# Bridgeport Culverts

U.S. Highway 395 between Green Lakes Road and Swauger Creek Road

09-Mono County-395-PM 72.5/74.6 and 77.3/86.0

Project ID #0900020091
EA 09-34090

## Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration

Prepared by the

State of California Department of Transportation

**November 2013**

# General Information About This Document

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

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

### *What should you do?*

Please read this Initial Study. Additional copies of this document are available for review at the Caltrans district office at 500 S. Main Street, Bishop, CA 93514 and Mono County Library - Bridgeport at 94 North School Street, Bridgeport, CA 93517. The document can also be accessed at the following website: http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist9/environmental/index.html.

We welcome your comments. If you have any concerns about the project, please send your written comments to Caltrans by the deadline. Submit comments via U.S. mail to Caltrans at the following address:

Susan Schilder-Thomas, Branch Chief
Central Regional Environmental Support Services Branch
California Department of Transportation
855 M Street, Suite 200
Fresno, CA 93721

Submit comments via email to: Susan.Schilder@dot.ca.gov.

- Submit comments by the deadline: January 13, 2014.

### *What happens next?*

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

For individuals with sensory disabilities, this document is available in Braille, in large print, on audiocassette, or on computer disk. To obtain a copy in one of these alternate formats, please call or write to Caltrans, Attn: Susan Schilder-Thomas, Central Regional Support Services Branch, 855 M Street, Suite 200, Fresno, CA 93721; (559) 445-6429, or use California Relay Service TTY number 711.

## *PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND:*

| | |
|---|---|
| **Project Title:** | Bridgeport Culverts |
| **Lead Agency (Project Sponsor):** | California Department of Transportation<br>855 M Street, Suite 200<br>Fresno, CA 93721 |
| **Contact person and telephone number:** | Susan Schilder-Thomas, Branch Chief<br>Central Region Environmental Support Services<br>(559) 445-6429 |
| **Project Location:** | On U.S. Highway 395 in Mono County between 0.6 mile north of Green Creek Road and 1 mile south of Swauger Canyon Road from post miles 72.5/74.6 and from 77.3/86.0 |
| **General plan description:** | U.S. Highway 395 is 120 miles long and is the principal route to and through Mono County. It is the only direct route to and through the County for the shipment of goods and materials. It is the only route suitable for emergency purposes and the principal route to the county's many recreational and tourist attractions. Identified as a regionally significant part of the Interregional Road System, as a lifeline route, and as part of the National Truck Network on the National Highway System. The majority of U.S. Highway 395 in Mono County is also identified as a freeway/expressway. |
| **Zoning:** | Agriculture, Recreation, Resource Management |
| **Description of project:** | The proposed project would replace, refurbish, or repair 44 culverts beneath U.S. Highway 395 from post miles 72.5/74.6 and from post miles 77.3/86.0, provide rock slope protection, and remove obstructions from clear recovery zone near Bridgeport in Mono County, California. Temporary construction easements would be required. |
| **Surrounding land uses and setting:** | U.S. Highway 395, within the project limits, is an undivided two-lane conventional highway with 12-foot lanes and varies from 0-15 feet-wide paved shoulders. The project is located in a rural area with both flat areas and mountainous terrain. Land uses include privately owned agricultural land, residential, wildlands, recreational at Bridgeport Reservoir and East Walker River, and open space. |
| **Other public agencies whose approval is required:** | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers<br>California Department of Fish and Wildlife<br>State Regional Water Quality Control Board |

## *ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:*

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project. Please see the checklist for additional information. Any boxes *not* checked represent issues that were considered as part of the scoping and environmental analysis for the project, but for which no adverse impacts were identified. Regarding boxes not checked, no further discussion of these issues is in this document.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | Aesthetics | ☐ | Agriculture and Forestry | ☐ | Air Quality |
| ☒ | Biological Resources | ☒ | Cultural Resources | ☐ | Geology/Soils |
| ☐ | Greenhouse Gas Emissions | ☐ | Hazards and Hazardous Materials | ☐ | Hydrology/Water Quality |
| ☐ | Land Use/Planning | ☐ | Mineral Resources | ☐ | Noise |
| ☐ | Paleontology | ☐ | Population/Housing | ☐ | Public Services |
| ☐ | Recreation | ☐ | Transportation/Traffic | ☐ | Utilities/Service Systems |
| ☐ | Mandatory Findings of Significance | | | | |

## *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. |

**Signature:** **Date:** 11/27/2013

Susan Schilder-Thomas
Senior Environmental Planner
Central Regional Environmental Support Services Branch

# Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

### *Project Description*

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to replace or repair damaged culverts under U.S. Highway 395 from post miles 72.5 to 74.6 and from post miles 77.3 to 86.0 near the community of Bridgeport, California in Mono County.

### *Determination*

This proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration is included to give notice to interested agencies and the public that it is Caltrans' intent to adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration for this project. This does not mean that Caltrans' decision on the project is final. This Mitigated Negative Declaration is subject to change based on comments received by interested agencies and the public.

Caltrans has prepared an Initial Study for this project and, pending public review, expects to determine from this study that the proposed project would have no effect on the environment for the following reasons: The proposed project would have no effect on: aesthetics, agriculture and forest resources, air quality, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, utilities and service systems.

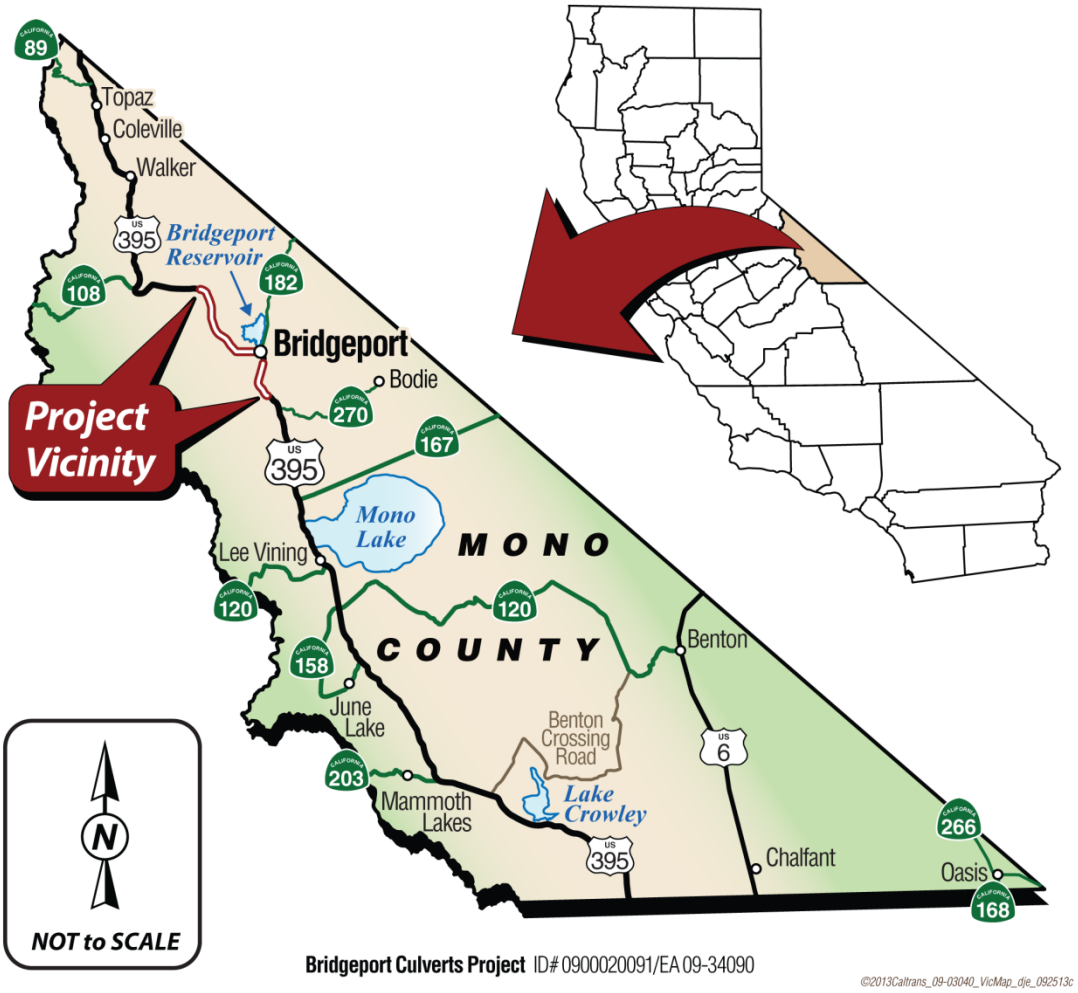
In addition, the proposed project would have no significantly adverse effect on biological or cultural resources because the following mitigation measures would reduce potential effects to insignificance:

- Establishment of Environmental Sensitive Area fencing for biological resources and cultural resources;
- On- or off-site planting, enhancement or preservation for riparian habitat.
- Purchase of in lieu fee credits or off-site wetland creation or enhancement for wetlands and Waters of the U.S.

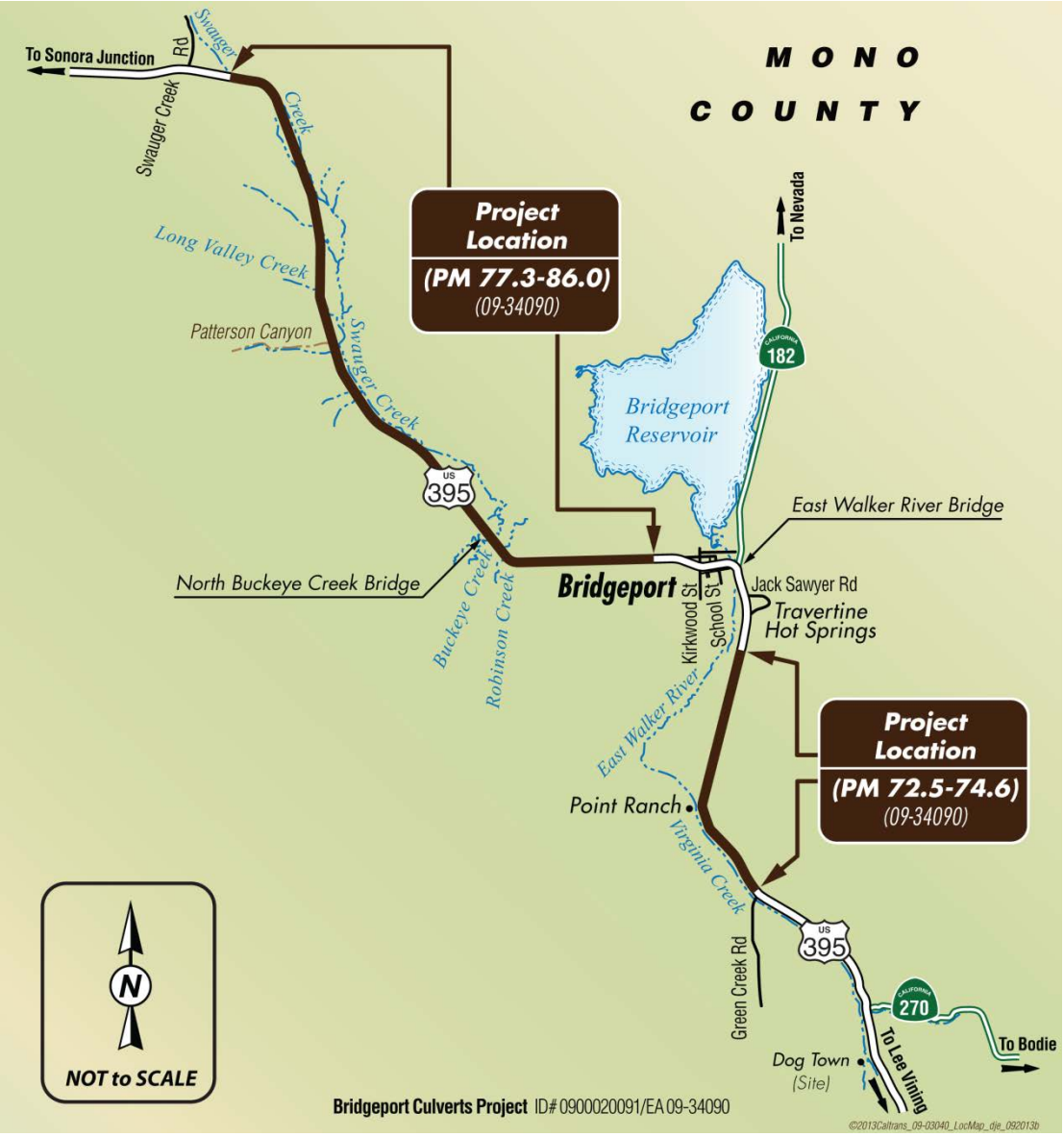
_____ _____

Susan Schilder-Thomas Date
Senior Environmental Planner
Central Regional Environmental Support Services Branch
California Department of Transportation

**Figure 1  Project Vicinity Map**



## Figure 2  Project Location Map



# CEQA Environmental Checklist

| 09-Mono-395 | 72.5/74.6 and 77.3/86.0 | 09-34090 (ID#: 0900020091) |
|---|---|---|
| Dist.-Co.-Rte. | P.M/P.M. | E.A. |

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 a clarifying discussion is needed, the discussion either follows the applicable section in the checklist or is placed within the body of the environmental document itself. 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.

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **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** | | | | |
| a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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))? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| **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: | | | | |
| a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non- attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| **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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |

*A Natural Environmental Study was prepared in October 2013. The project would impact jurisdictional wetlands and Waters of the U.S. by placing fill in portions in areas where existing culverts are to be modified. All on-site impact areas have been reduced to the smallest practical footprint. The project would permanently impact 0.01 acre and temporarily impact 0.2 acre of potentially jurisdictional wetlands. Approximately 0.03 acre of permanent impacts and 0.04 acre of temporary impacts of jurisdictional Waters of the U.S. See Wetlands and Other Waters of the U.S. Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures of this document.*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

**V. CULTURAL RESOURCES**: Would the project:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |

*Historic Property Survey Report and Environmental Sensitive Area Action Plan prepared in April 2013. Caltrans determined a finding of no substantial adverse change in the form of Environmental Sensitive Areas because the impacts to historical resources would be mitigated to below of significance pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15064.5(b). Eight ESAs would be established. State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this finding on June 15, 2013, 2013.*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |

*Historic Property Survey Report and Environmental Sensitive Area Action Plan prepared in April 2013. Caltrans determined a finding of no substantial adverse change in the form of Environmental Sensitive Areas because the impacts to historical resources would be mitigated to below of significance pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15064.5(b). Eight ESAs would be established. State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this finding on June 15, 2013, 2013.*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS**: Would the project: | | | | |
| a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| ii) Strong seismic ground shaking? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| iv) Landslides? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

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| **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?<br><br>b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases? | While Caltrans has included this good faith effort in order to provide the public and decision-makers as much information as possible about the project, it is Caltrans determination that in the absence of further regulatory or scientific information related to greenhouse gas emissions and CEQA significance, it is too speculative to make a significance determination regarding the project's direct and indirect impact with respect to climate change. Caltrans does remain firmly committed to implementing measures to help reduce the potential effects of the project. |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

**IX. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY**: Would the project:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| **X. LAND USE AND PLANNING**: Would the project: | | | | |
| a) Physically divide an established community? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b)Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| **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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| **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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| ) 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

**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)? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

**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: | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| Fire protection? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| Police protection? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| Schools? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| Parks? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| Other public facilities? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| **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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

**XVIII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

## Additional Explanations for Questions in the Impacts Checklist

### *IV. Biological Resources (checklist questions a and c)*

#### *Threatened and Endangered Species*

This section discusses plant and animal species that are either state- or federally-listed as threatened or endangered, or are currently proposed for such listing.

#### *Affected Environment*

A Natural Environment Study was prepared in October 2013. The project area consists of a rural environment ranging in elevation from 6,600 feet to approximately 7,400 feet within the Eastern High Sierra Nevada. The Biological Study Area consists of 41 culvert locations. The study identified one state-threatened species, the bank swallow, with the potential to occur in the project area.

Bank Swallow

The 41 culvert locations were surveyed four times between May and September 2013 when bank swallow would most likely use this area for nesting. Although potentially suitable habitat for the bank swallow is present in the Biological Study Area, bank swallow nesting holes were not observed within or adjacent to the Biological Study Area during any of the surveys.

#### *Environmental Consequences*

Because no bank swallow nesting holes are currently present within the Biological Study Area, no impact to this species is anticipated.

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

Bank Swallow

Because the Biological Study Area contains suitable habitat for the bank swallow, clearance surveys would be completed within 1-2 weeks of the start of construction. If any bank swallow nesting holes are observed during the pre-construction surveys, the following measures would be implemented:

- Environmental Sensitive Area fencing would be established around the nesting holes prior to the start of construction. The fencing would be clearly identifiable and labeled with appropriate signs to identify the potential for the bank swallow.
- Mandatory environmental education would be provided for all construction personnel prior to the start of any ground-breaking activities to review the specific

avoidance and minimization measures in place to eliminate impacts to the bank swallow and their nest holes.

### *Other Special Status Species*

#### *Affected Environment*

Migratory Birds

Nesting migratory birds were observed in the Biological Study Area in June 2013.

Western white-tailed jack rabbit

The western white-tailed jack rabbit, a California Department of Fish and Wildlife species of special concern may have the potential to occur within the Biological Study Area. The jackrabbit's habitat is open grasslands, sometimes can be found in forested areas and high alpine meadows. This species was not positively identified within the Biological Study Area during the 2013 surveys and jackrabbit burrows were not observed in the impact areas. However, jackrabbit scat (animal droppings) was observed and unidentified species of jackrabbits were observed on the project site.

#### *Environmental Consequences*

Migratory Birds

The removal of vegetation (clearing and grubbing) and construction in the proposed impact areas could affect migratory birds if nests are present.

Western white-tailed jack rabbit

The potential exists for jackrabbits to establish burrows in the Biological Study Area prior to the start of construction. If jackrabbit burrows are present, the clearing and grubbing, and construction activities could impact the jackrabbit.

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

Migratory Birds

The following measures would be implemented for migratory birds:

- Impacts to migratory birds would be avoided by scheduling clearing and grubbing activities outside the nesting season. The nesting season is February through mid-September). If construction is scheduled to occur within the nesting season, pre-construction nesting bird surveys would confirm the presence of nesting birds at specific locations and a determination would be made at the time as to what avoidance measures would need to be implemented.

- Migratory bird clearance surveys would be completed within 1 to 2 weeks prior to the start of construction. If a nest is discovered during the pre-construction surveys a construction buffer would be provided to avoid impacts to the species.
- Mandatory environmental education would be provided for all construction personnel prior to the start of any clearing, grubbing, or ground-breaking activities to review the importance of avoiding impacts to nesting species of migratory birds observed in the project.

Western white-tailed jack rabbit

The following measures would be implemented for the Western white-tailed jack rabbit:

- During the time of the migratory bird clearance surveys, the Biological Study Area and specifically the areas to be impacted by the project would be surveyed for the species.
- If any suitably sized burrows are observed that could belong to the Western white-tailed jack rabbit, if determined to be inactive the burrow(s), would be collapsed by a biologist, or if the burrows are active and can be avoided, a construction buffer would be provided around any burrows located within the project site.

## ***Natural Communities***

### *Affected Environment*

Riparian Habitat

Riparian areas are the vegetated areas in streams, streambanks, or rivers and they protect water quality by capturing, storing and treating water through their soils before it flows into streams. They are also important because they provide habitat for wildlife and aquatic life.

The project area surveyed by Caltrans biologists in 2013 contains areas with established riparian habitat. The riparian habitat present on the project is mostly comprised of willows (Salix sp.).

### *Environmental Consequences*

Construction activities would impact riparian habitat by removing or trimming willows.

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

The following measure would be implemented for riparian habitat:

- Removal of any riparian vegetation would be limited to the minimum amount necessary to allow for efficient project construction.
- Mitigation for impacts to native species of riparian trees and shrubs with a threshold diameter of 4 inches at breast height, or the equivalent of in the case of willows would be compensated for through on-site or off-site plantings, enhancement, or preservation of off-site riparian habitat.
- With water diversions in place at locations that contain perennial waters, stream flow, both above and below the work site, would be maintained in order to avoid impact to any species of fish during construction. All culverts would be repaired or replace in a way that would not hinder fish passage once construction is complete.

## ***Wetlands and Other Waters of the U.S.***

This section discusses wetlands and Waters of the U.S. that are under the jurisdiction of the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

Jurisdictional wetlands are areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Jurisdictional wetlands generally include swamps, bogs, fens, natural drainage features, and seasonal wetlands.

Waters of the U.S. are defined as those waters that are currently used, were used in the past, or may be subject to use in interstate and foreign commerce, including all waters subject to the ebb (receding) and flow of the tide and all interstate waters including interstate wetlands. This definition also includes intrastate lakes, rivers, streams (including intermittent, ephemeral and perennial streams), mudflats, sand flats, sloughs, prairie potholes, wet meadows, playa lakes, or natural ponds where the use, degradation or destruction of which could affect interstate or foreign commerce.

### *Affected Environment*

The Biological Study Area was surveyed by Caltrans biologists between May and September 2013. A Natural Environmental Study was prepared in October 2013.

A wetlands/Waters of the U.S. site assessment was conducted in June 2013. Forty-two potentially jurisdictional wetlands and 51 potentially jurisdictional Waters of the

U.S. were mapped within the Biological Study Area. The mapped boundaries of the wetlands were determined using the presence or absence of hydrology and hydrophytic-dominant vegetation, as well as topography and aerial mapping. Boundaries of the Waters of the U.S. were determined based on the presence of surface hydrology, ordinary high water mark indicators, and topography in the immediate and surrounding areas. A formal wetland/Waters of the U.S. delineation and report would be completed and submitted to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for verification in 2014.

### *Environmental Consequences*

The proposed project would impact wetlands and Waters of the U.S. through the placement of fill in portions of these hydrologic resources in areas where existing culverts are to be widened, extended, replaced and/or equipped with rock slope protection that would function as energy dissipaters.

Approximately 38 potentially jurisdictional wetlands and 43 potentially jurisdictional Waters of the U.S. are located in areas that would be either temporarily and/or permanently impacted by the project. Specifically, culvert repair and replacement would permanently impact 555 square feet (0.01 acre) and temporarily impact 965 square feet (0.02 acre) of potentially jurisdictional wetlands on the project. Likewise, approximately 1,414 square feet (0.03 acre) of permanent impacts and 1,563 square feet (0.04 acre) of temporary impacts would be placed in potentially jurisdictional Waters of the U.S. as a result of the project. Refer to Tables 1 and 2 below for a list of the features and the area of impacts anticipated for wetlands and Waters of the U.S.

Any of the below listed wetlands of Waters of the U.S. that would be impacted by the project and are determined to be jurisdictional according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers would require a Clean Water Act Section 404 Nationwide Permit #14. A Clean Water Act Section 401 Certification from the State Regional Water Quality Control Board would also be required for impacts to jurisdictional wetlands and Waters of the U.S. A California Department of Fish and Wildlife 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement would also be required for any impacts to drainages in the project.

**Table 1: Summary of Potential Impacts to Wetlands**

| Post Mile | Feature | Potential Area of Impact (square feet/acres) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Permanent | Temporary |
| 73.8 | Wetland A1 | 5 | 63 |
| 73.8 | Wetland B | - | 6 |
| 73.87 | Wetland A2 | 10 | 67 |
| 74.59 | Wetland E | - | 7 |
| 77.33 | Wetland F1 | 8 | 22 |
| 77.33 | Wetland F2 | - | 23 |
| 77.37 | Wetland G | 20 | 41 |
| 77.52 | Wetland H | 20 | 116 |
| 77.52 | Wetland I | 15 | 127 |
| 78.03 | Wetland M | 4 | 21 |
| 78.10 | Wetland N1 | - | 91 |
| 78.20 | Wetland R | 11 | 91 |
| 78.53 | Wetland S | 19 | 84 |
| 78.53 | Wetland T | 1 | 2 |
| 79.22 | Wetland W | - | 1 |
| 79.25 | Wetland Y | 3 | 31 |
| 80.2 | Wetland Swale | 1 | 80 |
| 80.2 | Wetland Swale | - | 1 |
| 83.28 | Wetland AF | 9 | 24 |
| 83.28 | Wetland AG | - | 21 |
| 83.86 | Wetland AH | 16 | 34 |
| 83.9 | Wetland AM | 20 | 107 |
| 84.15 | Wetland AJ | 22 | 35 |
| 84.53 | Wetland AK | 3 | 3 |
| 84.53 | Wetland AL | 8 | 32 |
| Total | | 195/0.004 | 1130/0.026 |

## Table 2: Summary of Potential Impacts to WOUS

| Post Mile | Feature | Potential Area of Impact (square feet/acres) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Permanent | Temporary |
| 73.80 | Irrigation Ditch 1 | - | 1 |
| 73.87 | Irrigation Ditch 1 | 1 | 42 |
| 74.01 | Irrigation Ditch 2 | 18 | 16 |
| 74.29 | Ephemeral Wash 3 | 52 | 73 |
| 74.59 | Ephemeral Stream 4 | 30 | 48 |
| 77.33 | Irrigation Ditch 5 | - | 71 |
| 77.33 | Irrigation Ditch 6 | - | 46 |
| 77.37 | Irrigation Ditch 6 | 4 | 419 |
| 77.52 | Irrigation Ditch 6 | - | 29 |
| 77.61 | Irrigation Ditch 6 | - | 38 |
| 77.79 | Irrigation Ditch 6 | 5 | 33 |
| 78.03 | Irrigation Ditch 6 | - | 45 |
| 78.03 | Irrigation Ditch 13 | - | 15 |
| 78.20 | Irrigation Ditch 6 | 17 | 48 |
| 78.53 | Irrigation Ditch 18 | - | 26 |
| 78.75 | Irrigation Ditch 21 | - | 35 |
| 78.98 | Irrigation Ditch 22 | 9 | 8 |
| 79.22 | Perennial Stream 25 | 40 | 71 |
| 79.25 | Irrigation Ditch 26 | 29 | 22 |
| 79.41 | Irrigation Ditch 27 | 10 | 44 |
| 79.64 | Irrigation Ditch 28 | 65 | 166 |
| 80.20 | Relic Channel 29 | 13 | 28 |
| 82.10 | Perennial Stream 31 | - | 40 |
| 82.52 | Ephemeral Stream 32 | 11 | 12 |
| 82.52 | Roadside Ditch 33 | 3 | 16 |
| 82.56 | Ephemeral Stream 34 | 17 | 47 |
| 82.88 | Ephemeral Stream 35 | 23 | 43 |
| 82.98 | Ephemeral Stream 36 | 17 | 31 |
| 83.16 | Roadside Ditch 37 | 14 | 20 |
| 83.28 | Perennial Stream 39 | 17 | 86 |
| 83.33 | Irrigation Ditch 40 | 5 | 8 |
| 83.40 | Erosional Feature 41 | 8 | 28 |
| 83.42 | Erosional Feature 42 | 3 | 9 |
| 83.56 | Irrigation Ditch 43 | 11 | 15 |
| 83.67 | Irrigation Ditch 45 | 15 | 48 |
| 83.86 | Erosional Feature 46 | 2 | 81 |
| 83.90 | Ephemeral Stream 47 | 4 | 10 |
| 84.09 | Irrigation Ditch 48 | 25 | 24 |
| 84.53 | Perennial Stream 49 | 5 | 5 |
| 85.7 | Perennial Stream 50 | - | 19 |
| 85.98 | Perennial Stream 51 | 16 | 32 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 85.98 | Perennial Stream 52 | 11 | 24 |
| | Total | 509/0.012 | 1,916/0.044 |

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

To avoid and minimize both temporary and permanent impacts to jurisdictional wetlands and Waters of the U.S., Best Management Practices have been included in the project design. For example, all of the on-site impact areas have been reduced to the smallest practical footprint. When possible, new culverts would be replaced in the same locations as the existing and the construction contract would be timed so that major of culverts with ephemeral or intermittent flows are dry. For culverts with perennial (recurring) flows, coordination with landowners would be used so flows can be diverted during the time of construction when possible. In cases where diversions are not possible, some replacements may be made on a new and adjacent alignment with the subsequent abandonment of the existing culvert.

Additional avoidance and minimization measures to be implemented prior to the start of construction are as follows:

- Construction would occur during the dry season when flows are absent or low.
- A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan would be prepared.
- Best Management Practices protecting water quality would be implemented such as:
    - Installation of measures to control temporary erosion;
    - Installation of measures to prevent debris from entering surface waters;
    - Measures to be implemented in the case of an accidental spill of hazardous materials.
- An Environmental Sensitive Area would be established for wetlands and Waters of the U.S. that are not to be impacted by the project. The Environmental Sensitive Areas would be identified on the project mapping and included in the Plans, Specifications and Estimates section of the construction contract so they can be flagged or fenced on-site prior to the start of construction.
- A qualified biologist would be on-site at the time of the Environmental Sensitive flagging or fence installation.
- A mandatory environmental education would be provided for all construction personnel prior to the start of any ground-breaking activities to review the specific avoidance and minimization measures in place to eliminate unnecessary impacts to wetlands and Waters of the U.S. on the project.
- Mitigation for impacts to wetlands and Waters of the U.S. would be provided through the purchase of In Lieu Fee credits or through off-site wetland creation or enhancement.

- The following permits would be required:
    - California Department of Fish and Wildlife 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement;
    - State Regional Water Quality Control Board Clean Water Act Section 401 Certification; and
    - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Clean Water Act Section 404 Nationwide Permit #14.

## *V. Cultural Resources (checklist questions a and b)*

### *Affected Environment*

A Historic Property Survey Report was prepared on May 30, 2013. Seven cultural sites are within the project's Area of Potential Effects. The sites are:

- Prehistoric lithic and ceramic scatter, bedrock mortar (CA-MNO-2456/H)
- Prehistoric flaked stone scatter (P-26-5872)
- Prehistoric/historic flaked and ground stone scatter (P-26-5873)
- Historic road (P-26-5906)
- Prehistoric lithic scatter (CA-MNO-569)
- Prehistoric/historic flaked stone tool and debitage scatter (CA-MNO-2476-H)
- Prehistoric/historic flaked stone scatter (CA-MNO-2473)

### *Environmental Consequences*

The Historic Property Survey Report was sent to the State Historic Preservation Officer on June 15, 2013 as notification of Caltrans findings. The results of Caltrans' cultural resources inventory indicate that with appropriate avoidance measures, the construction of the Bridgeport Culverts project would avoid the seven sites and have no adverse effect. For this reason, Caltrans did not conduct subsurface testing or surface collection within the Area of Potential Effects. Caltrans assumes that for the purpose of this project the seven archaeological sites that might otherwise be impacted would be considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and/or the California Register.

For California Environmental Quality Act Impact Findings, Caltrans determined a finding of no substantial adverse change. With avoidance measures, the seven sites would be not impacted by construction activities.

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

An Environmental Sensitive Area Action Plan was prepared in April 2013 to protect the cultural resources from construction impacts. The Action Plan is designed to prevent any project activity that could result in ground disturbance that could impact these sites. The following measures would be implemented:

- Prior to construction, the sensitive resources would be defined as "Environmental Sensitive Areas" and would be clearly described and illustrated on the Plans and in the Resident Engineer's file.
- At construction meetings, the importance of the sensitive areas/restricted areas would be discussed with construction personnel. It would be stressed that no construction activity should occur within the defined locations and construction workers must remain outside of these areas at all times. The ramifications of violating the ESAs would be made apparent to all involved with construction.
- A qualified Archaeologist would be required to monitor all cultural ESA fence installation and would be present during any construction activities adjacent to the cultural ESAs.
- Any breach in these instructions, Caltrans qualified archaeologist would notify the State Historic Preservation Officer within 48 hours and consult with local Native American representative.
- If previously unidentified cultural materials are unearthed during construction, it is Caltrans' policy that work be halted in that area until a Caltrans qualified archaeologist can assess the significance of the find.
- The contractor, under supervision of the qualified archaeologist would remove ESA fencing after construction is completed.

# Appendix A List of Technical Studies Available Separately

Paleontological Identification Report (January 2012)

Visual Impact Assessment (February 2013)

Hazardous Waste Evaluation (February 2013)

Air Quality, Noise Analysis, and Water Quality (February 2013)

Floodplain Evaluation (June 2013)

Natural Environment Study (November 2013)

*The following technical study has been removed due to confidentiality:*

Historical Property Survey Report (May 2013)

Legal authority to restrict cultural resource information can be found in California Government Code Sections 6254.10 and 6254(r); California Code of Regulations Section 15120(d); and Section 304 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.