Yellow Creek Bridge Replacement Project

PLUMAS COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
02-PLU-70-PM 14.9
EA#: 02-1C750
EFIS#: 02-0000-0080

Initial Study with Negative Declaration

Prepared by the
State of California, Department of Transportation
Caltrans District 2
1657 Riverside Drive, MS-30
Redding, CA 96001

January 2015
General Information about this Document

For individuals with sensory disabilities, this document is available in Braille, large print, on audiocassette, or computer disk. To obtain a copy in one of these alternate formats, please call or write to Caltrans, Attn: Chris Quiney, North Region Environmental Management, 1657 Riverside Drive, Redding, CA 96001; (530) 225-3174 Voice, or use the California Relay Service TTY number, 1-800-735-2929.
Yellow Creek Bridge Replacement Project

In Plumas County, California on State Route 70
Post Mile 14.9, at Belden

INITIAL STUDY WITH NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Submitted Pursuant to: Division 13, California Public Resources Code

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Transportation

Amber Kelley
Office Chief - Redding
North Region Environmental Services
California Department of Transportation

1-26-15
Negative Declaration
Pursuant to: Division 13, California Public Resources Code

Project Description
The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to remove the existing Yellow Creek Bridge (Bridge No. 09-0008) on SR 70 and construct a new, single-span bridge on the same alignment as the existing bridge. The project will include bridge replacement, retaining walls, rock slope protection, metal beam guardrail, culvert work, grading, snow plow reflectors, bridge barriers, vegetation removal and tree clearing, earthwork, drainage improvements, utility relocation, paving, sign replacement, and striping. The project will require temporary stream diversion and right-of-way acquisition.

Determination
The Department has prepared an Initial Study for this project, and following public review, has determined from this study that the proposed project would not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:

- The proposed project will have no effect with regard to aesthetics, agriculture and forest resources, geology and soils, land use and planning, mineral resources, population and housing, public services, utilities and service systems, wild and scenic rivers, or energy resources.

- The proposed project will have a less-than-significant effect with regard to air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, noise, recreation, transportation/traffic, hydrology and water quality, and mandatory findings of significance.

Amber Kelley
Office Chief - Redding
North Region Environmental Services
California Department of Transportation

I-260-15
Date
Table of Contents

Chapter 1. Proposed Project.............................................................. 1
  1.1. Project Title........................................................................... 1
  1.2. Lead Agency Name and Address......................................... 1
  1.3. Contact Person and Phone Number...................................... 1
  1.4. Project Location................................................................... 1
  1.5. Project Sponsor’s Name and Address................................. 1
  1.6. Purpose and Need............................................................... 1
  1.7. Project Description............................................................. 1
  1.8. Project Alternatives............................................................ 11
  1.9. Permits and Approvals....................................................... 14
  1.10. Environmental Factors Potentially Affected .................... 14
  1.11. Environmental Determination......................................... 14

Chapter 2. CEQA Environmental Checklist.................................. 15

Chapter 3. Discussion of Environmental Impacts............................ 27
  3.1. Air Quality ........................................................................... 27
  3.2. Biological Resources.......................................................... 27
  3.3. Cultural Resources.............................................................. 29
  3.4. Greenhouse Gas Emissions............................................... 30
  3.5. Hazards and Hazardous Materials................................. 34
  3.6. Hydrology and Water Quality.......................................... 34
  3.7. Noise................................................................................. 35
  3.8. Recreation........................................................................... 36
  3.9. Transportation and Traffic............................................. 36

Chapter 4. List of Preparers............................................................... 37

Chapter 5. References.................................................................. 39

Appendix A. Summary of Avoidance and Minimization Measures

Appendix B. List of Technical Studies

Appendix C. Project Comments and Responses

Figures
  Figure 1: Project Vicinity Map.................................................. 3
  Figure 2: Project Location Map................................................. 5
  Figure 3: Project Detail Map...................................................... 7
  Figure 4: Project General Plan................................................. 9
  Figure 5. California Greenhouse Gas Forecast....................... 31
  Figure 6: Mobility Pyramid....................................................... 32
Chapter 1. Proposed Project

1.1. Project Title
Yellow Creek Bridge Replacement Project

1.2. Lead Agency Name and Address
California Department of Transportation, District 2
1657 Riverside Drive, MS-30
Redding, CA 96001

1.3. Contact Person and Phone Number
Chris Quiney
Caltrans Environmental Branch Chief
Phone: (530) 225-3174

1.4. Project Location
The project is located along the North Fork of the Feather River, extending from PM 14.3 to PM 15.2 on SR 70 (Figures 1 and 2).

1.5. Project Sponsor’s Name and Address
California Department of Transportation, District 2
1657 Riverside Drive, MS-30
Redding, CA 96001

1.6. Purpose and Need
The purpose and need of the proposed project is to provide a reliable highway crossing that meets modern highway design standards and accommodates interregional transportation needs. The project will include a seismic retrofit of the bridge and upgrades to meet current design standards.

1.7. Project Description
The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is proposing to remove the existing Yellow Creek Bridge (Bridge No. 09-0008) on SR 70 and construct a new, single-span bridge on the same alignment as the existing bridge (Figures 3 and 4). The proposed single-span bridge structure will measure 48-feet-wide by 204-feet 6-inches in length, which would provide a 12-foot-wide lane in each direction, with an eight-foot-wide left shoulder and 12-foot 6-inch-wide right shoulder. The proposed bridge structure will consist of a cast-in-place, pre-stressed, concrete box girder superstructure on reinforced concrete seat-type abutments supported by 24-inch diameter cast-in-drilled-hole (CIDH) concrete piles. Two retaining walls will be constructed parallel to the Feather River to support the southern edge of roadway directly before and after the bridge. The wall leading up to the bridge is 152 feet long and has a maximum height of 10-feet; the wall after the bridge is 80 feet long with a maximum height of 14-feet. Rock slope protection (RSP), excavated to a depth of up to 10 feet, will be placed along the banks of Yellow Creek in front of the existing retaining walls located in front of and below the new abutments, RSP will also be placed in front of the new retaining walls that parallel the Feather River.
The bridge will include Type 80 concrete bridge barrier rail that will extend to the ends of the retaining walls, with metal pedestrian railing attached to the top of the bridge barrier rail. The concrete bridge barrier rail will be modified with architectural texture to mimic the existing Douglas fir wood bridge rails. Metal beam guard railing will connect to the ends of the bridge barrier rail. Approximately 150-feet of roadway on both ends of the bridge will be reconstructed and widened to conform the new bridge to the existing roadway, with the grade of the bridge raised 1 foot. Scuppers along the bottom of the bridge barrier rail will be used to remove drainage from the bridge deck. Three existing culverts will be replaced and the existing ditches will be regraded. A new down drain will be constructed west of the bridge. The PG&E Safety Roadside Rest Area parking lot will be repaved. Vegetation clearing, tree removal, and tree trimming will occur, with the intent to retain mature trees where it is possible to construct around them. The utilities in the existing bridge will be moved to the new bridge, and buried utility vaults will be relocated.

Construction staging areas include the PG&E Safety Roadside Rest Area parking lot and the wide pull-out areas on both sides of SR 70 at PM 14.3. Temporary construction access roads will be built parallel to the Feather River and along the west bank of Yellow Creek. A temporary gravel work pad will be constructed on the west bank of Yellow Creek. Two temporary bridge trestles will be constructed, one upstream and one downstream of Yellow Creek Bridge. Falsework will be used to support the new bridge during construction. Clear water diversions will be used to isolate RSP construction from stream flow. Parking for trail users (i.e. Pacific Crest Trail, Indian Springs Trail, and Yellow Creek Trail) will be temporarily relocated across Belden Bridge, on PG&E-owned land.

Additional project details are included in Section 1.8: Project Alternatives, in the Preferred Alternative section.
Figure 1: Project Vicinity Map
Figure 2: Project Location Map
Figure 3: Project Detail Map
Figure 4: Project General Plan
1.8. **Project Alternatives**

Eight project alternatives, including a "no-build" alternative, were identified as potential solutions to address the purpose and need for the project. For the purposes of this Initial Study, two project alternatives are discussed in detail; the “No-Build” alternative, and the Preferred Alternative. All alternatives considered are outlined in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Construct a new single-span precast concrete girder bridge on the existing alignment and remove the existing bridge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rehabilitate the existing Yellow Creek Bridge to current bridge design and seismic standards, including modifications of the existing piers and construction of new foundations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3*</td>
<td>Construct a new single-span, Cast-in-Place (CIP) pre-stressed (PS) concrete box girder bridge on the existing alignment and remove the existing bridge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Construct a new bridge on a new alignment and preserve the existing Yellow Creek Bridge. The purpose of this alternative is to investigate the feasibility of mitigating impacts on the Feather River Historic Highway District by leaving the existing bridge intact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Construct a new single-span, composite welded steel girder bridge on the existing alignment and remove the existing bridge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Construct a new three-span precast concrete voided slab bridge on the existing alignment and remove the existing bridge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Construct a new two-span precast concrete girder bridge on the existing alignment and remove the existing bridge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Build</td>
<td>The no-build alternative would not involve any new bridge construction or existing bridge rehabilitation at the project site. The existing Yellow Creek Bridge would remain in its existing configuration and condition and continue to serve as SR 70’s crossing over Yellow Creek.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Preferred alternative

All eight alternatives were evaluated based on cost, constructability, structure hydraulics, structure design, traffic handling, long-term maintenance, environmental concerns, and right-of-way constraints.

Alternatives 2, 6, and 7 include piers within Yellow Creek. Based on the presence of the piers, Alternatives 2, 6, and 7 would be costly to build due to the cost associated with controlling water releases from the Belden Powerhouse during construction. In addition, Alternatives 2, 6, and 7 would perpetuate the existing issues related to aggregate being deposited around the existing piers during storm events and Belden Powerhouse water releases.
Alternative 4 would include constructing a new bridge on a new alignment within the Feather River Canyon. Alternative 4 would be costly due to environmental constraints (slope, water features, existing infrastructure, etc.) and would most likely result in greater environmental impacts than those that will result from other identified alternatives.

Based on design requirements Alternatives 1 and 5 would sit deeper in the stream channel than other identified alternatives, and may be impacted by flooding. In addition, Alternatives 1 and 5 would be more costly to build than other alternatives, as the bridge components would have to be transported to the project site, rather than cast-in-place.

“No Build” Alternative
The No-Build Alternative is defined as not implementing any aspect of the proposed project. A no-build alternative should be considered as a baseline for comparing the environmental impacts associated with the proposed build alternative. This alternative would not result in temporary environmental impacts, but would continue to perpetuate a highway crossing that does not meet modern highway design standards nor accommodate interregional transportation needs, and would not address seismic deficiencies. The No-Build Alternative would not meet the defined purpose and need for the proposed project.

Preferred Alternative
The Preferred Alternative includes removal of the existing Yellow Creek Bridge and construction of a new, single-span bridge on the existing alignment.

Bridge Structure
The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to remove the existing Yellow Creek Bridge on SR 70 and construct a new, single-span bridge on the same alignment as the existing bridge. The proposed single-span bridge structure will measure 48-feet-wide by 204-feet 6-inches in length, which would provide a 12-foot-wide lane in each direction, with an eight-foot-wide left shoulder and 12-foot 6-inch-wide right shoulder. The proposed bridge structure will consist of a cast-in-place, pre-stressed, concrete box girder superstructure on reinforced concrete seat-type abutments supported by 24-inch diameter cast-in-drilled-hole (CIDH) concrete piles. Two retaining walls will be constructed parallel to the Feather River to support the southern edge of roadway directly before and after the bridge. The wall leading up to the bridge is 152 feet long and has a maximum height of 10-feet; the wall after the bridge is 80 feet long with a maximum height of 14-feet. Rock slope protection (RSP), excavated to a depth of up to 10 feet, will be placed along the banks of Yellow Creek in front of the existing retaining walls located in front of and below the new abutments, RSP will also be placed in front of the new retaining walls that parallel the Feather River.

Additional Roadway Improvements
The bridge will include Type 80 concrete bridge barrier rail that will extend to the ends of the retaining walls, with metal pedestrian railing attached to the top of the bridge barrier rail. The concrete bridge barrier rail will be modified with architectural texture to mimic the existing Douglas fir wood bridge rails. Metal beam guard railing will connect to the ends of the bridge barrier rail. Approximately 150-feet of roadway on both ends of the bridge will be reconstructed and widened to conform the new bridge to the existing roadway, with the grade of the bridge raised 1 foot. Scuppers along the bottom of the bridge barrier rail will be used to remove...
drainage from the bridge deck. Three existing culverts will be replaced and the existing ditches will be regraded. A new down drain will be constructed west of the bridge. The PG&E Safety Roadside Rest Area parking lot will be repaved. Vegetation clearing, tree removal, and tree trimming will occur, with the intent to retain mature trees where it is possible to construct around them. The utilities in the existing bridge will be moved to the new bridge, and buried utility vaults will be relocated.

Staging Areas and Stream Access
Construction staging areas include the PG&E Safety Roadside Rest Area parking lot and the wide pull-out areas on both sides of SR 70 at PM 14.3. Temporary construction access roads will be built parallel to the Feather River and along the west bank of Yellow Creek. A temporary gravel work pad will be constructed on the west bank of Yellow Creek. Two temporary bridge trestles will be constructed, one upstream and one downstream of Yellow Creek Bridge. Falsework will be used to support the new bridge during construction. Clear water diversions will be used to isolate RSP construction from stream flow. Parking for trail users (i.e. Pacific Crest Trail, Indian Springs Trail, and Yellow Creek Trail) will be temporarily relocated across Belden Bridge, on PG&E-owned land.

Temporary Stream Diversion
A temporary stream diversion will be required to isolate the work area from the live stream, which may be accomplished by diverting flows through the work area using temporary culvert(s), a plastic lined ditch, cofferdams, and/or driven sheet piles. The temporary stream diversion will convey stream flows through the construction area and outlet downstream of the work area. If a gravel berm is used to divert stream flows, materials shall consist of clean river run gravel. Following construction, flows will be returned to the stream channel, while clean river run gravel may be left in the stream channel, provided it does not impede stream flow or fish passage, and conforms to the natural channel morphology. If any other materials are used to divert the stream flows, they shall be removed from the stream channel following construction. All work within Yellow Creek and the Feather River will be in accordance with Caltrans' Standard Specifications, Standard Special Provisions, and/or Non-standard Special Provisions, for a temporary clear water diversion.

Traffic Control
Bridge construction will require temporary traffic control through the project site during construction activities. Vehicle traffic will be controlled using the One Way Reversing Traffic Control method during construction. Signals will be placed at both ends of the bridge, and traffic will be able to proceed one direction at a time. Traffic will proceed on portions of the bridge in accordance with construction staging.

Pedestrian traffic through the construction zone will be facilitated with push buttons located at the north end of Belden Bridge and near the Safety Roadside Rest Area. Pedestrians will be able to push the button when they would like to cross Yellow Creek Bridge, and will have a predetermined timeframe during which vehicle traffic across the bridge will be restricted.
1.9. Permits and Approvals
Proposed work within Yellow Creek and the Feather River will require permits from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and a Central Valley Flood Protection Board (CVFPB) Agreement. In addition, Temporary Construction Easements will be required for work on PG&E-owned land.

A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be prepared and implemented in accordance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES).

1.10. Environmental Factors Potentially Affected
The environmental factors checked below may be potentially affected by this project. Please see the checklist beginning on page 15 for additional information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aesthetics</th>
<th>Agriculture and Forestry</th>
<th>Air Quality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biological Resources</td>
<td>Cultural Resources</td>
<td>Geology/Soils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenhouse Gas Emissions</td>
<td>Hazards and Hazardous Materials</td>
<td>Hydrology/Water Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Use/Planning</td>
<td>Mineral Resources</td>
<td>Noise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population/Housing</td>
<td>Public Services</td>
<td>Recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation/Traffic</td>
<td>Utilities/Service Systems</td>
<td>Mandatory Findings of Significance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.11. Environmental Determination
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 revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

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

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

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

Signature: [Signature]
Printed Name: [Printed Name]
Date: [Date]
For: [For]
Chapter 2. **CEQA Environmental Checklist**

This checklist identifies physical, biological, social, and economic factors that might be affected by the proposed project. In many cases, background studies performed in connection with the projects indicate no impacts. A NO IMPACT answer in the last column reflects this determination. Where there is a need for clarifying discussion, the discussion is included in the section following the checklist. The words "significant" and "significance" used throughout the following checklist are related to CEQA, not NEPA, impacts. The questions in this form are intended to encourage the thoughtful assessment of impacts and do not represent thresholds of significance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potentially Significant Impact</th>
<th>Less Than Significant with Mitigation</th>
<th>Less Than Significant Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**I. AESTHETICS**

Would the project:

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>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?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potentially Significant Impact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potentially Significant Impact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potentially Significant Impact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potentially Significant Impact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potentially Significant Impact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potentially Significant Impact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation? 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potentially Significant Impact</th>
<th>Less Than Significant with Mitigation</th>
<th>Less Than Significant Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potentially Significant Impact</th>
<th>Less Than Significant with Mitigation</th>
<th>Less Than Significant Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potentially Significant Impact</th>
<th>Less Than Significant with Mitigation</th>
<th>Less Than Significant Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potentially Significant Impact</th>
<th>Less Than Significant with Mitigation</th>
<th>Less Than Significant Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES: Would the project:

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?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potentially Significant Impact</th>
<th>Less Than Significant with Mitigation</th>
<th>Less Than Significant Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potentially Significant Impact</th>
<th>Less Than Significant with Mitigation</th>
<th>Less Than Significant Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potentially Significant Impact</th>
<th>Less Than Significant with Mitigation</th>
<th>Less Than Significant Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potentially Significant Impact</th>
<th>Less Than Significant with Mitigation</th>
<th>Less Than Significant Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potentially Significant Impact</th>
<th>Less Than Significant with Mitigation</th>
<th>Less Than Significant Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potentially Significant Impact</th>
<th>Less Than Significant with Mitigation</th>
<th>Less Than Significant Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### V. CULTURAL RESOURCES: Would the project:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact Level</th>
<th>Potentially Significant Impact</th>
<th>Less Than Significant with Mitigation</th>
<th>Less Than Significant Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS: Would the project:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact Level</th>
<th>Potentially Significant Impact</th>
<th>Less Than Significant with Mitigation</th>
<th>Less Than Significant Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv) Landslides?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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?

VII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS: Would the project:

a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

VIII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS: Would the project:

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?
### IX. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Potentially Significant Impact</th>
<th>Less Than Significant with Mitigation</th>
<th>Less Than Significant Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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?</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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?</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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?</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Mitigation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potentially Significant</td>
<td>Less Than Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

X. LAND USE AND PLANNING: Would the project:

a) Physically divide an established community?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Mitigation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potentially Significant</td>
<td>Less Than Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Mitigation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potentially Significant</td>
<td>Less Than Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Mitigation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potentially Significant</td>
<td>Less Than Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

XI. MINERAL RESOURCES: Would the project:

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?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Mitigation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potentially Significant</td>
<td>Less Than Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Mitigation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potentially Significant</td>
<td>Less Than Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

XII. NOISE: Would the project result in:

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?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Mitigation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potentially Significant</td>
<td>Less Than Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potentially Significant Impact</th>
<th>Less Than Significant with Mitigation</th>
<th>Less Than Significant Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potentially Significant Impact</th>
<th>Less Than Significant with Mitigation</th>
<th>Less Than Significant Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potentially Significant Impact</th>
<th>Less Than Significant with Mitigation</th>
<th>Less Than Significant Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potentially Significant Impact</th>
<th>Less Than Significant with Mitigation</th>
<th>Less Than Significant Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

) 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?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potentially Significant Impact</th>
<th>Less Than Significant with Mitigation</th>
<th>Less Than Significant Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

XIII. POPULATION AND HOUSING: Would the project:

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)?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potentially Significant Impact</th>
<th>Less Than Significant with Mitigation</th>
<th>Less Than Significant Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potentially Significant Impact</th>
<th>Less Than Significant with Mitigation</th>
<th>Less Than Significant Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potentially Significant Impact</th>
<th>Less Than Significant with Mitigation</th>
<th>Less Than Significant Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

XIV. PUBLIC SERVICES:

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:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potentially Significant Impact</th>
<th>Less Than Significant with Mitigation</th>
<th>Less Than Significant Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fire protection?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potentially Significant Impact</th>
<th>Less Than Significant with Mitigation</th>
<th>Less Than Significant Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Police protection? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑
Schools? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑
Parks? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑
Other public facilities? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑

**XV. RECREATION:**

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? ☐ ☐ ☑ ☐

**XVI. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC:** Would the project:

a) Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit? ☐ ☐ ☑ ☐

b) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards 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) Conflict with adopted policies, plans or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Impact</th>
<th>Less Than Significant with Mitigation</th>
<th>Less Than Significant Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potentially Significant Impact</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Than Significant with Mitigation</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Than Significant Impact</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

XVII. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS: Would the project:

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?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>XVIII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (<em>Cumulatively considerable</em> 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)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 3. Discussion of Environmental Impacts

3.1. Air Quality

The proposed project may result in the generation of short-term construction-related air emissions, including fugitive dust and exhaust emissions from construction equipment. Fugitive dust, sometimes referred to as windblown dust or PM10, would be the primary short-term construction impact, which may be generated during excavation, grading, pavement grinding, and hauling activities. Both fugitive dust and construction equipment exhaust emissions would be temporary and transitory in nature, and will not result in long-term adverse conditions. Implementation of construction specifications related to air quality would address any air quality impacts resulting from construction activities to a no impact level.

3.2. Biological Resources

Literature and record searches of the proposed project area included consultation of numerous databases, lists, and maps, and visits to and/or contacts with a number of relevant agencies (Caltrans, November 2014). Biological field surveys were conducted on several occasions in 2013 and 2014 to develop an accurate description of the existing environment, gather information on the presence of special status species, and determine project level impacts with regard to biological resources. Additional field review included a survey of Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM) / Waters of the U.S., following ACOE criteria.

Results and Findings

Special Status Species
Based on literature searches, surveys, and analysis performed for this report, no special status plant or wildlife species will be impacted by proposed project activities. In accordance with standard construction specifications, a qualified, contractor-supplied biologist is required to be on-site during dewatering activities in order to monitor and relocate aquatic species.

Migratory Bird Species
Bridge deck removal has the potential to affect cliff swallows nesting under the bridge along the girders and/or piers, or beneath the exterior web and deck overhang, where nests are easily attached. Removal of swallow nests on bridges during breeding season is prohibited by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. One of following three strategies shall be implemented as part of the proposed project to avoid potential impacts to nesting swallows.

- Removal of bridge deck shall take place between September 1 and February 15.
- Existing swallow nests shall be removed from the bridge prior to February 15.
- Exclusion devices shall be installed prior to the arrival of the cliff swallows (installation of devices to occur between September 1 and February 15).

Riparian Habitat
Construction activities will result in a temporary riparian habitat impact of 0.21 acres and a permanent riparian habitat impact of 0.14 acres. Permanent impacts are a result of RSP installation to aid in bank stabilization and to protect the bridge from future erosion and scouring.
Temporary impacts are a result of bank clearing to allow access to install a temporary gravel pad, and to construct a temporary trestle and falsework to facilitate construction of the bridge. When practicable, trees and shrubs will be trimmed flush with existing grade to preserve root structure and soil composition. Temporary fencing will be installed at strategic locations to create an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) in order to protect riparian vegetation located beyond the work limits from inadvertent impacts during construction, as well as to protect trees that will be retained.

The streambank near Yellow Creek Bridge supports little riparian vegetation; the riparian vegetation that is present is substantially damaged as a result of regular, powerful releases of water from the Belden Powerhouse, is of low value, and does not provide a wildlife habitat and/or corridor. Removal of existing riparian vegetation shall not exceed the minimum necessary to complete the project activities, and every effort shall be made to leave the root system intact to encourage natural regeneration of riparian vegetation following construction. All riparian vegetation removal will be in accordance with California Department of Fish and Wildlife 1602 Permit requirements. Due to the steep grade of the slope, bedrock, and thickness of the RSP (6.5 ft), it is not feasible to plant within or around the RSP. In addition, the use of RSP to reinforce the streambank against high flow will be a net benefit for water quality and aquatic resources. Given the factors above, and the abundance of riparian vegetation with the Feather River corridor, the loss of this minor riparian vegetation is considered to be less-than-significant.

Jurisdictional Waters of the U.S.
Waters. Construction activities will result in a temporary instream habitat impact of 0.17 acres and a permanent instream habitat impact of 0.26 acres. Permanent impacts are a result of RSP installation to aid in bank stabilization and to protect the bridge from future erosion and scouring. RSP will be placed in front of the retaining walls along the banks of Yellow Creek and in front of the retaining walls along the banks of the Feather River. ESA fencing will be located along the Feather River shoreline, as depicted on project plans, to ensure unnecessary encroachment and disturbance within the river. Temporary impacts are a result of the construction of a temporary gravel pad to do work below bridge, installation of trestle and falsework piles, and a clear water diversion to key the bottom of RSP into the streambed.

Other Waters of the U.S. All drainage work will occur within existing pavement or upland areas, with the exception of installation of a down drain. While work required to install the down drain will take place above the Ordinary High Water Mark, ESA fencing will be installed in this area to prevent accidental encroachment into the Feather River. No other waters of the U.S. are present in the project area.

Wetlands. No wetlands are present in the project area.

Critical Habitat
Based on Caltrans’ review, no designated critical habitats for listed species occur within the proposed project location. The Federal Register and USFWS Critical Habitat Mapper were used to map the critical habitat of listed species and it was confirmed that no known critical habitat exists within the project area, the proposed project location does not fall within federally designated or proposed critical habitats, and the ESL does not have the potential habitat to support proposed or listed species. Therefore, the project activities will have no effect on critical habitat for proposed or listed species.
3.3. Cultural Resources

Literature and record searches of the proposed project area included visits to and/or contacts with a number of repositories, agencies, organizations, and individuals. The cultural resources field review for this project was conducted in the spring and summer of 2012 and 2013. Additional field studies, including a remote sensing investigation of the main staging area, were conducted in the spring of 2014. The purpose of these efforts was to identify and evaluate any historic properties that may exist within the project area, and to assess any effects that the proposed project might have with regard to the historic properties.

The historic property identification efforts of the Yellow Creek Bridge Replacement Project identified nine cultural resources within and/or immediately adjacent to the project limits. Of the nine resources identified, only the Yellow Creek Bridge will be directly impacted as a result of the proposed project.

Though not eligible individually, the Yellow Creek Bridge was determined to be a contributor to the Feather River Historic Highway District (CA-PLU-970H), a National Register Eligible District. Retaining a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, the Feather River Historic Highway District (aka Highway 70 or SR 70) between Jarbo Gap in Butte County at PM 35.57 and Keddie in Plumas County at PM 36.00, was determined to meet National Register criteria with significance in the areas of engineering, architecture, and transportation.

The Yellow Creek Bridge was found to be a contributing element for the Feather River Historic Highway District by Caltrans in 1987 based on the fact that it was constructed as part of the Feather River Highway System and served as a link for an important highway system. The Yellow Creek Bridge was reconstructed after its period of significance, resulting in modifications to its original design, materials, and workmanship, thus affecting its original historic integrity. Moreover, while the bridge still exists in the same location and can be associated with the Feather River Historic Highway District, the setting of the structure has been so compromised by the 1969 construction of the Belden Power House that it no longer retains sufficient integrity of setting and feeling. The Belden Power House and its 1,292-foot-long penstock dwarf the bridge, dominating the physical setting in the vicinity of the Yellow Creek Bridge. This modification to the bridge setting has affected it so greatly that all feeling of the bridge being part of a historic highway has been lost. Though eligible as a minor contributor to the larger National Register of Historic Places-eligible Feather River Historic Highway District, the craftsmanship of the bridge is typical and it lacks sufficient significance and integrity to be eligible as an individual property in terms of history, architecture, engineering or transportation.

In addition to the Yellow Creek Bridge, there are two additional contributing elements to the Feather River Historic Highway District located within the Area of Potential Effects (APE), which is the cultural resource study area. These elements include a stone masonry culvert and stone masonry retaining wall, both located at PM 15.13. The wall is approximately 300 feet long and ranges in height from two feet tall at the west end, where it begins at the base of the slope, to nearly 20 feet tall on the east end at its terminus. The project will not affect the culvert or the retaining wall.
The remaining resources are outside of the Area of Direct Impact (ADI) for the proposed project. All of the remaining resources will be protected and completely avoided from all adverse impacts through the establishment of an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) and the development of an ESA Action Plan. As part of the ESA Action Plan, protective fencing will be included in the project plans and periodic monitoring of sensitive locations will be conducted by Caltrans throughout the course of the construction project.

It is Caltrans’ policy to avoid cultural resources whenever possible. If buried cultural materials are encountered during construction, it is Caltrans’ policy that work stop in the area until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the nature and significance of the find.

3.4. Greenhouse Gas Emissions

An individual project does not generate enough greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to significantly influence global climate change. Rather, global climate change is a cumulative impact. This means that a project may contribute to a potential impact through its incremental change in emissions when combined with the contribution of all other sources of GHG. In assessing cumulative impacts, it must be determined if a project’s incremental effect is “cumulatively considerable” (CEQA Guidelines sections 15064(h)(1) and 15130). To make this determination the incremental impacts of the project must be compared with the effects of past, current, and probable future projects. To gather sufficient information on a global scale of all past, current, and future projects in order to make this determination is a difficult, if not impossible, task.

The AB 32 Scoping Plan mandated by AB 32 contains the main strategies California will use to reduce GHG emissions. As part of its supporting documentation for the Draft Scoping Plan, ARB released the GHG inventory for California (forecast last updated: May 2014). The forecast is an estimate of the emissions expected to occur in the year 2020 if none of the foreseeable measures included in the Scoping Plan were implemented. The base year used for forecasting emissions is the average of statewide emissions in the GHG inventory for 2006, 2007, and 2008.

Caltrans and its parent agency, the Business, Transportation, and Housing Agency, have taken an active role in addressing GHG emission reduction and climate change. Recognizing that 98 percent of California’s GHG emissions are from the burning of fossil fuels and 40 percent of all human-made GHG emissions are from transportation, Caltrans has created and is implementing the Climate Action Program at Caltrans, published in December 2006.

---

1 This approach is supported by the AEP: Recommendations by the Association of Environmental Professionals on How to Analyze GHG Emissions and Global Climate Change in CEQA Documents (March 5, 2007), as well as the South Coast Air Quality Management District (Chapter 6: The CEQA Guide, April 2011) and the US Forest Service (Climate Change Considerations in Project Level NEPA Analysis, July 13, 2009).

2 Caltrans Climate Action Program is located at the following web address:
http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/ogm/key_reports_files/State_Wide_Strategy/Caltrans_Climate_Action_Program.pdf
Project Analysis
The purpose of the proposed project is to provide a reliable highway crossing that meets modern highway design standards and accommodates interregional transportation needs. The proposed project will not increase capacity or vehicle miles travelled, therefore no increases in operational GHG emissions are anticipated.

Construction Emissions
GHG emissions for transportation projects can be divided into those produced during construction and those produced during operations. Construction GHG emissions include emissions produced as a result of material processing, emissions produced by onsite construction equipment, and emissions arising from traffic delays due to construction. These emissions will be produced at different levels throughout the construction phase; their frequency and occurrence can be reduced through innovations in plans and specifications, and by implementing traffic management practices during construction phases. Even though the project is not anticipated to increase operational GHG emissions, the proposed project would generate some GHG emissions during construction.

CEQA Conclusion
While construction will result in a slight increase in GHG emissions during construction, it is anticipated that the project will not result in any increase in operational GHG emissions. It is Caltrans’ determination that in the absence of further regulatory or scientific information related to GHG emissions and CEQA significance, it is too speculative to make a significance determination with regard to the project’s direct impact and its contribution on the cumulative scale related to climate change. However, Caltrans is firmly committed to implementing measures to help reduce GHG emissions, as follows:

Project level GHG measures
During construction, the project will utilize a “stop and proceed when clear” type of temporary detour, which would eliminate traffic delays and long periods of traffic holding

Figure 5. California Greenhouse Gas Forecast
While construction emissions of greenhouse gases are unavoidable, the proposed project is minor in scope, and construction utilizing mechanized equipment will be of relatively short duration.

**AB 32 Compliance**

Caltrans continues to be actively involved on the Governor’s Climate Action Team as ARB works to implement the Executive Orders S-3-05 and S-01-07 and help achieve the targets set forth in AB 32. Many of the strategies Caltrans is using to help meet the targets in AB 32 come from the California Strategic Growth Plan, which is updated each year. Former Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger’s Strategic Growth Plan calls for a $222 billion infrastructure improvement program to fortify the state’s transportation system, education, housing, and waterways, including $100.7 billion in transportation funding during the next decade. The Strategic Growth Plan targets a significant decrease in traffic congestion below today’s level, and a corresponding reduction in GHG emissions; the Strategic Growth Plan proposes to accomplish these targets while accommodating growth in population and the economy. A suite of investment options has been created that, combined together, are expected to reduce congestion. The Strategic Growth Plan relies on a complete systems approach to attain CO₂ reduction goals: systems monitoring and evaluation, maintenance and preservation, smart land use and demand management, and operational improvements, as depicted in Figure 5.

![Mobility Pyramid](image)

**Figure 6: Mobility Pyramid**

Caltrans is supporting efforts to reduce vehicle miles traveled by planning and implementing smart land use strategies: job/housing proximity, developing transit-oriented communities, and high density housing along transit corridors. Caltrans works closely with local jurisdictions on planning activities, but does not have local land use planning authority. Caltrans assists efforts to improve the energy efficiency of the...
transportation sector by increasing vehicle fuel economy in new cars, and light and heavy-duty trucks; Caltrans is doing this by supporting on-going research efforts at universities, by supporting legislative efforts to increase fuel economy, and by its participation on the Climate Action Team. It is important to note; however, that the control of the fuel economy standards is held by the U.S.EPA and ARB.

**Adaptation Strategies**

“Adaptation strategies” refer to how Caltrans and others can plan for the effects of climate change on the state’s transportation infrastructure and strengthen or protect the facilities from damage. Climate change is expected to produce increased variability in precipitation, rising temperatures, rising sea levels, storm surges and intensity, and the frequency and intensity of wildfires. These changes may affect the transportation infrastructure in various ways, such as damaging roadbeds by longer periods of intense heat; increasing storm damage from flooding and erosion; and inundation from rising sea levels. These effects will vary by location and may, in the most extreme cases, require that a facility be relocated or redesigned. There may also be economic and strategic ramifications as a result of these types of impacts to the transportation infrastructure.

On November 14, 2008, former Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed EO S-13-08 which directed a number of state agencies to address California’s vulnerability to sea level rise caused by climate change. This EO set in motion several agencies and actions to address the concern of sea level rise.

Executive Order S-13-08 also directed the Business, Transportation, and Housing Agency to prepare a report to assess vulnerability of transportation systems to sea level rise affecting safety, maintenance, and operational improvements of the system, and economy of the state. The Department continues to work on assessing the transportation system vulnerability to climate change, including the effect of sea level rise.

The proposed project location is outside of the coastal zone and is not in an area expected to experience direct impacts due to sea level rise for the projected 2050 and 2100 years.

Currently, the Department is working to assess which transportation facilities are at greatest risk from climate change effects. However, without statewide planning scenarios for relative sea level rise and other climate change effects, the Department has not been able to determine what change, if any, may be made to its design standards for its transportation facilities. Once statewide planning scenarios become available, the Department will be able review its current design standards to determine what changes, if any, may be warranted in order to protect the transportation system from sea level rise.

Climate change adaptation for transportation infrastructure involves long-term planning and risk management to address vulnerabilities in the transportation system from increased precipitation and flooding; the increased frequency and intensity of storms and wildfires; rising temperatures; and rising sea levels. The Department is an active participant in the efforts being conducted in response to EO S-13-08 and is mobilizing to
be able to respond to the National Academy of Science Sea Level Rise Assessment Report.

3.5. Hazards and Hazardous Materials

An Initial Site Assessment (Caltrans, 2005) and updated Initial Site Assessment (Caltrans, 2014), identified the potential for several minor hazardous waste/material issues within the project site; Lead Containing Paint (LCP) related to thermoplastic and/or paint striping removal, Aerially Deposited Lead (ADL), the potential for Asbestos Containing Material (ACM), and the presence of Treated Wood Waste (TWW).

Portions of the existing steel bridge structure may contain LCP. In addition, soils beneath the bridge could be contaminated with lead from sandblasting operations, which may result in the release of ADL. Based upon visual inspection, review of as-builts, and past history of similar structures there is some potential that ACM could be present in joint filler material, abutment joints, and/or expansion joints. A structural survey is currently in progress to determine the presence of LCP, ADL, and ACM within the project site.

If LCP and/or ADL are present, construction specifications will be included to address appropriate lead removal (including preparation of a Lead Compliance Plan), and temporary storage, testing, and transportation to an appropriate disposal or recycling facility. In addition, a requirement will be included for the contractor to provide written documentation that recycling or disposal facilities acknowledge the potential for lead on the material received.

If ACM is present it will be treated in accordance with the appropriate construction specifications, including requiring the contractor be notified as to the presence of suspected ACM. ACM removal must be conducted by a licensed and certified asbestos abatement contractor.

The handling, storing, transporting, and disposing of TWW will be conducted in accordance with the appropriate construction specifications.

3.6. Hydrology and Water Quality

FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) designate the Yellow Creek and North Fork Feather River floodplains within the project area as Zone D, "Undetermined Risk Areas". These areas have potential flooding risks, but the extent of risk has not been determined analytically. Based on modeling completed by Caltrans (2013), results indicate that removing the bridge piers will have less of an effect on the water surface elevation upstream in Yellow Creek than does the flood stage of the North Forth Feather River during the larger storm events. The preferred bridge type (Alternative 3) will increase the water surface profile for the 100-year flood event by 0.05-foot, but this does not constitute a significant encroachment as defined by 23 CFR Section 650.1 05(q). The expected 0.05-foot rise will not inundate the highway, adjacent parking facilities, or impact any other beneficial uses upstream in Yellow Creek.
It is anticipated that dewatering during construction activities will be completed utilizing cofferdams and clear water diversion. Sheet pile driving may be necessary as well. The temporary stream diversion during construction is anticipated to result in short-term increases in turbidity during channel dewatering, rewatering, and during the first major rain event following project completion. It is expected the majority of suspended sediment will likely settle out within a few hours, and would not have an appreciable effect on background sediment levels in the Feather River (Caltrans, 2013).

In accordance with construction specifications, the contractor will be required to submit a SWPPP. The SWPPP will be prepared in accordance with Caltrans’ Storm Water Management Program and the Statewide Caltrans NPDES Permit issued by the State Water Resources Control Board. The SWPPP identifies potential sources of pollution and includes Caltrans’ Best Management Practices (BMPs) that will be implemented to avoid and/or minimize potential sediment delivery or chemical contamination from entering Yellow Creek and/or the Feather River (Caltrans, 2014).

The net addition of impervious surface associated with the proposed project is 0.12 acre, which would have an insignificant effect on runoff volumes and velocity relative to existing conditions (Caltrans, 2014).

Hydrology and water quality-related avoidance and minimization measures relevant to the project are identified in Appendix A.

3.7. Noise

The project is located on State Route 70, near the town of Belden. Existing noise receptors near the project limits include users of the recreational trails in the area, and residents of Belden. Temporary increases in ambient noise levels will occur in the project vicinity during construction due to the operation of construction equipment.

Noise produced by construction equipment shall be in accordance with the appropriate construction specifications. The noise level from proposed construction activities between 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. shall not exceed 86dBa (decibels) at a distance of 50’. The noise level requirement shall apply to the equipment on the job or related to the job, including but not limited to trucks, transit mixers, or transient equipment that may or may not be owned by the Contractor. The use of loud signals shall be avoided in favor of light warnings, except those required by safety laws for the protection of personnel. All internal combustion engines used for any purpose on the job or related to the job, shall be equipped with the manufacturer recommended muffler. No internal combustion engine shall be operated on the project site without a muffler. In addition, personnel shall wear hearing protection while operating or working near equipment (producing noise levels greater than 84 db, including chainsaws, excavators, and backhoes).
3.8. Recreation

Recreational opportunities in the project vicinity include publicly-used trails, as well as boating use of the Feather River and Yellow Creek.

Three publicly-used trails travel through or are adjacent to the project site; the Pacific Crest Trail, the Indian Springs Trail, and the Yellow Creek Trail. The Pacific Crest Trail passes through the town of Belden, crosses the Feather River on the Belden Bridge, and travels on State Route 70 for a short distance before continuing into the forest on the west end of the Safety Roadside Rest Area. The Indian Springs Trail and Yellow Creek Trail both originate from the north side of the Safety Roadside Rest Area.

While the Pacific Crest Trail, Indian Springs Trail, and the Yellow Creek Trail will remain open to pedestrian and equestrian use during construction, the Safety Roadside Rest Area facilities and parking will be used as a staging area, and will not be available to trail users and/or motorists during construction activities. Signs will be placed in both directions of State Route 70 informing motorists of the closure, starting one week prior to construction. Trail users will be notified of the closure via appropriate USFS and Pacific Crest Trail websites, as well as signs located in the project vicinity.

Parking for the trails will be temporarily relocated to the PG&E property southeast of the Belden Bridge. Traffic control in place on the bridge during construction will allow for safe pedestrian passage. Specific traffic control procedures are detailed in Section 3.9: Transportation and Traffic.

The Feather River and Yellow Creek are used for recreational boating purposes, including rafting, kayaking, and tubing. Construction activities within the Feather River will be limited to the north side of the channel; passage will be available to boaters on the south side of the channel. Signs will be placed on the Feather River upstream of the project informing boaters of the construction in the area. Yellow Creek will not be passable to boaters in the vicinity of the proposed project, due to construction activities.

3.9. Transportation and Traffic

Vehicle traffic during construction will be outlined in a Traffic Management Plan, and is anticipated to be controlled using the One Way Reversing Traffic Control method. Signals will be placed at both ends of the bridge, and traffic will be able to proceed one direction at a time. Idling time for vehicles will be limited to the amount of time it takes for traffic from one direction to pass through the construction site. Construction will occur in two stages, with approximately half of the bridge being constructed at a time, and traffic will proceed on the bridge in accordance with these construction stages.

Pedestrian traffic during construction will be facilitated with push buttons located at the north end of Belden Bridge and near the Safety Roadside Rest Area. Pedestrians will be able to push the button when they would like to cross Yellow Creek Bridge, and will have a predetermined timeframe during which vehicle traffic across the bridge will be restricted.

If necessary, additional traffic control may be implemented during special events held on the Belden Town & Lodge Resort property.
Chapter 4. List of Preparers

This Initial Study was prepared by the California Department of Transportation, North Region Office of Environmental Management, with input from the following staff/consultants:

**Blossom Hamusek**, Project Archaeologist  
Contribution: Cultural resource surveys and reports

**Chelsea Tran-Wong**, Project Biologist  
Contribution: Natural Environment Study

**Chris Quiney**, Environmental Branch Chief  
Contribution: Document preparation oversight

**David Melendrez**, Branch Chief, North Region of Environmental Engineering-North  
Contribution: Water Quality Assessment Report review

**Julie McFall**, Environmental Coordinator  
Contribution: Document writer

**Lori Ewens**, Project Engineer  
Contribution: Project design

**Mark Melani**, Office of Environmental Engineering  
Contribution: Initial Site Assessment for Hazardous Waste (2014)

**Mark Williams**, CPSWQ, CPESC, QSD, AECOM  
Contribution: Water Quality Assessment Report preparation

**Thomas Graves**, Associate Engineering Geologist  

**Toby Crawford**, Hydraulics Project Engineer  
Contribution: Floodplain Evaluation Report Summary and Location Hydraulic Study
Chapter 5. References

Association of Environmental Planners. 2007. *Recommendations by the Association of Environmental Professionals on How to Analyze GHG Emissions and Global Climate Change in CEQA Documents.*


California Department of Transportation, Office of Environmental Engineering, North Region. March 23, 2005. *Yellow Creek Bridge Initial Site Assessment.*


California Department of Transportation, Office of Environmental Engineering, South. June 27, 2014. *Bridge Replacement Project Initial Site Assessment.*


California Department of Transportation, Office of Environmental Analysis, North Region. November 2014. *Natural Environment Study, Yellow Creek Bridge Replacement.*

California Department of Transportation; AECOM. 2014. *Water Quality Assessment Report, Yellow Creek Bridge Replacement Project.*


## Appendix A. Summary of Avoidance and Minimization Measures

The following standard specifications and special provisions will be included in the project to avoid and/or minimize impacts potentially resulting from the proposed project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental Factor</th>
<th>Potential Impact</th>
<th>Avoidance/Minimization Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Air Quality</td>
<td>Temporary increases in airborne pollutants due to construction, demolition, and vehicle/equipment emissions</td>
<td>Construction documents will include specifications related to air quality impacts resulting from construction activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Resources</td>
<td>Potential impacts to aquatic species</td>
<td>Construction documents will include specifications related to the monitoring and relocating of aquatic species during dewatering activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Resources</td>
<td>Potential impacts to riparian habitat and Waters of the U.S.</td>
<td>The contractor will follow the terms and conditions of the regulatory permits and agreements obtained from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), and Central Valley Flood Protection Board (CVFPD).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Resources</td>
<td>Potential impacts to nesting migratory birds</td>
<td>Construction documents will include specifications related to potential impacts to nesting migratory birds. To avoid potential impacts to nesting migratory birds, bridge deck removal shall take place between September 1 and February 15 or exclusionary devices shall be installed over the vertical surfaces prior to February 15 during the year that section of bridge deck is scheduled for removal. Vegetation removal (trees and shrubs) shall take place prior to February 15 and after August 31.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Resources</td>
<td>Potential impacts to nesting swallows</td>
<td>Construction documents will include specifications related to potential impacts to nesting migratory birds. One of following three strategies shall be</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

implemented as part of the proposed project to avoid potential impacts to nesting swallows.

- Removal of bridge deck shall take place between September 1 and February 15.
- Existing swallow nests shall be removed from the bridge prior to February 15.
- Exclusion devices shall be installed prior to the arrival of the cliff swallows (installation of devices to occur between September 1 and February 15).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biological Resources</th>
<th>Impacts to riparian habitat</th>
<th>Removal of existing riparian vegetation will not exceed the minimum necessary to complete the project. When practicable, trees and shrubs will be trimmed flush with existing grade to preserve root structure and soil composition. Removal of vegetation will be in accordance with CDFW 1602 permit requirements.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biological Resources</td>
<td>Potential impacts to vegetation located beyond the work limits during construction activities</td>
<td>Construction documents will include specifications related to environmentally sensitive area requirements, including placement of ESA fencing as depicted on project plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Resources</td>
<td>Potential impacts to existing upland vegetation</td>
<td>Removal of existing upland vegetation shall not exceed the minimum necessary to complete the project. Following construction, all disturbed upland areas will be stabilized and reseeded with local, native seed mix.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Resources</td>
<td>Potential impacts to the Feather River beyond work limits during construction activities</td>
<td>Construction documents will include specifications related to environmentally sensitive area requirements, including placement of ESA fencing along the Feather River shoreline, as depicted on project plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Resources</td>
<td>Potential impact to historic properties located within APE</td>
<td>Construction documents will include specifications related to environmentally sensitive area requirements, including Caltrans preparation of an ESA Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Impact Description</td>
<td>Plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Resources</td>
<td>Potential for buried cultural resources</td>
<td>Construction documents will include specifications related to the discovery of archaeological resources during construction activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazards and Hazardous Materials</td>
<td>Potential impacts related to lead and asbestos presence; asbestos in bridge joints; treated wood waste</td>
<td>Construction documents will include specifications related to lead (including preparation of a Lead Compliance Plan), asbestos, and treated wood waste.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydrology and Water Quality</td>
<td>Temporary increases in turbidity and suspended soils due to construction; erosion</td>
<td>Construction documents will require compliance with provisions of the Caltrans Statewide NPDES Permit (Order 2012-0011-DWQ) and the Construction General Permit (Order 2012-0006-DWQ), including preparation of a SWPPP and incorporation of appropriate water quality-related Best Management Practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise</td>
<td>Temporary increases in airborne noise during construction activities</td>
<td>Construction documents will include specifications related to noise impacts resulting from construction activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>Temporary loss of Pacific Crest Trail parking at PG&amp;E Safety Roadside Rest Area</td>
<td>Project design includes temporary parking facilities located to the east of Belden, on PG&amp;E-owned property.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>Temporary impact to boaters on the Feather River</td>
<td>Signs will be placed on the Feather River upstream of the project informing boaters of the construction in the area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and Traffic</td>
<td>Temporary traffic control during construction activities</td>
<td>Traffic control methods during project construction will be outlined in a Traffic Management Plan. Project design includes use of the One Way Reversing Traffic Control method, including signals and a push button for pedestrians. If necessary, additional traffic control may be implemented during special events held on the Belden Town &amp; Lodge Resort property.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B.  List of Technical Studies

The following technical studies were prepared with regard to the proposed project and are available for public review upon request.

California Department of Transportation, Office of Environmental Engineering, North Region.  March 23, 2005.  Yellow Creek Bridge Initial Site Assessment.


California Department of Transportation, Office of Environmental Analysis, North Region.  November 2014.  Natural Environment Study, Yellow Creek Bridge Replacement.

California Department of Transportation; AECOM.  2014.  Water Quality Assessment Report, Yellow Creek Bridge Replacement Project.

_____________________________________

3 Technical studies containing cultural resources information are confidential and are not available for public review.
Appendix C. Project Comments and Responses
4 November 2014

Hello,

I am writing to express my concerns related to the work that is scheduled to begin on the Yellow Creek Bridge near Belden, California.

I am a whitewater river enthusiast. I have been kayaking and rafting on the Feather River for more than 30 years. I also am the program coordinator for the Outdoor Recreation Leadership program at Feather River College, upstream, in Quincy, California.

The most commonly utilized whitewater run in Plumas County ends near the Yellow Creek Bridge. The run begins about 7 miles upstream at Rich Bar and ends at the Yellow Creek Bridge. Some groups take out at the PG&E rest stop while others take out at Belden (with permission from the owners) or just below Belden at the USFS land on the south side of the North Fork of the Feather River. The document titled: Yellow Creek Bridge Replacement Project discusses mitigation for boaters wishing to float past the bridge, it does not address the much more common concern of taking out at the PG&E site on the north side of Hwy 70. This common river access will be impeded by an inability to travel under the bridge.

As an instructor, the Rich Bar to Belden run is critical for teaching. The run is of intermediate difficulty and is aesthetically pleasing. Other intermediate runs in the area include Class V rapids that need to be portaged.

At FRC we use the Rich Bar to Belden run about 15-20 days each spring. This use represents at least 400 participant uses of the site. If we don’t have access to the PG&E site, we will become reliant on the cooperation of the owners of the Belden Resort. While this has not been a problem in the recent past, it’s critical to maintaining access.

I recommend that, as a component of the bridge construction, accommodations be made to provide access to the takeout at the PG&E site and/or to better develop and maintain the USFS access downstream from the Belden Resort.

Please call or email if you would like to have more discussion related to this topic.

Respectfully,

Rick Stock
Instructor / Program Coordinator
Outdoor Recreation Leadership program
Feather River College
Quincy, CA 95971
530-283-0202 x275
January 15, 2015

Rick Stock, Instructor/Program Coordinator
Outdoor Recreation Leadership Program
Feather River College
570 Golden Eagle Avenue
Quincy, CA 95971

Dear Mr. Stock:
Thank you for providing comments related to Caltrans' proposed Yellow Creek Bridge Replacement project. The project will entail major bridge construction and demolition operations over the course of two years. As such, the area surrounding the bridge, including the PG&E Safety Roadside Rest Area will be closed to public use during the construction period. As Caltrans' primary concern is for the safety of workers and the traveling public, the project will include development of a traffic management plan and informational signage for the traveling public, including pedestrians and boaters on the North Fork Feather River.

Caltrans has included a response to each of the comments in this letter; comments are numbered for reference purposes and correspond with the annotations in the letter dated November 4, 2014.

Comment Response RS-1
The letter states that some whitewater groups currently take out at the PG&E Safety Roadside Rest Area, as well as the Belden Lodge & Resort (addressed in Comment Response RS-2) and USFS property south of the Belden Lodge & Resort (addressed in Comment Response RS-3). The letter expresses concern that the river access at Yellow Creek Bridge will be impeded by an inability to travel under the bridge. Caltrans does not own the land in the vicinity of Yellow Creek Bridge that is currently being used as an informal takeout location by boaters. Other river access points, on both private and public use lands, are available for recreational users upstream and downstream of the Yellow Creek Bridge. As explained in the Draft Initial Study, the area surrounding the Yellow Creek Bridge will be under construction and temporarily closed to public access for safety reasons. The area will be returned to its pre-existing condition following construction. Caltrans will place signage on the North Fork Feather River notifying boaters of construction at the Yellow Creek Bridge.

Comment Response RS-2
As mentioned in the letter, there are other options for boating access and egress points in the immediate vicinity on both private and public lands. Caltrans encourages the Feather River College to utilize this advance notice to plan trips accordingly. Caltrans will provide advance notification of construction progress through press releases and website updates to minimize traffic delays and notify the public of closures and work progress. Navigation on the North Fork Feather River will not be affected by the proposed project.

"Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and viability"
Mr. Rick Stock  
January 15, 2015  
Page 2

Comment Response RS-3  
While Caltrans appreciates your interest in developing a takeout location at the USFS property downstream from the Belden Resort or other locations, it is not within the scope of the proposed project.

If you have any questions about the project or the environmental process, please contact the environmental coordinator, Julie McFall, at (530) 225-2828. A copy of the Final Initial Study/Negative Declaration is available on Caltrans’ website at www.dot.ca.gov/dist3/departments/envinternet/envdoc.htm.

Sincerely,

Chris Quiney, Branch Chief  
Office of Environmental Management – R1 Branch

"Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and livability."
Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board

14 November 2014

Ms. Julie McFall
Caltrans
1657 Riverside Drive, MS-30
Redding, CA 96001

COMMENTS ON THE NEGATIVE DECLARATION FOR PROPOSED YELLOW CREEK BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT, BELDEN, PLUMAS COUNTY

The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) is a responsible agency for this project, as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). On 5 November 2014, we received your request for comments on the Negative Declaration for the Yellow Creek Bridge Replacement Project.

Caltrans is proposing to remove the existing Yellow Creek Bridge (Bridge No. 09-0008) on State Route 70 and construct a new, single-span bridge on the same alignment as the existing bridge. The project will include bridge replacement, retaining walls, rock slope protection, metal beam guardrail, culvert work, grading, snow plow reflectors, bridge barriers, vegetation removal and tree clearing, earthwork, drainage improvements, utility relocation, paving, sign replacement, and striping. The project will also require temporary stream diversion and right-of-way acquisition.

Based on our review of the information submitted for the proposed project, we have the following comments:

Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 401, Water Quality Certification
The Central Valley Water Board has regulatory authority over wetlands and waterways under both the Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) and the California Water Code, Division 7 (CWC). Discharge of dredged or fill material to waters of the United States requires a CWA Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the Central Valley Water Board. Typical activities include any modifications to these waterways, such as stream crossings, stream bank modifications, filling of wetlands, etc. 401 Certifications are issued in combination with CWA Section 404 Permits issued by the Army Corps of Engineers. The proposed project must be evaluated for the presence of jurisdictional waters, including wetlands and other waters of the State. Steps must be taken to first avoid and minimize impacts to these waters, and then mitigate for unavoidable impacts. Both the Section 404 Permit and Section 401 Water Quality Certification must be obtained prior to site disturbance.

Caltrans Statewide Storm Water Permit
In order to protect water quality from the potential development activities, appropriate stormwater pollutant controls will be required during construction. Construction activities for this project must be covered under the Caltrans Statewide Storm Water Permit (Order No. 99-06-DWQ), adopted in July 1999. The Caltrans Statewide Storm Water Permit covers all Caltrans construction activities. Caltrans construction activities must also comply with all requirements of...
Caltrans
Yellow Creek Bridge Replacement Project

the General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities (CGP). Caltrans is required to notify the Central Valley Board that a project is to be covered under the permit at least 30-days prior to the start of construction.

Dewatering Alternative 1: Discharge to Storm Drains or Waters of the United States
A dewatering permit, General Order for Dewatering and Other Low Threat Discharges to Surface Waters, (Central Valley Water Board Order No. R5-2009-0082, adopted 12 June 2009) may be required for pump testing, pipeline dewatering and/or construction activities. This general NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) permit covers the discharge to waters of the United States of clean or relatively pollutant-free wastewater that poses little or no threat to water quality. The following categories are covered by the dewatering permit: well development water, construction dewatering, pump/well testing, pipeline/tank pressure testing, pipeline/tank flushing or dewatering, condensate discharges, water supply system discharges, miscellaneous dewatering/low threat discharges. The dewatering permit applies only to direct discharges to waters of the United States. Failure to obtain a dewatering permit, when required, may result in enforcement action. An application form and a copy of the permit are available at this office.

Dewatering Alternative 2: Discharges to Land
Construction and system test dewatering discharges that are contained on land (i.e., will not enter waters of the United States) are allowed under Central Valley Water Board Resolution No. 2003-0003-DWQ provided the following conditions are met: (1) the dewatering discharge is of a quality as good as or better than underlying groundwater; and (2) there is a low risk of nuisance. Examples of dewatering discharges to land include a terminal basin, irrigation (with no return to waters of the United States), and dust control. You may request written confirmation from this office that the waiver is applicable.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this matter please contact me at (530) 224-4784 or by email at szaltz@waterboards.ca.gov.

Scott A. Zaltz, R.E.H.S.
Environmental Scientist
Storm Water & Water Quality Certification Unit

SAZ: wbr/mm

cc/w/o
enclosures: Mr. Matt Kelley, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, Redding
Department of Fish and Wildlife, Region 2, Rancho Cordova
State Clearing House Number (2014/02/077)
January 15, 2015

Scott Zaitz, Environmental Scientist
Storm Water & Water Quality Certification Unit
Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
365 Knollerest Drive, Suite 205
Redding, CA 96002

Dear Mr. Zaitz:
Thank you for providing comments related to Caltrans’ proposed Yellow Creek Bridge Replacement project.

Caltrans has included a response to each of the comments in this letter; comments are numbered for reference purposes and correspond with the annotations in the letter dated November 14, 2014.

Comment Response CVWB-1
The letter states that both a Section 404 Permit and Section 401 Water Quality Certification must be obtained prior to site disturbance. Caltrans will procure both a Section 404 Permit and Section 401 Water Quality Certification prior to site disturbance.

Comment Response CVWB-2
The letter states that construction activities for the project must be covered under the Caltrans Statewide Storm Water Permit, must comply with all requirements of the General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities, and that Caltrans is required to notify the Central Valley Board that a project is to be covered under the permit at least 30-days prior to the start of construction. Construction activities for the project will be covered under the Caltrans Statewide Storm Water Permit, Caltrans will comply with all requirements of the General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities, and Caltrans will notify the Central Valley Board that the project is to be covered under the permit at least 30-days prior to the start of construction.

Comment Response CVWB-3
The letter states that a dewatering permit, General Order for Dewatering and Other Low Threat Discharges to Surface Waters, may be required for pump testing, pipeline dewatering, and/or construction activities. Comment noted; if appropriate, Caltrans will procure a dewatering permit.

Comment Response CVWB-4
The letter outlines conditions related to construction and system test dewatering discharges that are contained on land. Caltrans will comply with the conditions outlined by the Central Valley Water Board.

"Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and viability"
Mr. Scott Zaitz  
January 15, 2015  
Page 2

If you have any questions about the project or the environmental process, please contact the environmental coordinator, Julie McFall, at (530) 225-2828. A copy of the Final Initial Study/Negative Declaration is available on Caltrans’ website at www.dot.ca.gov/dist3/departments/envinternet/envdoc.htm.

Sincerely,

Chris Quiney, Branch Chief  
Office of Environmental Management – R1 Branch

“Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California’s economy and livability.”
Sierra Pacific Industries
PO Box 750 Quincy, CA 95971
(530) 283-2820

November 20, 2014

California Department of Transportation
Attention: Chris Quincy
North Region Office of Environmental Mgmt., MS30
1657 Riverside Drive
Redding, CA  96001

Re: Comment on Draft Initial Study – State Route 70 Yellow Creek Bridge Replacement Project (02-PLU-70-PM 14.9)

Hello Chris –

As you may know Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) operates lumber manufacturing and electric cogeneration facilities in Quincy, and a lumber manufacturing facility in Oroville, CA, among other locations throughout the State. As a result, the Highway 70 corridor between Oroville and Quincy is used daily by SPI and our contractors for the transportation of logs and biomass from our timberlands and purchased sales, and for the transportation of finished lumber and by-products from our sawmills to the destinations of our customers. In addition products purchased by SPI through vendors including, fuel, parts for machinery, and other items necessary for production, are routed across Hwy 70 to our facilities daily.

In short, SPI depends on Hwy 70 as an efficient and timely route of transportation for our products as well as purchased items for which our business is dependent.

It is our request that whatever Alternative be chosen as a part of this process, the route remain open and safe for commerce and that any transportation and traffic delays be minimized.

Regards,

Jared J. Tappero, Division Forester
January 15, 2015

Jared J. Tappero, Division Forester  
Sierra Pacific Industries  
P.O. Box 750  
Quincy, CA 95971

Dear Mr. Tappero:

Thank you for providing comments related to Caltrans’ proposed Yellow Creek Bridge Replacement project.

Caltrans has included a response to each of the comments in this letter; comments are numbered for reference purposes and correspond with the annotations in the letter dated November 20, 2014.

Comment Response SPI-1

The letter requests that the route [State Route 70] remain open and safe for commerce and that any transportation and traffic delays be minimized. As stated in the Draft Initial Study/Negative Declaration, traffic handling during construction will be outlined in a Traffic Management Plan, and is anticipated to be controlled using the One Way Reversing Traffic Control method. Signals will be placed at both ends of the bridge, and traffic will be able to proceed one direction at a time. Idling time for vehicles will be limited to the amount of time it takes for traffic from one direction to pass through the construction site. Construction will occur in two stages, with approximately half of the bridge being constructed at a time, and traffic will proceed on the bridge in accordance with these construction stages. Due to the limited project area, it is anticipated that transportation and traffic delays will be minimal and will not significantly impact commerce activities.

If you have any questions about the project or the environmental process, please contact the environmental coordinator, Julie McFall, at (530) 225-2828. A copy of the Final Initial Study/Negative Declaration is available on Caltrans' website at www.dot.ca.gov/dist3/departments/envinternet/envdoc.htm.

Sincerely,

Chris Quinn, Branch Chief  
Office of Environmental Management – R1 Branch

"Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California’s economy and viability"
November 21, 2014

Christopher Quiney
North Region Office of Environmental Management
1657 Riverside Drive
Redding, CA 96001

Sent via electronic mail to: Chris.Quiney@dot.ca.gov

Dear Mr. Quiney,

American Whitewater appreciates having the opportunity to provide comment on the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans) Draft Initial Study, which proposes to rebuild the Highway 70 bridge across Yellow Creek adjacent to the North Fork River near the town of Belden. American Whitewater requests that Caltrans reevaluate the impacts of this project on river recreation during construction and after project completion. We also request that Caltrans complete a feasibility study on improving river access at this site, as it is required to do under California Highway Code. American Whitewater requests that this study be completed before further action is taken on this project.

American Whitewater ("AW") is a national nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization devoted to protecting and restoring America’s whitewater resources and enhancing the public’s ability to enjoy them safely. With over 5,800 members and 100 affiliate clubs, we represent the conservation interests of thousands of whitewater paddlers across the nation. A significant percentage of our members reside in and travel to California to paddle the state’s outstanding whitewater rivers, including the North Fork Feather River and Yellow Creek. Therefore, we have a direct interest in the reconstruction of the Yellow Creek Bridge as it impacts access to the river.

BACKGROUND

American Whitewater’s members enjoy paddling the Class III Rich Bar run of the East Branch and North Fork of the Feather. The run is one of the most popular runs in the area during the winter and spring. In the future, we expect this use to extend into the summer months. As part of the upper North Fork Feather River Settlement Agreement through the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission hydropower relicensing process, flow releases will occur June through October on specified weekends. Currently, recreation flow releases that occur downstream on the Rock Creek reach of the North Fork Feather River attracts

1 California Highway Code section 84.5.
2 The Upper North Fork Feather Relicensing Settlement Agreement was completed in 2004, which will govern river flowing releases below Lake Almanor. This is an agreement between PG&E, USFS, Plumas County, American Whitewater and an array of NGO's, and other state and federal agencies.
several hundred paddlers during similar weekend releases. While it is paddled less frequently, paddlers also boat the Class V run on Yellow Creek from Humbug Valley down to the North Fork Feather River. For each of these runs, the only publicly accessible take-out is at the mouth of Yellow Creek adjacent to the Highway 70 Bridge. Paddlers typically use the rest area for parking, and access the river from the road at the east end of the rest area parking lot. Historically paddlers have occasionally taken out on the south side of the river in Belden Town, however, their ability to do so has been based upon whether property owners are willing to allow this access. While this has been acceptable for smaller groups, it is not reasonable for larger groups, nor is it a long-term solution.

COMMENTS

A. Providing Access During Construction

Section 3.8 of the Draft Initial Study (DIS), acknowledges that boating is one of the recreational uses that occurs within the project area. The study also notes that the project will not impede navigation on the North Fork Feather River, and that Caltrans intends to provide signage on the river to notify paddlers of the construction activities downstream. What the report fails to acknowledge, or plan for, is the fact that the Yellow Creek Bridge area, and adjacent rest area, is the only historic public river access site to the Rich Bar or Yellow Creek whitewater runs, and that this access will not be available during the 2+ years of construction for this project.

American Whitewater recommends that a temporary access location be provided, similar to that which is being provided for Pacific Crest Trail user parking. On September 25, 2014, American Whitewater met with Caltrans staff at the project site to discuss issues related to river access. During this meeting we identified the most logical place for temporary river access. This access is on USFS property located on the south side of the river downstream from Belden Town. We believe that this location could provide temporary access during construction with a minimal level of improvement.

B. The Draft Initial Study Needs To Comply With California Highway Code 84.5

Section 84.5 of the California Highway Code states:

"During the design hearing process relating to state highway projects that include the construction by the department of a new bridge across a navigable river, there shall be included full consideration of, and a report on, the feasibility of providing a means of public access to the navigable river for public recreational purposes."

During our September 25th meeting, we informed Caltrans staff about the requirement in Section 84.5, and specified that our expectation was that there would be a report regarding river access as part of this project. We were disappointed to see that this report was not included in the DIS, nor was any mention made of completing one in the future. In a letter to Caltrans director Malcolm Dougherty on January 25, 2013, American Whitewater outlined what we believe should be the basic components of studies that meet the intent of Section 84.5.
Those components are as follows:

Defining and implementing a scoping process
1. The specific issues associated with a River Access Feasibility study should be determined as part of a formal public scoping process regarding any bridge construction or bridge repair projects.
2. Notify appropriate interested stakeholders, including local watershed groups, recreational fishing, boating, and hunting groups, and state and national river conservation organizations such as American Rivers and American Whitewater, as parties to initial Caltrans project scoping.
3. Identify and describe the waterway and the recreational interest in the waterway being affected. This information can be supplemented from the American Whitewater National River Database, or from other online guidebooks such as Dreamflows (these resources are suggestions, and are by no means an exhaustive list of the resources that Caltrans should consider).
4. Through the public scoping process it should be determined whether there is a need and potential to improve river access.

Determining potential access points
1. Determine all existing access points utilized by the public to access the affected river segment, whether established or informal.
2. If access in the bridge right of way is deemed infeasible or of lesser quality than a nearby improvement or development, explore the potential to establish a new public access site outside of the direct project right of way. Determine the land ownership of these potential access sites and engage landowners or agencies to determine whether they are willing to explore improving river access.

Establishing and describing right of ways
1. When acquiring right of ways necessary for construction, Caltrans should, whenever possible, include public access as part of the right of way agreements.
2. The Feasibility Study should evaluate existing easements and determine to what extent they allow public access.
3. Clear and obvious signage should be in place to inform the public of the right of way boundary and where the public is legally allowed to access the river along the bridge.

Identifying Potential Funding Sources
1. The study should identify potential funding sources. Some sources for consideration include partnership with nonprofits, California Department of Boating and Waterways, California Department of Parks and Recreation (Recreational Trails Program), and the California Natural Resources Agency (California River Parkways and EEMP).

---

3 Available at: http://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/River/state-summary/state/CA/
4 http://www.dreamflows.com/xlist-ca.php?Site185
Making the final determination

1. Establish a formal and transparent decision-making framework to determine the feasibility of providing public access.
2. If deemed feasible, that determination should mandate the planning and implementation necessary to provide the identified public access.

We believe that we have already achieved several of the recommendations outlined above. In our meeting with Caltrans staff, which we considered to be initial scoping, we discussed a number of access alternatives. We also provided information regarding potential funding sources. What is lacking is a formal report that summarizes the alternatives that can be distributed to interested stakeholders. Once this is completed we can move forward to determine how river access can be improved as part of this project.

CONCLUSION

We propose that local landowners, USFS, NGOs, and other interested parties will be strong potential partners throughout this process. Developing public waterway access can lead to significant cost savings if it is incorporated into the initial construction project plans. Doing so has the potential to negate the need for significant external funding sources. We applaud the attention that Caltrans has given to pedestrians and hiking recreationists as part of this project, and we request that river recreationists be given the same consideration.

American Whitewater appreciates the opportunity to provide these comments. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dave Steindorf
California Stewardship Director
American Whitewater

cc: Erika Brenzovich, Mt. Hough Ranger District Plumas National Forest

Rick Stock, Instructor / Program Coordinator Outdoor Recreation Leadership Program
Feather River College
January 15, 2015

Dave Steindorf, California Stewardship Director  
American Whitewater  
4 Baroni Drive  
Chico, CA 95928

Dear Mr. Steindorf:

Thank you for providing comments related to Caltrans’ proposed Yellow Creek Bridge Replacement project. The project will entail major bridge construction and demolition operations over the course of two years. As such, the area surrounding the bridge, including the PG&E Safety Roadside Rest Area, will be closed to public use during the construction period. As Caltrans’ primary concern is for the safety of workers and the traveling public, the project will include development of a Traffic Management Plan and informational signage for the traveling public, including pedestrians and boaters on the North Fork Feather River.

Caltrans has included a response to each of the comments in this letter; comments are numbered for reference purposes and correspond with the annotations in the letter dated November 21, 2014.

Comment Response AW-1

The letter states that the Draft Initial Study does not acknowledge, or plan for, the fact that the Yellow Creek Bridge area, and adjacent rest area, is the only historic public river access site to the Rich Bar or Yellow Creek whitewater runs, and that this access will not be available during the 2+ years of construction for this project.

As explained in the Draft Initial Study, the area surrounding the Yellow Creek Bridge will be under construction and temporarily closed to public access for safety reasons. Other river access points, on both private and public use lands, are available for river recreationists upstream and downstream of the Yellow Creek Bridge. Those engaged in recreational activities on the North Fork Feather River in the vicinity of the Yellow Creek Bridge should plan ahead to use alternate river access points. The area surrounding the Yellow Creek Bridge will be returned to its pre-existing condition following construction. Caltrans will place signage on the North Fork Feather River notifying boaters of construction at the Yellow Creek Bridge.

Comment Response AW-2

The letter recommends that a temporary river access location be provided, similar to that which is being provided for Pacific Crest Trail user parking. The letter states that the most logical place for temporary river access is located on USFS property on the south side of the river downstream from Belden Town, and that American Whitewater believes this location could provide temporary access during construction with a minimal level of improvement.

"Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California’s economy and livability"
Mr. Dave Steindorf  
January 15, 2015  
Page 2

While we appreciate your interest in developing a temporary access takeout at the USFS property downstream from the Belden Resort, it is not within the scope of the proposed transportation project. Temporary parking is being provided for Pacific Crest Trail users because the Pacific Crest Trail is part of a designated interstate trail system that bisects the highway at the Yellow Creek Bridge on State Route 70. In accordance with Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act, Caltrans plans to provide a temporary alternate parking area and pedestrian/equine detours for trail users.

Comment Response AW-3  
The letter requests that a feasibility report be prepared in accordance with Section 84.5 of the California Highway Code with regard to river access as part of this project.

State Route 70 and Yellow Creek Bridge are situated on an easement over PG&E-owned land. Caltrans has acquired a Temporary Construction Easement from PG&E in order to access the PG&E Safety Roadside Rest Area and areas adjacent to the bridge during construction. Based on topography, roadway geometrics, and land use at the Yellow Creek Bridge, development of an access point for river recreational users would not be feasible at this location. As you are aware, various access points for river access are available upstream and downstream of the Yellow Creek Bridge.

If you have any questions about the project or the environmental process, please contact the environmental coordinator, Julie McFall, at (530) 225-2828. A copy of the Final Initial Study/Negative Declaration is available on Caltrans’ website at www.dot.ca.gov/dist3/departments/envinternet/envdoc.htm.

Sincerely,

Chris Quiney, Branch Chief  
Office of Environmental Management – R1 Branch

“Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California’s economy and livability.”
From: Torres, Juan@Wildlife
Sent: Tuesday, November 25, 2014 2:23 PM
To: Quiney, Chris D@DOT
Cc: Wildlife R2 CEQA
Subject: Yellow Creek Bridge Replacement Project Comments [State Clearinghouse No. 20141020777]

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Initial Study with Proposed Negative Declaration (IS/ND) for the Yellow Creek Bridge Replacement Project (Project) [State Clearinghouse No. 20141020777]. CDFW is responding to the IS/ND as a Trustee Agency for fish and wildlife resources (California Fish and Game Code Sections 711.7 and 1802, and the California Environmental Quality Act [CEQA] Guidelines Section 15365), and as a Responsible Agency regarding any discretionary actions (CEQA Guidelines Section 15381), such as the issuance of a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement (California Fish and Game Code Sections 1600 et seq.) and a California Endangered Species Act (CESA) Permit for Incidental Take of Endangered, Threatened, and/or Candidate species (California Fish and Game Code Sections 2080 and 2080.1).

1. Wetlands and Other Waters Section. Information regarding project impacts to areas under CDFW jurisdiction is missing from this section. Please clarify if a jurisdictional delineation or equivalent document was prepared to identify CDFW jurisdictional areas within the project footprint. Project impacts to areas under CDFW jurisdiction should be disclosed in this section of the IS/ND. An accompanying map showing the areas of impact is recommended. The IS/ND should not defer mitigation measures to future regulatory discretionary actions, such as a Lake or Streambed Alteration (LSA) Agreement. Please note that as a responsible agency under CEQA, the Department must rely on the CEQA analysis for the project when exercising our discretion after the lead agency to approve or carry out some facet of a proposed project, such as the issuance of a LSA Agreement. Therefore, the IS/ND should include specific enforceable measures to be carried out on-site or within the same stream system that will avoid, minimize and/or mitigate for project impacts to the natural resources.

2. Please note that the LSA Agreement for this project will require some form of mitigation for permanent impacts to riparian areas under CDFW jurisdiction. For the reasons stated in the comment above the environmental document shall include potential enforceable mitigation measures such as on-site/off-site habitat creation, restoration, enhancement or any combination of these measures.

3. Animal Species. Harlequin (Mylopharodon conchocephalus) a California Species of Special Concern has been detected downstream from the project footprint. Since the proposed project may require work within the active channel additional avoidance and minimization measures may be required to avoid or reduce impacts to this species especially when performing water diversion during construction. These measures could include the presence of a fish monitor, construction personnel training etc.

4. For the reasons stated above, CDFW, requests that a mitigated negative declaration is prepared for this project.

If you should have any questions pertaining to these comments, please contact me at (916) 356-2951 or Juan.Torres@wildlife.ca.gov
Sincerely,

Juan Lopez Torres
Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist)

[Address]
Office: (916) 358-2951
Fax: (916) 358-2912
Juan.Torres@wildlife.ca.gov
www.wildlife.ca.gov
January 15, 2015

Juan Torres, Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist)
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
North Central Region Habitat Conservation Program
1701 Nimbus Road, Suite A
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

Dear Mr. Torres:
Thank you for providing comments related to Caltrans’ proposed Yellow Creek Bridge Replacement project.

Caltrans has included a response to each of the comments in this letter; comments are numbered for reference purposes and correspond with the annotations in the email dated November 25, 2014.

Comment Response CDFW-1
The email states that information regarding project impacts to areas under CDFW jurisdiction is missing from the Wetlands and Others Waters section of the Initial Study/proposed Negative Declaration. Further, the email states that the IS/ND should include specific enforceable measures to be carried out onsite or within the same stream system that will avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate for project impacts to the natural resources. Caltrans has completed detailed studies which support the (IS/ND). Impacts to wetlands and other waters, as well as species and habitat of concern, are addressed in a biological report entitled Natural Environment Study (NES). The project description and anticipated impacts have been disclosed in the Draft IS/ND and appropriate protective and restoration measures for the construction site are discussed. A copy of the CEQA determination document, NES, and other relevant information will be submitted to CDFW at the time Caltrans applies for a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement (LSAA).

Comment Response FS-2
The email states that the LSA agreement for the project will require some form of mitigation for permanent impacts to riparian areas under CDFW jurisdiction. As stated in the IS/ND, Caltrans plans to trim riparian at ground level to minimize soil disturbance and encourage post-construction vegetation growth (restoration). Caltrans proposes a waiting period of 14-16 months following construction to allow plant regeneration and to make an assessment as to the need for supplemental planting on-site. A revegetation plan will be provided with the LSAA application package. While existing riparian and upland vegetation on-site is sparse, efforts will be made to remove only that necessary to accomplish construction of the new bridge. Traffic sight distance and maintenance of the highway and bridge structure must be considered when replanting the project site.

"Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and viability"
Comment Response FS-3
The email states that additional avoidance and minimization measures may be required to avoid or reduce impacts to *Mylopharodon conocephalus*, as the species has been detected downstream from the project footprint. The NES prepared by Caltrans includes an evaluation of species that may occur in the project area, including *Mylopharodon conocephalus*. Caltrans is aware that the hardhead minnow is found in the North Fork Feather River, but does not anticipate encountering this species at the confluence of Yellow Creek and North Fork Feather River. In accordance with standard construction specifications, a qualified, contractor-supplied biologist is required to be on-site during dewatering activities in order to monitor and relocate aquatic species.

Comment Response FS-4
The email requests that “for the reasons stated above” Caltrans prepare a Mitigated Negative Declaration versus a Negative Declaration. While Caltrans appreciates CDFW’s comments as a Trustee Agency under CEQA, the comments are general in nature and only presume that there is potential for a significant impact. The comments fail to identify specific impacts or avoidance or minimization measures, which without, may cause the project to result in a potentially significant impact. Caltrans anticipates that CDFW may have additional questions with regard to the forthcoming LSAA application package and may impose permit conditions relative to avoidance or habitat restoration measures at that time. The LSAA application package will include a copy of preliminary project plans, a Natural Environment Study, and other project details that will assist CDFW in its Responsible Agency role under CEQA for issuance of the LSAA.

If you have any questions about the project or the environmental process, please contact the environmental coordinator, Julie McFall, at (530) 225-2828. A copy of the Final Initial Study/Negative Declaration is available on Caltrans’ website at www.dot.ca.gov/dist3/departments/envinternet/envdoc.htm.

Sincerely,

Chris Quincy, Branch Chief
Office of Environmental Management – R1 Branch

"Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and livability"
California Department of Transportation  
Attention: Christopher Quiney, Branch Chief  
North Region Office of Environmental Management, MS-30  
1657 Riverside Drive  
Redding, CA 96001

December 1, 2014

Re: Pacific Crest Trail Association Comments on the Yellow Creek Bridge Replacement Project Draft Initial Study with Proposed Negative Declaration

Dear Christopher Quiney,

I am writing on behalf of the 9,800 member Pacific Crest Trail Association (PCTA). PCTA is the Forest Service's primary private partner in the management, maintenance and protection of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT). As such, it is PCTA's role to advocate for the best possible protection of the PCT and the experience it offers to hikers and equestrians.

To begin, PCTA commends the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans) for considering the impacts of the Yellow Creek Bridge Replacement Project on the PCT and trail users. Further, PCTA supports this project as it will provide a long term benefit to the PCT. By widening the shoulder on each side of the highway, as the project proposes, PCT hikers and equestrians will have a higher level of safety as they travel the short distance along the Yellow Creek Bridge before rejoining the PCT on either side of Hwy 70. PCTA does have a few comments which can help CalTrans to further mitigate the short term impacts of this project on PCT users.

PCTA understands that the Roadside Rest Area and Trailhead facilities on the north side of Hwy 70 will have to be closed during construction of the bridge. In section 3.8 of the Draft Initial Study, the document states that trail users will be notified of this closure via USFS website and the Pacific Crest
Trail website. To be more specific, PCTA suggests CalTrans utilize the PCTA website. PCTA’s website is the main source of trail conditions and general trail information for PCT users. To do this, CalTrans should contact me, the Northern Sierra Regional Representative, and I will be sure information regarding the project is current and available for PCT users on our website. Also in Section 3.8, the document states that CalTrans will provide a temporary parking area for PCT users southeast of the Belden Bridge. PCTA greatly appreciates this accommodation for the general public and trail users. To avoid confusion and unnecessary travel through the construction area, PCTA suggests that CalTrans erect temporary signs visible from Hwy 70 directing trail users to the temporary parking area.

Traffic control procedures are detailed in Section 3.9 of the Draft Initial Study document. The document states, “Pedestrian traffic during construction will be facilitated with push buttons located at the north end of Belden Bridge and near the Safety Roadside Rest Area. Pedestrians will be able to push the button when they would like to cross Yellow Creek Bridge, and will have a predetermined timeframe during which vehicle traffic across the bridge will be restricted.” The traffic control procedures address pedestrians but not equestrians. As the PCT is open and managed for pedestrian and equestrian use, PCTA suggests that CalTrans takes into consideration that a person leading one or more equines will need more time to cross the bridge than a hiker. The predetermined timeframe for crossing the bridge should reflect and accommodate this need.

Mr. Quiney, I appreciate the time and effort CalTrans is making to protect the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail within the Yellow Creek Bridge Replacement Project. Please don’t hesitate to contact me with any questions you have regarding PCTA’s comments. Thank you for your time and support.

Thank you,

Justin Kooyman
PCTA Northern Sierra Regional Representative

Cc:
Michael Donald, Mt. Hough District Ranger
Erika Brenzovich, Mt. Hough Public Services Staff Officer
Dave Wood, Plumas National Forest Public Services Staff Officer
Mike Dawson, PCTA Trail Operations Director
Beth Boyst, USFS PCT Manager
January 15, 2015

Justin Kooymans, PCTA Northern Sierra Regional Representative  
Northern Sierra Regional Trail Operations Office  
P.O. Box 1092  
Portola, CA  96122

Dear Mr. Kooymans:  
Thank you for providing comments related to Caltrans’ proposed Yellow Creek Bridge Replacement project.

Caltrans has included a response to each of the comments in this letter; comments are numbered for reference purposes and correspond with the annotations in the letter dated December 1, 2014.

Comment Response PCTA-1  
The letter requests that in addition to notifying trail users of the PG&E Safety Roadside Rest Area closure via the USFS website and Pacific Crest Trail website, that trail users also be notified of the closure via the PCTA website.  Caltrans will notify the PCTA Northern Sierra Regional Representative of construction-related closures.

Comment Response PCTA-2  
The letter requests that Caltrans erect temporary signs visible from SR 70 directing trail users to the temporary parking area southeast of the Belden Bridge.  The Traffic Management Plan prepared for the project will include the placement of appropriate signage directing trail users to the temporary parking.

Comment Response PCTA-3  
The letter requests that Caltrans consider the additional time that equestrians may need to cross Yellow Creek Bridge during construction, and to allow for that time as part of the pedestrian push button system. The Traffic Management Plan prepared for the project will consider time needed for both pedestrians and/or equestrians to cross Yellow Creek Bridge during construction.

If you have any questions about the project or the environmental process, please contact the environmental coordinator, Julie McFall, at (530) 225-2828. A copy of the Final Initial Study/Negative Declaration is available on Caltrans’ website at www.dot.ca.gov/dist3/departments/envinternet/envdoc.htm.

Sincerely,

Chris Quincy, Branch Chief  
Office of Environmental Management – R1 Branch

"Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California’s economy and livability"
Chris Quincy
Branch Chief, Environmental Management – R1 Branch
California Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 490073
Redding, CA 96004-6073

Re: Yellow Creek Bridge Replacement Draft Initial Study

Dear Mr. Quincy:

Thank you for soliciting comments from the Forest Service on the Yellow Creek Bridge Replacement Project Draft Initial Study. I have reviewed the Draft Initial Study with Proposed Negative Declaration and appreciate the attention that Caltrans has given in the Draft Study in providing an alternate temporary trailhead location for the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) and other trail users. Due to the closure of the Belden Roadside Rest Area, this temporary trailhead will be located on the southeast side of the Belden Bridge, and signs will be posted at the rest area notifying trail users of the alternate location.

The Forest Service is interested in ensuring that the bridge replacement project either maintains or improves recreation opportunities in the Feather River Canyon. I recommend that Caltrans also provide a permanent shoulder wide enough on the new bridge to allow for safe PCT trail access along the highway. It was my understanding that this was part of the proposed project, but it was not apparent in the Draft Initial Study - Proposed Action or description of alternatives. I recommend this be included in the preferred alternative.

I also recommend that Caltrans maintain or improve recreational boating access affected by this project since access for boaters in the Feather River Canyon is very limited.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project. You can reach me at 530-283-7610, mdonald@fs.fed.us, or Public Services Staff, Erik Brenzovich at 530-283-7620, ebrenzovich@fs.fed.us, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL A. DONALD
District Ranger

CC:
Pacific Crest Trail Association, Justin Keeyman
American Whitewater, Dave Steindorf
January 15, 2015

Michael A. Donald, District Ranger
Mt. Hough Ranger District
39696 Highway 70
Quincy, CA 95971

Dear Mr. Donald:
Thank you for providing comments related to Caltrans’ proposed Yellow Creek Bridge Replacement project.

Caltrans has included a response to each of the comments in this letter; comments are numbered for reference purposes and correspond with the annotations in the letter dated December 5, 2014.

Comment Response FS-1
The letter requests Caltrans provide a permanent shoulder wide enough on the new bridge to allow for safe Pacific Crest Trail access along the highway. The existing bridge has no shoulders; the preferred alternative includes an eight-foot-wide shoulder on the north side of the highway and a 12-foot 6-inch-wide shoulder on the south side of the highway.

Comment Response FS-2
The letter requests that Caltrans maintain or improve recreational boating access affected by the project. Caltrans does not own the land in the vicinity of Yellow Creek Bridge that is currently being used as an informal takeout location by boaters. Other river access points, on both private and public use lands, are available for recreational users upstream and downstream of the Yellow Creek Bridge. As explained in the Draft Initial Study, the area surrounding the Yellow Creek Bridge will be under construction and temporarily closed to public access for safety reasons. The area will be returned to its pre-existing condition following construction. Caltrans will place signage on the North Fork Feather River notifying boaters of construction at the Yellow Creek Bridge.

If you have any questions about the project or the environmental process, please contact the environmental coordinator, Julie McFall, at (530) 225-2828. A copy of the Final Initial Study/Negative Declaration is available on Caltrans’ website at www.dot.ca.gov/dist3/departments/envinternet/envdoc.htm.

Sincerely,

Chris Quiney, Branch Chief
Office of Environmental Management – R1 Branch

"Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and viability"