Memorandum

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To: Haesun Lim
Associate Environmental Planner
Southern Sierra Environmental Analysis Branch

Date: March 26, 2007
File: MNO-395
PM 52.1/53.7
EA: 09-33500K

From: Gerald H. White, Chief 3/26/07
Central Region Hazardous Waste, Water Quality and Paleontology Branch

Subject: Paleontological Identification Report for:
Mono Lake Rockfall
Mono County

Staff from the Central Region Hazardous Waste, Water Quality and Paleontology Branch reviewed the proposed Mono Lake Rockfall project in Mono County. A request for scoping studies was received on January 24, 2007.

The potential for paleontological resources within the limits and scope of the project description were evaluated by review of: The California State University, Fresno, Department of Geology Paleontological Sensitivity Mapping Project database; geologic maps; and geologic and paleontologic literature (see attached references).

Project Description

The following Project Description was included in the Request for Scoping Studies: "The project starts from approximately 0.2 miles north of the Mono Lake Visitor Center driveway to approximately 0.6 miles north of Picnic Grounds Road (PM 52.1 to 53.7). The project proposes to stabilize six identified cut areas within the project limits by using various combinations of different methods of slope stabilization. Methods of slope stabilization include cutting back the slopes and/or flattening the slopes, scaling the existing slopes, installing a restraining/draping systems, re-vegetating the slopes where feasible, and installing permanent advance-warning signs. There is also the No-Build Alternative."

Paleontological Review

The Mono Lake Rockfall project is on State Route 395 near the west side of Mono Lake in Mono County. The project begins approximately one mile north of the town of Lee Vining in portions of Sections 5 and 7 of T1N, R26E and Section 31, T2N, R26E, MDB&M of the Mount Dana USGS 7.5' quadrangle map. The project is along the eastern edge of the Sierra Nevada geomorphic province (Strand, 1967).

The project area is underlain by alluvium and lake deposits of Quaternary age (Strand, 1967). A larger scale geologic map prepared just north of the project area describes the alluvium as bedded stream and lacustrine gravel, sand, and silt and minor thin volcanic ash layers. The lake deposits are described as fine-grained tuffaceous silt and sand with interbedded sand and gravel and calcareous tuffa in the Mono basin (Chesterman and Gray, 1975). Chesterman and Gray assigned the alluvium and lake deposits as Pleistocene in age.

As identified in the CSUF Paleontology Sensitivity Mapping Project database, paleontology sensitivity for the post mile section of SR 395 is listed as having no paleontologic sensitivity. A University of California Museum of Paleontology (UCMP) database search identified the Trench Canyon fossil locality as a site where numerous vertebrate fossils have been found. Fossils found at the Trench Canyon locality include *hypolagus*, *osteichthyes*, and *aves* assigned a blancan Pliocene age. The Trench Canyon locality is over ten miles from the project area.

Although a UCMP vertebrate fossil locality has been identified within the area, based on the project description, a review of geologic maps and literature for the project area, the CSUF Paleontology Sensitivity Mapping Project database, and a UCMP database search, excavation activities associated with the project appear to have a low potential to encounter significant paleontologic resources. No further studies are recommended.

If you need further information, please contact Richard C. Stewart at (559) 243-8229.

REFERENCES

CSUF, 2000, Paleontological sensitivity mapping project, technical report and data base: California Department of Transportation and California State University, Fresno, Interagency Agreement No. 06A0163, 49 p.

Strand, R.G., 1967, Geologic Map of California, Olaf P. Jenkins edition, Mariposa Sheet: State of California, Division of Mines and Geology, scale 1: 250,000

Chesterman, C.W. and Gray, C.H., 1975, Geology of the Bodie 15-Minute Quadrangle, Mono County, California, California Division of Mines and Geology, scale 1: 48,000

UCMP, University of California, Berkeley, Museum of Paleontology database: http://www.ucmp.berkeley.edu/

Paleontological Resources Checklist

Site Visit: No; Photolog

Project Setting:
Urban ☐ Rural ☒ Semi Rural ☐

Current Land Use:
Residential ☐ Commercial ☐ Industrial ☐ Light Industrial ☐
Agricultural ☐ Recreational ☒ Undeveloped ☒

Property Owner (Private/Public): Public

Paleontological Database search revealed the following data:
2000, CSUF sensitivity database indicates no sensitivity. UCMP database search identified vertebrate fossil locality approx. ten miles from project.

Additional Comments:
Isolated areas of slope stabilization. No further studies.

Cost of Studies (if necessary): Contracted Paleontology Studies would be shown as Consultant Hours in the WBS (165.10.65)

Duration of Studies: 0 **(in Months)**

Cost of Monitoring (if necessary): $0.00 ($Dollar value)

Cost of Mitigation (if necessary): $0.00 ($Dollar value)

Note: Please fill in the Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) sections below with the appropriate hours. Consultant Hours for Mitigation or Monitoring is reported in Dollar Amounts. Mitigation and Monitoring costs are entered into the Text of the Scoping Checklist, NOT in the WBS.)

Person Hours									
Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8	Start Date	End Date	Source Unit	Consultant Hrs.		
		0				172.1	00	165.10.65	Perform Paleontology Study
		0				172.1		235.05.25	Perform Paleontology Mitigation

Reviewed By Richard C. Stewart Date: 03/26/07

March 26, 2007

Preliminary Environmental Analysis Report - Paleontology

Project Information

District 09 County MNO Route 395 Post Mile 52.1/53.7 EA 33500K

Project Title: Mono Lake Rockfall

Paleontology Coordinator Richard Stewart Phone # (559) 243-8229

Project Description

Stabilization of six cut slopes within the project limits.

Paleontology Summary Statement

The project area underlain by Quaternary alluvium and lake deposits consisting of bedded stream and lacustrine gravel, sand, silt and minor thin volcanic ash layers, fine-grained tuffaceous silt and sand with interbedded sand and gravel and calcareous tuffa. No sensitivity in CSUF Paleontology database. UCMP database identified fossil locality within ten miles. Based on a review of geologic and paleontologic data, excavation activities associated with the project appear to have a low potential to encounter significant paleontologic resources.

Mitigation

Mitigation is not necessary.

Disclaimer

This report is not an environmental document. Preliminary analysis, determinations, and estimates of mitigation costs are based on the project description provided in this report. The estimates and conclusions provided are approximate and are based on cursory analysis of probable effects. This report is to provide a preliminary level of environmental analysis to supplement the Project Initiation Document. Changes in project scope, alternatives, or environmental laws will require a reevaluation of this report.

Reviewed by:

Richard Stewart Date: March 26, 2007

Environmental Technical Reports or Studies Required

No further studies are required.

Environmental Technical Reports or Studies That May Be Required

Study – requires thorough analysis including field surveys, database searches, and reports
Document – does not require field surveys; issue is incidental and may only require memo to file and brief explanation in the environmental document.
N/A – Issue is not applicable to the proposed project.

	Study	Document	N/A
Paleontology	☐	☒	☐

Paleontological Resources. The Paleontological Identification Report determined that the project is unlikely to impact any sensitive paleontologic resources.

Permits
Permits. No permits are anticipated for the project.

non-Standard Special Provision

None

Technical Review

List of Preparers

Paleontology Review by Richard Stewart	Date March 26, 2007

Cost of Studies (if necessary): **Contracted Paleontology Studies would be shown as Consultant Hours in the WBS (165.10.65)**

Duration of Studies: 0 **(in Months)**

Person Hours							
Level 7	Level 8	Start Date	End Date	Source Unit	Consultant Hrs.		
0				172	0	165.10.65	Perform Paleontology Study
0				172		235.05.25	Perform Paleontology Mitigation

Central Region Environmental Division
Mitigation Cost Compliance Estimate Form

☒ PEAR ☐ Draft ED ☐ Final ED ☐ PS&E

Dist.-Co.-Rte.-PM: 09-MNO EA: 33500K
Project Name: Mono Lake Rockfall Alternative #: _____
Date: March 26, 2007

Numbers are in thousands

	Right of Way Capital (Prior to Construction – Biology only) (050)	**Construction Capital (During and Post Construction) (042)**
Paleontology		0

Comments: