increase noise levels in the vicinity of the Project. Because these increases would be temporary and because the Project is located in an uninhabited area, there would be no impact as a result of construction noise.

e) ***No Impact.*** The Project is not located within an airport land use plan area or within two miles of a public or public use airport.

f) ***No Impact.*** The Project is not located within the vicinity of a private airstrip.

XII. POPULATION AND HOUSING—Would the project:	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
a) Induce substantial 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) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Environmental Setting

The Project occurs in an unpopulated area within the Eldorado National Forest.

Potential Environmental Effects

a) ***No Impact.*** The Project will not induce population growth either directly or indirectly because the Project does not involve road extensions or expansion of infrastructure in a populated area. Land surrounding the Project is the Eldorado National Forest.

b) ***No Impact.*** The Project does not involve the displacement of any housing.

c) ***No Impact.*** The Project does not involve the displacement of people.

XIII.PUBLIC SERVICES—Would the project:	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
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:	☐	☐	☐	☒
Fire protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Police protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Schools?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Parks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Environmental Setting

No government facilities occur within or adjacent to the Project area.

Potential Environmental Effects

a–e) ***No Impact.*** The Project will not result in an increase in population served by government facilities. The Project will not require the provision of, or need for, new or altered governmental facilities. The Project will not impact acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any public services.

XIV. RECREATION:	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
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) 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Environmental Setting

Undeveloped campsites occur in the vicinity of the Project along Wentworth Springs Road.

Potential Environmental Effects

a) ***Less Than Significant.*** Installation of the new bridge would not appreciably change the amount of traffic on Wentworth Springs Road or the numbers of the public using the undeveloped campsites adjacent to the Project area. Traffic is already limited to vehicles that can navigate uneven terrain. The road would remain an unpaved backcountry road.

b) ***No Impact.*** The Project does not include the construction of any recreational facilities and would not require the expansion of existing recreational facilities. The new bridge would be an infrastructure improvement to an existing public road.

XV. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC—Would the project:	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
a) Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Environmental Setting

Wentworth Springs Road is a rural, unpaved backcountry road that traverses the Project area..

Potential Environmental Effects

a) ***Less Than Significant.*** Installation of the new bridge would not appreciably change the amount of traffic on Wentworth Springs Road. Traffic is already limited to vehicles that can navigate uneven terrain. The road would remain an unpaved backcountry road.

b) ***No Impact.*** Wentworth Springs Road is an unpaved backcountry road and does not have an established level of service designation.

c) ***No Impact.*** The Project would not result in a change in air traffic patterns.

d) ***No Impact.*** The Project will result in a safer crossing of Gerle Creek. The Project would not include design features such as sharp curves, dangerous intersections, or turning radii that would increase hazards. Because uses of the roadway and surrounding areas would not change, it would likewise not result in any use incompatibility.

e) ***No Impact.*** The Project will not result in inadequate emergency access.

f) ***No Impact.*** The Project will not result in inadequate parking capacity.

g) ***No Impact.*** The Project will not conflict with established alternative transportation goals.

XVI. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS—Would the project:	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Environmental Setting

There are no storm drainage facilities within the Project area.

Potential Environmental Effects

a) ***No Impact.*** The Project would not produce additional wastewater, and therefore, would not exceed the applicable wastewater treatment requirements**.**

b) ***No Impact.*** The Project would not increase the demand on existing water or wastewater treatment facilities.

c) ***No Impact.*** The Project would not require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or the expansion of existing facilities.

d) ***No Impact.*** The Project would not require water service.

e) ***No Impact.*** The Project would not produce wastewater.

f) ***No Impact.*** Solid waste generated by the Project would be limited to debris generated during construction . Solid waste disposal would occur in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations. Disposal would occur at permitted landfills. Therefore, the Project would not generate the need for new solid waste facilities.

g) ***No Impact.*** The Project would conform to all applicable state and federal solid waste regulations.

XVII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE (To be filled out by Lead Agency if required)	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
a) Does the project have the potential to 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, 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) 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)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☐	☐	☒

a) ***Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated.*** Through the use of Best Management Practices and the mitigation measures noted previously, the Project will not degrade the quality of the environment.

b) ***No Impact.*** The Project will not result in cumulatively considerable impacts.

c) ***No Impact.*** The Project will provide a safer crossing of Gerle Creek for vehicles travelling along Wentworth Springs Road and will not cause adverse effects on human beings.

4. DETERMINATION

4.1 Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

This Initial Study has determined that in the absence of mitigation the proposed Project could have the potential to result in significant impacts associated with the factors checked below. Mitigation measures are identified in this Initial Study that would reduce all potentially significant impacts to less-than-significant levels.

___	Aesthetics	___	Mineral Resources
___	Agricultural Resources	___	Noise
___	Air Quality	___	Population and Housing
✓	Biological Resources	___	Public Services
✓	Cultural Resources	___	Recreation
___	Geology and Soils	___	Transportation/Traffic
___	Hazards and Hazardous Materials	___	Utilities and Service Systems
___	Hydrology and Water Quality	✓	Mandatory Findings of Significance
___	Land Use and Planning	___	None Identified

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

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

☒ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because the project-specific mitigation measures described in Section III have been added to the project. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

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

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

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

Janet Postlewait — November 23, 2010

Signature — Date

Name and Title: Janet Postlewait, Principal Planner

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5. REPORT PREPARATION AND REFERENCES

5.1. Report Preparation

El Dorado County Department of Transportation – CEQA Lead Agency

Chuck Pazzi, P.E.	Supervising Civil Engineer
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Dustin Harrington, P.E.	Associate Civil Engineer
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R. John Little, Ph.D.	CEQA/NEPA Program Manager, President
Jeffery Little	Project Manager, Vice President
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APPENDIX A

Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan

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Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan
for the
Wentworth Springs Road at Gerle Creek Crossing Project

CEQA Lead Agency:
El Dorado County

Prepared: November 2010

Adopted by Board of Supervisors on: _____

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Introduction

Purpose

El Dorado County (County) Department of Transportation (DOT) has prepared an Initial Study (IS) and Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the proposed Wentworth Springs Road at Gerle Creek Project. The County DOT, in conjunction with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is proposing to construct a new bridge on Wentworth Springs Road over Gerle Creek. The proposed Project is to construct a new 16 ft wide, prefabricated steel truss bridge immediately upstream of the existing low water crossing through Gerle Creek on Wentworth Springs Road. The proposed Project is described in more detail in the Initial Study.

As described in the IS/MND, the Project itself incorporates a number of measures to minimize adverse effects on the environment. The IS/MND also identified several mitigation measures that are required to reduce potentially significant impacts to levels that are less than significant. This Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP) describes a program for ensuring that these mitigation measures are implemented in conjunction with the Project. El Dorado County DOT, as the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), is responsible for overseeing the implementation and administration of this MMRP. The County will designate a staff member to manage the MMRP. Duties of the staff member responsible for program coordination will include conducting routine inspections and reporting activities, coordinating with the Project construction contractor, coordinating with regulatory agencies, and ensuring enforcement measures are taken.

Regulatory Framework

California Public Resources Code Section 21081.6 and California Code of Regulations Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15097 require public agencies to adopt mitigation monitoring or reporting plans when they approve projects under a MND. The reporting and monitoring plans must be adopted when a public agency makes its findings pursuant to CEQA so that the mitigation requirements can be made conditions of Project approval.

Format of This Plan

The MMRP summarizes the impacts and mitigation measures identified and described in the Project IS/MND. Each of the impacts discussed within this MMRP is numbered based on the sequence in which they are discussed in the IS/MND. A summary of each impact with the corresponding specific mitigation measures are provided. Mitigation measures are followed by an implementation description, the criteria used to determine the effectiveness of the mitigation, the timeframe for implementation, and the party responsible for monitoring the implementation of the measure.

Implementation of mitigation measures is ultimately the responsibility of DOT; during construction, the delegated responsibility is shared by DOT contractors. Each mitigation measure in this plan contains a "Verified By" signature line, which will be signed by the DOT Project manager when the measure has been fully implemented and no further actions or monitoring are necessary for the implementation or effectiveness of the measure.

Impacts and Associated Monitoring or Reporting Measures

Impact BIO-1: Potential impacts on Foothill yellow-legged frog.

Mitigation Measure BIO-1: The County will implement the following avoidance and minimization measures to protect FYLF.

- Temporary orange construction barrier fencing (or sedimentation fencing where required by permits) shall be installed at the upstream and downstream limits of the BSA along the creek. The fencing shall be installed after initial clearing of vegetation but prior to any further work on the Project.
- The Project shall prepare and follow a storm water pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) in order to obtain and comply with a Section 401 CWA water quality certification. The purpose of the SWPPP is to avoid and minimize Project impacts to water quality.
- A preconstruction survey for FYLF shall occur immediately prior to the initiation of construction activities within the riparian scrub or in Gerle Creek. The preconstruction survey shall be conducted by a biologist experienced with ranid surveys in California. If FYLF are not found, construction will proceed. If FYLF are found, construction will not proceed in the riparian scrub or Gerle Creek until either the frog has left the area of construction, or the biologist contacts DFG and USFS for permission to move the frog.
- A qualified biologist will be present during the grubbing and clearing activities in the riparian and aquatic habitat in the BSA.

Implementation:	The County will retain the services of a qualified biologist to conduct pre-construction surveys and will implement the measures described above.
Effectiveness Criteria:	The County will prepare and keep on file documentation verifying the implementation of the above referenced measures.
Timing:	Pre-Construction Phase and Construction Phase.
Verified By:	Date:
	County Project Manager

Impact BIO-2: Potential impacts on Migratory Bird and Birds of Prey.

Mitigation Measure BIO-2: The County will implement the following measures to minimize or avoid Project-related effects on nesting Migratory Bird and Birds of Prey.

- If construction begins between February 15th and 15th September, a biologist shall conduct a survey for active nests in the BSA and within 250 ft of the BSA within 30 days prior to construction. If no active nest of a bird of prey or MBTA bird is found, then no further action is necessary.
- If an active nest of a bird of prey or MBTA bird is found, then the biologist shall establish a minimum 250-ft Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) around the nest if the nest is of a bird of

prey, and a minimum 100-ft ESA around the nest if the nest is of a MBTA bird other than a bird of prey.

- No construction activity shall be allowed in the ESA until the biologist determines that the nest is no longer active, or unless monitoring determines that a smaller ESA will protect the active nest.
- The ESA may be reduced if the biologist monitors the construction activities and determines that no disturbance to the active nest is occurring. The size of suitable buffers depends on the species of bird, the location of nest relative to the project, project activities during the time the nest is active, and other project specific conditions.

Implementation: The County will retain the services of a qualified biologist to conduct pre-construction surveys and will implement the measures described above.

Effectiveness Criteria: The County will prepare and keep on file documentation verifying the implementation of the above referenced measures.

Timing: Pre-Construction Phase

Verified By: Date

County Project Manager

Impact BIO-3: Impacts on Mountain Alder Riparian Scrub habitat.

Mitigation Measure BIO-3: The County will implement the following measures to mitigate 0.05 ac of temporary impacts to the mountain alder riparian scrub.

- Restore 0.01 ac of mountain alder riparian scrub in the abandoned portion of Wentworth Springs Road and 0.03 ac of mountain alder riparian scrub in the RSP around the new bridge.
- Revegetate graded areas and replant native riparian trees in the study area in accordance with the Compensatory Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (Appendix G of the NES).

Implementation: The County will implement the measures described above.

Effectiveness Criteria: The County will prepare and keep on file documentation verifying the implementation of the above referenced measures.

Timing: Post-Construction Phase

Verified By: Date

County Project Manager

Impact BIO-4: Impacts on waters of the United States (Gerle Creek).

Mitigation Measure BIO-4: The County will implement the following measures to mitigate impacts to Gerle Creek.

- Restore 0.02 ac in the Gerle Creek bed where the road will be abandoned.

Implementation: The County will implement the measures described above.

Effectiveness Criteria: The County will prepare and keep on file documentation verifying the implementation of the above referenced measures.

Timing: Post-Construction Phase

Verified By: Date

County Project Manager

Impact CUL-1: Impacts on cultural resources.

Mitigation Measure CUL-1: The County will implement the following measures to protect cultural resources.

- Create an exclusion zone around the bedrock mortar using construction fencing. The location of the ESA fence is shown in the Archaeological Survey Report (Tremaine 2010).

Implementation: The County will implement the measures described above.

Effectiveness Criteria: The County will prepare and keep on file documentation verifying the implementation of the above referenced measures.

Timing: Pre-Construction Phase and Construction Phase

Verified By: Date

County Project Manager