

3.13 Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898, “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations,” dated February 11, 1994, requires federal agencies to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their actions on minorities and low-income populations and communities as well as the equity of the distribution of the benefits and risks of their decisions. Environmental justice addresses the fair treatment of people of all races and incomes with respect to actions affecting the environment. Fair treatment implies that no group of people should bear a disproportionate share of negative impacts from an environmental action.

To comply with the environmental justice policy established by the Secretary of the Interior, all DOI agencies are to identify and evaluate any anticipated effects, direct or indirect, from a project, action, or decision on minority and low-income populations and communities, including the equity of the distribution of the benefits and risks. Accordingly, this section examines the anticipated impacts associated with the alternatives with respect to potentially affected minority and economically disadvantaged groups. Socioeconomic issues, including population and housing, are evaluated in Section 3.9, Socioeconomics, Population, and Housing. This section does not function as part of the EIR portion of the joint EA/DEIR, as CEQA does not require state or local agencies to address environmental justice concerns in an EIR. In other words, environmental justice is not a CEQA issue.

3.13.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Regional Setting

Poverty Rate

The U.S. Census uses a set of income limits that vary by family size and composition to determine who is poor. If a family’s total income is less than the income limit, then that family, and every individual in it, is considered poor. Poverty income level thresholds are nationwide standards set by the Census. The formula for the poverty rate is the number of persons below the poverty level divided by the number of persons for whom poverty status is determined. A comparison of the poverty rates calculated for Trinity County and California between 1989 and 1999 is depicted in Table 3.13-1.

TABLE 3.13-1
POVERTY RATE, TRINITY COUNTY AND CALIFORNIA

	1989	1999
Trinity County	18.5%	18.7%
California	12.5%	14.2%

Source: Adapted from Center for Economic Development 2004

In 1999, 18.7 percent of the population in Trinity County was living in poverty. The 1999 median household income for Trinity County was \$27,711, which is 42 percent less than the average California income (Center for Economic Development 2004). For most communities in Trinity County, the poverty rates are higher than poverty rates of the state. The community in Trinity County with the highest poverty rate is Hyampom.

Population by Race/Ethnicity

Population by race and ethnicity is estimated annually by the California Department of Finance, Demographic Research Unit. Population by race and ethnicity is compiled by what the respondents to the U.S. Census indicate as their primary ancestry. White, black, American Indian, and Asian are racial designations, while Hispanic is an ethnic designation that can be a mixture of white, black, and American Indian races. The Hispanic population is separated from the four main racial groups because many Hispanic people associate their ancestry with their ethnicity rather than their race.

According to the data compiled by the Center for Economic Development (2004), the vast majority of the population in Trinity County (approximately 90 percent), as measured in 2003, consists of white non-Hispanic individuals. The remainder of the population is predominantly Native American (5 percent) and Hispanic (4 percent).

Following state patterns, the percentage of Hispanic and American Indian people in Trinity County is steadily increasing (Center for Economic Development 2004). In 1990, the Hispanic population was 3.3 percent of the county's total population. By 2003, the percentage had increased to 4 percent of the total. The largest minority population in the county is the American Indian population. In 1990, American Indians constituted 4.6 percent of the total county population, rising to 5 percent by 2003. During the period from 1990 to 2004, California's American Indian population increased from 0.7 percent to 1 percent of the state's total population.

In 1990, Trinity County's non-Hispanic white population was 91 percent of the county's total population. By 2003, the percentage had decreased slightly to 90 percent of the total (Center for Economic Development 2004). Comparatively, California's non-Hispanic white population decreased from 57.2 percent of the total population in 1990 to 44.2 percent in 2004 (Social Science Data Analysis Network 2006; U.S. Census Bureau 2004). The percentage of black and Asian residents in the county stayed the same (each less than 1 percent).

Local Setting

The Trinity River is a valuable economic resource for Trinity County. Its popularity as a recreation destination, particularly for fishing, white water recreation, gold panning, and as an access point to the Salmon-Trinity Alps, directly benefits communities such as Douglas City through increased business patronage. Campgrounds and river access points occur in close proximity to the site. These businesses benefit during peak recreation use periods (e.g., rafting, kayaking, and fishing). Other economic opportunities such as agriculture are severely limited by the surrounding topography, thereby minimizing the attraction for a transitional labor pool.

The Douglas City community is predominantly white (U.S. Census Bureau 2006). The proportion of people living below the poverty level is higher (18.0 percent) for this area than for the balance of the U.S (12.4 percent) (U.S. Census Bureau 2006). The Douglas City Community Plan area has virtually no multiple family units (Trinity County 1987); however, numerous single family homes are located within or adjacent to the site boundary. Several businesses are also located in the immediate vicinity of the project.

The Douglas City Elementary School, which includes grades kindergarten through eight (approximately 150 students), is located on Schoolhouse Road across SR 299 from the project boundary. The Douglas City School District encompasses 125 square miles of mountainous terrain with scattered residences, no industry, and only a handful of small businesses. This school is composed of 93 percent white (not Hispanic), 4 percent Hispanic, 2 percent Native American, and < 1 percent Pacific Islander (California Department of Education 2006). State averages for ethnic composition of elementary schools (grades kindergarten through eight) are 31 percent white (not Hispanic), less than 1 percent Native American, 47 percent Hispanic, and 3 percent Filipino (California Department of Education 2006). The ethnicity of the children attending the Douglas City Elementary School corresponds to the general ethnic composition of the Douglas City community and its environs. At the Douglas City Elementary School, 54 percent of the children participate in the free/reduced fee lunch program (California Department of Education 2006).

3.13.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES/IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Methodology

The EPA compares three factors—minority representation, low-income representation, and environmental burden—for a community of concern and one or more reference areas—for example, an entire county—to analyze potential environmental justice impacts. A community of concern can be defined in a number of ways, including a municipality, a census block group, a user-defined radius around a source of pollution, or a boundary drawn along physical features such as streets, streams, or railroad tracks. The demographic data for the community of concern can then be analyzed to determine whether there would be a potential environmental justice concern in the area.

As part of this analysis, poverty levels and minority population levels were examined for Trinity County, as well as the community of Douglas City. Detailed information on the residential areas associated with the project was unavailable.

Significance Criteria

Because environmental justice is not a CEQA issue, specific significance criteria were not applied in evaluating potential environmental justice consequences. However, any modification or change in environmental justice factors in response to the Proposed Action is evaluated.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Table 3.13-2 summarizes the potential environmental justice impacts that would result from implementation of the project.

TABLE 3.13-2
 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IMPACTS FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION, NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE, ALTERNATIVE 1, AND ALTERNATIVE 2

No-Action Alternative	Proposed Action	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Proposed Action with Mitigation	Alternative 1 with Mitigation	Alternative 2 with Mitigation
3.13-1. Implementation of the project could adversely affect a minority or low-income population and/or community.						
NI	LS	LS	LS	N/A ¹	N/A ¹	N/A ¹

Notes:
 LS = Less than Significant NI = No Impact N/A = Not Applicable
¹Because this potential impact is less than significant, no mitigation is required.

Impact 3.13-1: Implementation of the project could adversely affect a minority or low-income population and/or community. *No Impact for No-Action Alternative; Less-than-Significant Impact for the Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2*

No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, no impact to a minority or low-income population or community would take place because construction associated with the project would not occur.

Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

Although minority and low-income residents live within the general vicinity of the project (Trinity River corridor), the project impacts would generally be experienced by residents in relationship to their proximity to the Indian Creek activity areas, regardless of their racial or income characteristics. There is no evidence to suggest that the project would cause a disproportionately high adverse human health or environmental effect on minority and low-income populations compared to other residents of the Douglas City Community Plan area. The known health risks to residents that could be associated with the project are evaluated in Section 3.5, Water Quality; Section 3.12, Air Quality; Section 3.15, Hazardous Materials; and Section 3.16, Noise. For the most part, these health risks are associated with the construction aspects of the project, in that residents and construction workers could be exposed to hazardous materials that may be associated with the project. Possible health risks to minority and low-income residents also include the risk of construction-related accidents. Reclamation will manage the project to minimize these risks, as required by applicable federal and state safety regulations. Therefore, no specific or disproportionate health risks or other impacts to low-income groups would be associated with the project.

Mitigation Measures

No-Action Alternative, Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

Since no significant impact has been identified for any of the alternatives, no mitigation measures are required.

Significance After Mitigation: *N/A.*

3.14 Aesthetics

The aesthetic value of an area is a measure of its visual character and quality, combined with the viewer's response to the area (Federal Highway Administration 1983). The purpose of this section is to address aesthetic values and assess potential impacts of the project on aesthetic resources. The consistency of the Proposed Action and the alternatives with the federal and state Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA) is discussed. A review of local land use plans and policies specific to aesthetics and field reconnaissance conducted for the purpose of identifying those areas of aesthetic value potentially affected by project implementation provide the basis for this assessment.

3.14.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Regional Setting

The Trinity River provides an important visual resource for residents and visitors to Trinity County. The scenic nature of the river is vital to the communities, residential areas, and recreational allure of the county. As part of the federal Wild and Scenic River System, the Trinity River below Lewiston Dam to its confluence with the Klamath River has been designated as "recreational." It is also listed as a Wild and Scenic River by the State of California, under which it is designated as "scenic" and "recreational." SR 299 along the Trinity River is a part of the USFS' Trinity Scenic Byway.

Since the construction of the TRD, the flow regime of the Trinity River has been significantly changed (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Hoopa Valley Tribe 1999). Water flows are maintained at a relatively constant level year around, with controls placed on the amounts of water flowing through the channel during spring run-off and storm events. The alterations of natural flow patterns have resulted in substantial changes in the ecology and landscape features within the channel and floodplain downstream of the TRD.

Local Context

The study area focuses on the mainstem Trinity River from the point where SR 299 first encounters the river from the east, extending downstream to Douglas City, California. In general, the southern boundary of the project area conforms to the right-of-way for SR 299. The northern boundary of the project area generally extends along the outside edge of the right-bank floodplain. An existing unpaved road descends downslope toward the river from the north side, eventually forking to the west and to the east. Vegetation along SR 299 tends to obscure many of the views of the river and the project area from the roadway. Vegetation and topography surrounding the right-bank access road obscures the view of both forks of this road from SR 299, as well as its visibility from most residential and commercial locations situated along the river.

Several residential subdivisions and a few commercial enterprises are located along this reach of the river, predominantly adjacent to SR 299 along the river's left side. The regulation of flows created by the presence of upstream dams has allowed for development within the river's natural floodplain. Many of these homes and businesses have unobstructed views of the portion of the river to which they are adjacent.

The visual character of the project area as a whole is typified by the river channel, bordered by bands of riparian vegetation, which transitions to upland vegetation (e.g., annual grassland, Klamath mixed conifer) as one moves away from the river.

Visual Environment

The visual environment or character is a function of both the natural and artificial landscape features that make up a view. Geologic, hydrologic, botanical, wildlife, recreational, and urban features such as roads, homes, and earthworks directly influence the character of an area. The perception of the visual character of an area can vary significantly by season and even by hour as light, shadow, weather, and the elements composing the view change. Form, line, color, and texture are the basic components used to describe visual character and quality for most visual assessments (Federal Highway Administration 1983). The dominance of each of these components on the landscape serves to form the viewer's impression of the area. A viewer's impression directly corresponds to the aesthetic value of the landscape. The aesthetic value of an area is a measure of its visual character and scenic quality combined with the viewer response.

Visual Sensitivity and Viewer Response

The overall response of a viewer to the quality of a view is based on a combination of viewer exposure and viewer sensitivity. Viewer exposure refers to the visibility of resources in the landscape, the proximity of the vantage point to the view, the elevation of the viewer relative to the view, the frequency and duration of the viewing, the number of observers, and pre-conceived expectations of individual viewers or groups. Viewer sensitivity relates to the extent of the public's concern for particular landscapes. Judgments of visual quality and viewer response should be based on the regional frame of reference (U.S. Soil Conservation Service 1978). The geographical setting and nature of the visual resource will significantly influence the degree of visual quality and sensitivity experienced by the viewer. For example, the presence of a small hill within an otherwise flat landscape may be viewed as a significant visual element, but the hill may have very little significance when located in mountainous terrain.

Within the project area, the Trinity River corridor is the dominant component of the visual environment. Gravel bars, riparian vegetation, and various buildings along the corridor contribute to the visual character of the existing landscape.

Viewshed

The Federal Highway Administration (1983) defines a viewshed as all of the surface area visible from a particular location (e.g., a highway pull-out) or sequence of locations (e.g., a highway or trail). This document defines 25 individual view locations composing five distinct viewsheds. These viewsheds are referred to as visual assessment units (VAU) throughout this section of the EA/DEIR. The VAUs have been defined based on visibility from surrounding residences or at various points along SR 299 representative of visually sensitive resources within the project area.

Light and Glare

Because of the rural nature of the project area, potential sources of artificial light are limited to vehicles passing through the area on SR 299 and residences within and near the project boundary. Glare may

occur during the daylight hours as the sun is reflected off the river or light-colored sand and rocks that make up the floodplain.

Viewer Groups

The perceptions of viewers are influenced by their location, specific activities in which they engage, personal degree of awareness, and individual values and goals. Three distinct viewer groups would potentially be affected by activities described in Chapter 2: motorists, residents, and recreationists.

Motorists

Motorists are those persons who would view a given rehabilitation area from a moving vehicle. Motorists may be drivers or passengers. This user group typically consists of commuters, local residents, business travelers, and tourists. Tourists are often acutely aware of viewshed opportunities and aesthetics associated with the project area when viewed from SR 299. Business travelers, commuters, and local residents who travel the same routes frequently may be acclimated to the general view, but are more likely to be aware of visual changes than occasional passersby. In general, views of the river and the project area from SR 299 are somewhat limited and of short-duration for motorists that use this travel corridor along the Trinity River.

Residents

Residents are people whose home and/or property are in close proximity to, and have a view of, any given portion of the project area. The existing landscape features associated with the project area offer a variety of visual experiences that reflect various land use practices and natural processes. The individual sensitivity of residents to aesthetics and changes within the viewshed is highly variable. Sensitivity of residents to changes in the viewshed should also be considered in the context of view point location and the length of time that their view may be altered (e.g., temporary or permanent changes to topography or vegetation as a result of construction activities and future adjustments to the morphology of the river).

Recreationists

Recreationists are members of the community or the general public who use and access the recreational resources available within or adjacent to the project area. Like residents, recreational users are highly sensitive to the visual character of the river corridor since most are drawn to the area by an appreciation of its scenic nature.

Historically (since the TRD was constructed), the primary recreational activities in the project area have been those associated with warm summer temperatures (Memorial Day to Labor Day) and fishing for anadromous salmonids throughout the year. Although these activities continue, the modifications to the flow regime described in Section 3.4 have resulted in a substantial increase in use by whitewater enthusiasts during the spring and early summer (April–July). The Trinity River, including the project area, provides a myriad of recreational opportunities that are discussed in Section 3.8, Recreation.

Visual Assessment Units and Key Observation Points

Areas of distinct visual character within the viewshed, VAUs provide a framework for comparing the visual effects of a proposed project. Within each VAU, key observation points¹ (KOPs) were established along commonly traveled routes or other likely observation points from which a representative group (residents, recreationists, or motorists) could view the Proposed Action. Locations of VAUs and KOPs are shown in Figure 3.14-1. Table 3.14-1 provides a summary of KOPs, and photographs taken from each KOP are included as Appendix M.

TABLE 3.14-1
 KEY OBSERVATION POINTS{ TC "Table 3.14-1 Key Observation Points" \f B \l "1" }

VAU #	KOP #	Description of Key Observation Point
1	1	View from Thistle Lane, looking downstream (Photo 1)
2	1	View from SR 299, looking downstream (Photo 2a)
2	1	View from SR 299, looking upstream (Photo 2b)
2	2	View from SR 299, looking downstream (Photo 3a)
2	2	View from SR 299, looking upstream (Photo 3b)
3	1	View from SR 299 at driveway between homes, looking downstream (Photo 4a)
3	1	View from SR 299 at driveway between homes, looking upstream (Photo 4b)
3	2	View from backyard of home located at R-2 (alcove) (Photo 5a)
3	2	View from backyard of home located at R-2 (alcove), looking downstream (Photo 5b)
3	2	View from backyard of home located at R-2 (alcove), looking upstream (Photo 5c)
3	3	View from SR 299 near west end of Indian Creek Lodge, looking downstream (Photo 6a)
3	3	View from SR 299 near west end of Indian Creek Lodge, looking perpendicular to river (Photo 6b)
3	4	View of Indian Creek delta from northeast side of Indian Creek bridge/SR 299, looking downstream (Photo 7)
3	5	View of Indian Creek delta from south side of Indian Creek bridge/SR 299, looking upstream (Photo 8a)
3	5	View of Indian Creek delta from northwest side of Indian Creek bridge/SR 299, looking northeast toward Indian Creek (Photo 8b)
3	6	View from Trinity River/Indian Creek confluence near fisherman's access parking area, looking downstream (Photo 9a)
3	6	View from Trinity River/Indian Creek confluence near fisherman's access parking area, looking upstream (Photo 9b)
3	7	View from west end of fisherman's access parking area, looking downstream (Photo 10a)
3	7	View from west end of fisherman's access parking area, looking upstream (Photo 10b)

¹ Points from which the project boundary or portions thereof are visible from major travel routes and/or surrounding residences

VAU #	KOP #	Description of Key Observation Point
3	8	View from fisherman's access parking area, looking perpendicular to river (Photo 11)
3	9	View from Indian Creek MHP, east side of Indian Creek, south of Indian Creek bridge/SR 299, looking upstream (Photo 12)
4	1	View from River Ranch Road near SR 299 intersection, looking downstream (Photo 13a)
4	1	View from River Ranch Road near SR 299 intersection, looking upstream (Photo 13b)
4	2	View from Treon residence backyard, River Ranch Road, looking upstream (Photo 14)
4	3	View from property located at end of Private Drive, west end of property, looking downstream (Photo 15a)
4	3	View from property located at end of Private Drive, west end of property, looking upstream (Photo 15b)
4	4	View from property located at end of Private Drive, center of property, looking perpendicular (north) to river (Photo 16)
4	5	View from midpoint of Private Drive, looking northwest (Photo 17a)
4	5	View from midpoint of Private Drive, looking northeast (Photo 17b)
4	6	View from pull-out/dirt frontage road on north side of SR 299, looking northwest (Photo 18a)
4	6	View from pull-out/dirt frontage road on north side of SR 299, looking northeast (Photo 18b)
4	7	View from pull-out on north side of SR 299 immediately east of the SR 3/SR 299 intersection, looking northwest (Photo 19a)
4	7	View from pull-out on north side of SR 299 immediately east of the SR 3/SR 299 intersection, looking northeast (Photo 19b)
5	1	View from Douglas City, southwest side of SR 299 bridge, looking downstream (water treatment plant to the right) (Photo 20)
5	2	View from Douglas City, northwest side of SR 299 bridge, looking upstream (Photo 21)
5	3	View from north side of SR 299 across from Douglas City turn-off, looking north (Photo 22a)
5	3	View from north side of SR 299 across from Douglas City turn-off, looking northeast (Photo 22b)
5	4	View from Douglas City Fire Hall parking area, east side of building, looking north (Photo 23a)
5	4	View from Douglas City Fire Hall parking area, east side of building, looking southeast (Photo 23b)
5	5	View from Douglas City School, looking southeast (Photo 24a)
5	5	View from Douglas City School, looking east (Photo 24b)
5	6	View from SR 3, looking north toward SR 299 bridge at Douglas City (Photo 25a)
5	6	View from SR 3, looking downstream (Photo 25b)

Following is a discussion of the VAUs and associated KOPs that have been identified for the Indian Creek rehabilitation site.

VAU #1 (Steel Bridge Road Unit)

VAU #1 consists of 26.10 acres adjacent to Steel Bridge Road, at the eastern end of the Indian Creek project site. It extends roughly north from the Steel Bridge Road/SR 299 intersection, encompassing homes located along the left bank of the Trinity River and adjacent uplands. VAU #1 was delineated based on the potential for project actions proposed for the eastern end of the R-1 activity area to be visible from homes located along the southern end of Steel Bridge Road. The R-1 activity area is the only area of proposed action potentially viewable from VAU #1. KOP 1 was established about midway along Thistle Lane (off of Steel Bridge Road). The Steel Bridge Road/Thistle Lane area is relatively steep and heavily wooded, with a fairly sharp canyon-like descent downslope toward the river. Homes are located in the adjacent uplands, and some parcels appear to have undergone significant vegetation removal, allowing for partially unobstructed views of the river corridor. However, views of the river are generally limited by topography and surrounding upland and riparian vegetation. KOP 1 illustrates the general view from homes in the area. Glimpses of the river and far bank can be seen from KOP 1.

VAU #2 (SR 299 East End)

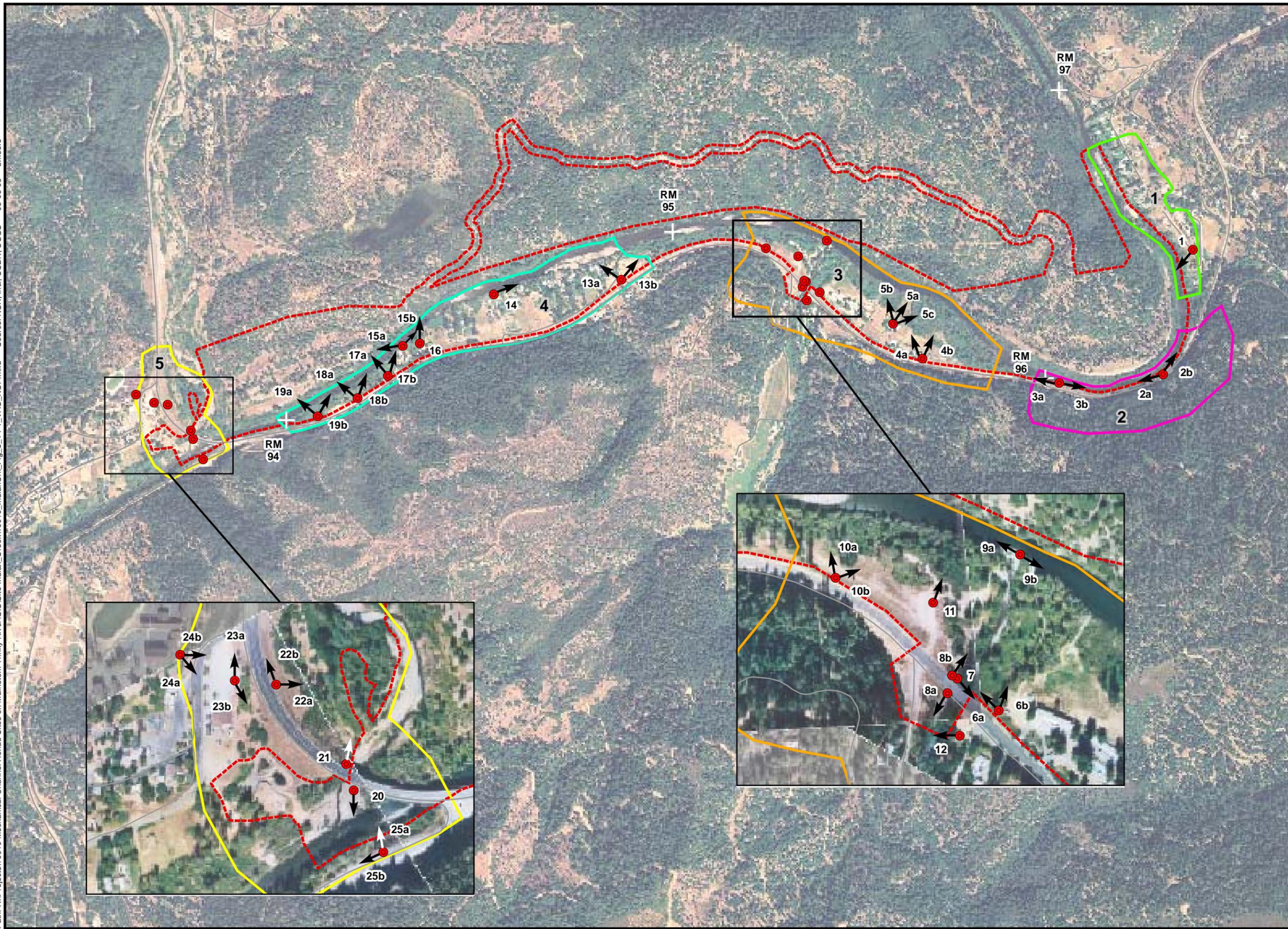
VAU #2 consists of 42.31 acres beginning at the westbound SR 299/Trinity River interface and extending west along SR 299 approximately 2,249 feet. This VAU, particularly from KOP 1, represents the viewer's first impression of the Trinity River as seen from the westbound lane of SR 299 and the last view of the river as seen from the eastbound lane. A vehicle traveling along SR 299 at an average speed of 55 mph would take less than 25 seconds to pass through the VAU.

Lands within VAU #2 are undeveloped with the exception of SR 299. Topography on the south side of this VAU ascends sharply away from the roadway, and the north-facing hillside is heavily vegetated with conifers. Both KOP 1 and KOP 2 were established along the westbound road shoulder of SR 299 and illustrate the view of the river and the R-1, U-1, and U-2 proposed activity areas as seen from SR 299. SR 299, as it passes through VAU #2, is situated upslope of the river, which allows for views of the river, the right bank floodplain, and adjacent uplands. A band of fairly sizable riparian vegetation (e.g., willows, cottonwoods) stretches along much of the river's left bank, partially obscuring views that motorists have of the project area.

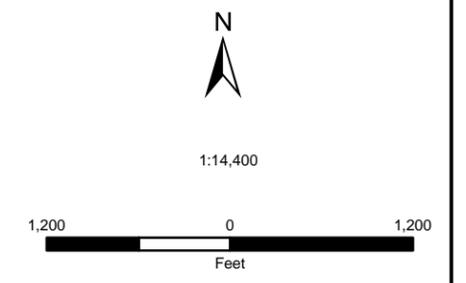
VAU #3 (SR 299 – Indian Creek Delta Unit)

VAU #3 consists of 81.62 acres that extend along SR 299. It encompasses several residences, the Indian Creek Lodge, the Indian Creek Mobile Home Park, the Indian Creek public fisherman's access, and the Indian Creek delta. The eastern boundary of VAU #3 begins at the point where residential development within the project area, immediately adjacent to SR 299, first occurs and extends west beyond the public fisherman's access parking area. Homes located at the eastern end of the VAU (KOP 1) are set back some distance from the river and have only limited views of the river corridor due to a dense band of riparian vegetation on the left bank floodplain. Residential and commercial development and distance from the river obstruct the view of the river corridor from this stretch of SR 299 throughout its entirety.

Path: R:\Projects\10010 Mechanical Channel Rehab Sites on Mainstem Trinity River\GIS\Site-Indian_Creek\10010_IndianCk_Fig_3.14-1_VAU_KOP.mxd Source: NSR, Inc.: USBR-USGS 06-06-06 bmoote



-  Site Boundary
-  River Mile (RM)
- Visual Assessment Unit**
-  1 - Steelbridge Road
-  2 - SR 299 East End
-  3 - SR 299 - Indian Creek Delta
-  4 - River Ranch Road
-  5 - Douglas City



Aerial photography:
July 2005

Figure 3.14-1
Visual Assessment Units and Key Observation Points

KOP 2 illustrates the view from the backyard of the residence immediately adjacent to R-2, the activity area intended to serve as an alcove and high flow channel.

KOPs 3 through 6, 8, and 9 illustrate various views of the Indian Creek delta. SR 299 passes over Indian Creek about 500 feet south of its confluence with the Trinity River. Dense riparian vegetation (e.g., willows) lines both banks of Indian Creek on the downstream side of the bridge. The upstream segment of Indian Creek supports a less dense assemblage of riparian vegetation. In general, the channel is not clearly visible to motorists traveling in either direction on SR 299.

KOP 7, located at the western end of the public fisherman's access, illustrates views from SR 299 as the road curves toward the west as approached from the west. The river is not visible from this location, and proposed activities associated with R-4 (berm removal) would not be visible from SR 299.

The western border of VAU #3 is delineated by a stand of trees located at the west end of the public fisherman's access parking area. The southern border follows SR 299 for a distance of approximately 3,504 feet. A vehicle traveling along SR 299 at an average speed of 55 mph would take less than 40 seconds to pass through the VAU.

VAU #4 (River Ranch Road Unit)

VAU #4 consists of 64.61 acres west of VAU #3 (the Indian Creek project area). The southern boundary of VAU #4 extends along SR 299 for approximately 5,013 feet. The eastern boundary begins just east of the first River Ranch Road/SR 299 intersection, as approached from the east. A majority of VAU #4 is composed of relatively large rural-residential parcels that front the river. There is little to no visibility of the river from this stretch of SR 299. River views from SR 299 and River Ranch Road are almost entirely obscured by residential development and both naturally occurring and planted vegetation. A vehicle traveling along SR 299 at an average speed of 55 mph would take approximately 50 seconds to pass through the VAU.

KOP 1 illustrates the view from the intersection of SR 299 and River Ranch Road. No project actions are proposed in the immediate vicinity of this observation point.

KOP 2 was established in the backyard of a home located immediately adjacent to R-5. The view of the river (and the R-5 activity area) is completely unobstructed from this home and neighboring homes.

KOPs 3 and 4 illustrate the existing views of the river from a home site recently acquired by the Reclamation. This property is situated downslope of SR 299 between the roadway and the river and is not visible from SR 299. Although riparian vegetation is dense both upstream and downstream of this site, the property itself opens outward toward the river. Virtually unobstructed views of the river's right bank, including the floodplain and adjacent uplands, are visible from KOP 3. Currently, buildings obscure the river view as seen from KOP 4.

KOPs 5, 6, and 7 illustrate views from three separate vantage points near or along SR 299. The extent of the view from all three of these KOPs is limited by dense vegetation between the river and SR 299. Views of R-8 would be obscured; however, glimpses of activities on the upper right bank of the river (U-3 and R-10) may be possible as motorists pass through this section of roadway.

VAU #5 (Douglas City Unit)

VAU #5 consists of 27.03 acres bisected by SR 299 and centered slightly southeast of the Douglas City/SR 299 intersection. Approximately 1,711 feet of SR 299 passes through VAU #5. The VAU extends from the SR 3/SR 299 intersection in the east, following SR 299 as it bends to the north (as approached from the east), ending north of the Douglas City/SR 299 intersection. A vehicle traveling along SR 299 at an average speed of 55 mph would take less than 20 seconds to pass through the VAU. Encompassed in VAU #5 is the Douglas City Volunteer Fire Department, the Weaverville Community Water Treatment Plant, the SR 299 bridge over the Trinity River, and a portion of the Weaver Creek floodplain. It is within VAU #5 that the Trinity River leaves its alignment with SR 299; at this point, the river bends toward the southwest and the highway curves to the north.

KOPs 1 through 3 illustrate views of activity area R-9 as viewed from SR 299; KOPs 1 and 2 were established at the northwest and northeast corners (respectively) of the SR 299 bridge, while KOP 3 was established on the eastside road shoulder, directly across SR 299 from the Fire Department parking lot. KOP 4 is located in the Fire Department parking lot. This area is at the confluence of Weaver Creek and the Trinity River, which is characterized by pockets of riparian vegetation scattered throughout the floodplain.

KOP 5 was established on the east side of the Douglas City School. The school's location at the top of a slope with an aspect facing the R-9 activity area was used to represent the view of the project area from one of the higher locations in Douglas City.

KOP 6 was established at a pull-out located on the north side of SR 3 just west of the SR 3/SR 299 intersection. This KOP provides a clear view of the R-9 activity area from SR 3, which includes delta excavation activities. The Weaver Creek delta is primarily characterized by barren floodplain interspersed with pockets of montane riparian vegetation. Prolonged views of the north side of SR 299, as viewed from the northbound lane of SR 3, are obscured for the most part by the SR 299 bridge.

3.14.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Federal

National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968

Congress enacted the National WSRA in 1968 to protect free-flowing rivers with "outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values." The entire mainstem of the Trinity River was designated a National Wild and Scenic River by the Secretary of the Interior in 1981, primarily because of the river's anadromous fishery. In addition, the reach of the river downstream from Lewiston Dam was classified as having distinctive scenic quality and high viewer sensitivity during peak flows, when the scenic qualities of the river are enhanced. Approximately 97.5 miles of the river are classified as recreational under the federal WSRA.

For projects upstream of Helena on the Trinity River, the BLM is responsible for ensuring that the scenic values of public lands are considered before allowing uses that may have negative visual impacts. The BLM accomplishes this through its Visual Resource Management (VRM) system, a system for minimizing the visual impacts of surface-disturbing activities to scenic public lands and maintaining

scenic values for the future. The VRM system consists of two stages, inventory and analysis. The inventory stage involves identifying the visual resources of an area and assigning them to inventory classes using the BLM's visual resource inventory process. The analysis stage involves determining whether the potential visual impacts from proposed surface-disturbing activities or developments will meet the management objectives established for the area, or whether design adjustments will be required (U.S. Bureau of Land Management 2003a).

The VRM system uses four inventory classes, each having distinct management objectives:

- Class I Objective: To preserve the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be very low and must not attract attention.
- Class II Objective: To retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low.
- Class III Objective: To partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate.
- Class IV Objective: To provide for management activities which require major modification of the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape can be high.

The Trinity River corridor is classified as VRM Class II. Therefore, management activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer. Any changes must repeat the basic elements of form, line, color, and texture found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape (U.S. Bureau of Land Management 2003b).

While there are no separate reporting requirements to address Wild and Scenic Rivers, environmental documentation should include a discussion of project-related issues, summarize coordination among participating agencies, evaluate impacts to qualities that support the river's designation, and propose suitable mitigation measures as warranted. Appendix D provides the analysis and determination necessary for the Proposed Action to comply with Section 7 of the federal WSRA. Compliance may require preparation of one or more of the following:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit;
- California Regional Water Quality Control Board Section 401 Water Quality Certification;
- NPDES Permit; and
- ESA Section 7 consultation for endangered species potentially affected by the project.

State

California Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1972

Patterned after the federal WSRA, the California WSRA was enacted in 1972 to preserve those rivers within the state designated as having extraordinary scenic, recreation, fishery, or wildlife values. Under this act, the Klamath River and its tributaries, including the mainstem Trinity River, are subject to similar criteria and definitions of purpose defined by the federal WSRA. However, while the federal act applies to public lands located within approximately 0.25 mile on either side of a river's channel and requires development and implementation of a river protection management plan, the state act provides protection

only to the first line of permanent riparian vegetation and does not require development of a management plan.

Under the California WSRA, the segment of the Trinity River that passes through the Indian Creek Rehabilitation Site is designated as “scenic” and “recreational.” The California Public Resources Code (5093.53[b]) defines “scenic rivers” as being “those rivers or segments of rivers that are free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads.” “Recreational rivers” are defined in the California Public Resources Code (5093.53[c]) as being “those rivers or segments of rivers that are readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past.” While the California WSRA does not specifically require that water quality, streambed alteration, or other project-related permits be granted, other permits or agreements may be required to comply with other laws in accordance with the federal WSRA.

Local

Trinity County General Plan Goals and Objectives

The Trinity County General Plan contains goals and policies designed to guide the future physical development of the county, based on current conditions. The General Plan contains all the state-required elements, including community development and design, transportation, natural resources, health and safety, noise, housing, recreation, economic development, public facilities and services, and air quality. The Trinity County General Plan does not specifically address visual resources. However, certain goals identified within the context of other plan elements are relevant to visual resources. The following goals and objectives related to aesthetic issues associated with the project were taken from the applicable elements of the County’s General Plan (Trinity County 2001) and the Douglas City Community Plan (Trinity County 1987).

County-Wide Goals and Objectives

Cultural

Goal: To retain the rural character of Trinity County.

- By encouraging uses that fit with the land.

Natural Resource Lands

Goal: To protect the scenic natural resources of Trinity County and preserve areas that are important as commercial natural resources for future generations.

- Preserve areas of established natural scenic beauty as areas of active and passive enjoyment.

Scenic Lands

Goal: To conserve, preserve, and maintain the scenic beauty of Trinity County.

- Encourage private developers to use conservation methods when using or developing the land. Discourage development on steep slopes unless special construction techniques are used.
- Acquire scenic easements for conservation of Trinity County’s scenic beauty.

- Adopt stringent regulations requiring the landscaping and maintenance of vegetation on cut and fill slopes as required by the appropriate agency.
- Control encroachment of cut and fill slopes into scenic easement areas or corridors along scenic highways, whether these highways are State or County.

Douglas City Community Plan Goals and Objectives

This plan includes the area centered on the Trinity River from Grass Valley Creek to slightly downstream of Steiner Flat.

Community Design

Goal: Retain and enhance the overall high visual quality of the Plan Area.

- Review future development within the quarter mile of the Trinity River for impact on the visual qualities of the Trinity River.

Project Consistency with the Trinity County General Plan and Community Plans

This section compares the goals and objectives of the Proposed Action to the relevant local planning policies (i.e., Trinity County General Plan, Douglas City Community Plan) to determine if there are any inconsistencies.

The goals and objectives described in Chapter 1 are generally compatible with the applicable General Plan goals and policies summarized above. The overall goal of the project is to rehabilitate the project site so that it functions in a manner that is closer to historic conditions (i.e., pre-Lewiston Dam).

3.14.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES/IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Methodology

A field assessment of the project site was conducted for the purpose of identifying areas of visual sensitivity and scenic resources, and to assess the existing character and quality of the aesthetic resources associated with the Proposed Action and project alternatives. This assessment emphasized the potential relationship between the Proposed Action and project alternatives, and viewers associated with the Trinity River, SR 299, and surrounding residences. VAUs were mapped based on the distinct visual character of the landscape, KOPs were identified within each VAU, and photo points were established.

Analysis of potential impacts to aesthetic resources is based on the significance criteria described in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. Trinity County, acting as the CEQA lead agency, has used these criteria to develop significance thresholds. Significance thresholds are used to evaluate the proposed project's potential impact on the visual character of the project area, particularly the visual character of those areas identified as KOPs. All assessments are qualitative, evaluating potential impacts of the Proposed Action and associated alternatives on the viewshed in relation to the local aesthetic context. A review of the consistency of the Proposed Action and alternatives with federal and state Wild and Scenic River designations is also presented in Appendix D.

Significance Criteria

The proposed project would have a significant impact if it:

- obstructs a scenic view from public viewing areas;
- has a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- substantially damages scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway;
- substantially degrades the existing visual character or quality of the project site and its surroundings;
- introduces physical features that are substantially out of character with adjacent residential areas;
- alters the site so that the scale or degree of change appears as a substantial, obvious, and disharmonious modification of the overall scene (to the extent that it clearly dominates the view);
- creates substantial daytime glare associated with new construction;
- disrupts adjacent residential areas from new night-time lighting;
- creates a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the site;
- is inconsistent with the policies of the Trinity County General Plan relating to aesthetics; or
- is inconsistent with the goals and objectives of both the federal and state WSRAs with regards to the Trinity River.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Table 3.14-2 summarizes the potential aesthetic impacts resulting from construction and operation of the No-Action Alternative, the Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2.

{ TC "Table 3.14-2 Summary of Aesthetic Impacts" \f B \l "1" } **TABLE 3.14-2**
 SUMMARY OF AESTHETIC IMPACTS FOR THE NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE, THE PROPOSED ACTION, ALTERNATIVE 1, AND ALTERNATIVE 2

No-Action Alternative	Proposed Action	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Proposed Action with Mitigation	Alternative 1 with Mitigation	Alternative 2 with Mitigation
3.14-1. Implementation of the project could result in the degradation and/or obstruction of a scenic view from key observation areas.						
NI	S	S	S	LS	LS	LS
3.14-2. Implementation of the project could substantially change the character of, or be disharmonious with, existing land uses and aesthetic features.						
NI	LS	LS	LS	N/A ¹	N/A ¹	N/A ¹
3.14-3. The project may be inconsistent with federal and state Wild and Scenic River Act or Scenic Byway requirements.						
NI	LS	LS	LS	N/A ¹	N/A ¹	N/A ¹
3.14-4. The project could generate increased daytime glare and/or nighttime lighting.						
NI	LS	LS	LS	N/A ¹	N/A ¹	N/A ¹

Notes: LS = Less than Significant; NI = No Impact; N/A = Not Applicable

¹ Because this potential impact is less than significant, no mitigation is required.

Impact 3.14-1: Implementation of the project could result in the degradation and/or obstruction of a scenic view from key observation areas. ***No Impact for the No-Action Alternative; Significant Impact for the Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2***

No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, the degradation and/or obstruction of a scenic view from key observation areas would not occur as a result of construction activities.

Proposed Action

As previously discussed in this section, the project study area includes five distinct VAUs. The potential effects of the Proposed Action on KOPs are discussed below by VAU.

VAU #1 (Steel Bridge Road Unit)

KOP 1 (Views of R-1, U-1, and a Construction Access Road): The Proposed Action includes rehabilitation activities in R-1 and U-1 and a construction access road along the right bank of the river. As with all of the upland areas, U-1 would be used as a repository for excavated material (i.e., sand, gravel, and cobble) and vegetation. Excavated material and cleared vegetation would be placed in locations above the 100-year floodplain elevation. Vegetation would be buried and excavated material would be deposited in the line and form of existing tailing piles. Currently, the lack of soil development in depositional environments throughout the VAUs inhibits recruitment and survival of native vegetation. The Proposed Action will increase the overall percentage of finer grained materials in the upland activity areas, resulting in more favorable vegetation recruitment and survival, which would increase the aesthetic quality of these areas in the long term. There are no views into U-1 from SR 299, and views of the river's right bank from homes on Thistle Lane are limited by upland vegetation and topography. Noticeable changes in views of the project study area from KOP 1 would be less than significant.

As with U-1, topography and vegetation obscure potential views of R-1 and the construction access road from SR 299 and homes along Steel Bridge Road and Thistle Lane. Rehabilitation of R-1 would require some riparian vegetation removal and berm modification in addition the placement of large woody debris into the channel for fish habitat. Some upland, riparian, and annual grassland vegetation removal would be necessary for the construction of the access road. Large willows and cottonwoods as well as other large nesting trees would be retained, and the floodplain would be revegetated with native riparian species and through natural recruitment. Visual impacts associated with R-1 and the construction of the access road, as seen from KOP 1, would be less than significant.

VAU # 2: (SR 299 East End Unit)

KOPs 1 and 2 (Views of R-1, U-2, Access Roads, and a Construction Staging Area): The Proposed Action includes rehabilitation activities in R-1 and U-2, construction of access roads into R-1 and U-2, and use of an upland area above the river's right bank as a construction staging area. Rehabilitation of R-1 would require some riparian vegetation removal and berm modification in addition to the placement of large woody debris into the channel for fish habitat. Some upland, riparian, and annual grassland vegetation removal would be necessary for the construction of the access road. Large willows and cottonwoods as well as other large nesting trees would be retained, and the floodplain would be

revegetated with native riparian species and through natural recruitment. U-2 would be used as a repository for excavated material (i.e., sand, gravel, and cobble) and vegetation. Excavated material and cleared vegetation would be placed in locations above the 100-year floodplain elevation. Vegetation would be buried and excavated material would be deposited in the line and form of existing tailing piles.

Although a string of riparian vegetation, primarily cottonwoods and willows, extends along much of the river's left bank, glimpses of the R-1 activity area and access roads would be available to motorists traveling in both directions along SR 299. Both KOP 1 and KOP 2 are representative of river and right bank views that occur throughout the entirety of VAU #2. Topography and upland vegetation on the right side of the river obscure most views of U-2, the construction staging area, and portions of the access roads as seen from SR 299. There are no homes in this VAU.

No long-term visual impacts to key public viewing areas in VAU #2 are anticipated because one of the primary objectives of the project is to improve the visual attractiveness of the project area.

VAU # 3: (SR 299 – Indian Creek Delta Unit)

KOP 1 (View of R-1); KOP 2 (Views of R-2, Construction Access Road, and a River Crossing); KOPs 3 through 9 (Views of R-3, R-4, Construction Access Roads, and a Construction Staging Area). The Proposed Action includes rehabilitation of the floodplain and alcove at R-2, the Indian Creek delta rehabilitation and floodplain rehabilitation at R-3, and the berm removal at R-4.

Views of the western end of R-1 from SR 299 are obscured by homes, vegetation, and distance. At this location, the river has meandered away from SR 299. The homes surrounding KOP 1 do not have a view of R-1.

None of the activities at R-2 would be visible from SR 299. At this location, the river continues to be some distance from SR 299, with residential development and upland and riparian vegetation minimizing views from all but the home off of River Ranch Road that backs up to the R-2 alcove. KOP 2, established at the back of this home, clearly shows that the alcove rehabilitation work in this area, the construction access road running through this property, and a river crossing allowing for construction access on the right side of the river, will have a temporary impact on views from the home. The R-2 floodplain rehabilitation work extending downstream from the alcove would not be visible from KOP 2, except for possibly a very small portion of the upstream end. Although it is expected that the channel will restore itself to a natural appearance over time, there would be a temporary, adverse visual impact associated with the Proposed Action, as viewed from KOP 2. Impacts to visual resources at this location are considered to be significant.

KOPs 3 through 9 were established primarily to assess visual impacts from SR 299 that would result from implementation of R-3 (the Indian Creek delta excavation). KOP 7 is also intended to assess R-4, berm removal along the left bank of the river. R-3 excavation activities involve the removal of sediment from beneath the SR 299/Indian Creek bridge, improvements to sediment routing through the delta, and floodplain rehabilitation at the Indian Creek/Trinity River confluence. The Indian Creek delta is currently densely vegetated, but highly visible from SR 299 (KOPs 3, 4, 5, 8, and 9), the west side of the Indian Creek Lodge (KOP 3), the public fisherman's access (KOP 8), and the north side of the Indian Creek

Mobile Home Park (KOPs 5 and 9). Although large cottonwoods, willows, and nesting trees would be retained, it is anticipated that some smaller riparian vegetation along Indian Creek would be removed. R-3 channel rehabilitation activities proposed at the mouth of the Indian Creek/Trinity River confluence (KOP 6) are visible only to those walking in from the public fisherman's access parking area, the Indian Creek Lodge river access trail, or recreationists approaching the site from the Trinity River. Impacts to visual resources as viewed from KOPs 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 9 are considered to be temporary, but significant. Views from KOP 7 of R-4 are obscured by vegetation. Thus, visual impacts as seen from KOP 7 would be less than significant.

VAU # 4: (River Ranch Road Unit)

KOP 1; KOP 2 (View of R-5); KOPs 3 and 4 (Views of R-6 and R-8); KOPs 5, 6, and 7 (Views of R-7, R-8, U-3, a Construction Access Road, and a Construction Staging Areas): The Proposed Action consists of rehabilitation activities associated with R-5, R-6, R-7, R-8, R-10, and U-3, which include floodplain rehabilitation, vegetation removal, berm removal, alcove and side channel construction, upland disposal sites, construction staging areas, and construction access roads. None of the proposed activity areas in this VAU would be visible from SR 299 or River Ranch Road due to topography, vegetation, residential development, and distance from the river. There would be no impact to visual resources as viewed from KOP 1 since there would be activities visible from this location or its immediate vicinity. However, several homes along River Ranch Road that back up to the river would have distinct views of the R-5 activity area as seen from KOP 2. Reconfiguration of an in-channel island would be noticeable as viewed from KOP 2, but its effect on visual resources would be less than significant since the character of the existing island would not change (i.e., it is currently devoid of vegetation).

KOPs 3 and 4 were established at a homesite that has been abandoned and is now owned by Reclamation. This location, from which R-6 (vegetation removal) and the eastern end of R-8 (floodplain rehabilitation, vegetation removal, and side channel and alcove construction on the right bank of the river) are visible when viewed from KOPs 3 and 4, is not visible from SR 299 or any nearby homes. Therefore, any impacts to visual resources at this location would be considered less than significant.

KOPs 5, 6, and 7 extend along SR 299. No activity areas are visible from these locations. Views of R-5, R-6, R-7, R-8, R-10, U-3, construction staging areas, and construction access roads are obscured by topography and vegetation. There are no homes along this stretch of SR 299. Therefore, any impacts to visual resources at this location would be considered less than significant.

VAU # 5: (Douglas City Unit)

KOPs 1 through 6 (Views of R-9): The Proposed Action consists of rehabilitation activities associated with R-9. The R-9 activity area would include excavating the Weaver Creek delta at its confluence with the Trinity River. This activity area is visible from both SR 299 (KOPs 1, 2, and 3) and SR 3 (KOP 6), although the SR 299/Trinity River bridge obscures portions of the area's east side when viewed from KOP 6. Views of the area from the town of Douglas City are obscured by topography. Although the impacts to visual resources from KOPs 1 through 3 and KOP 6 would be temporary, the impacts would be significant.

Alternative 1

Potential impacts to visual resources associated with Alternative 1 are the same as for the Proposed Action, except for the impacts described in the following paragraphs.

All VAUs

Although the construction access road (an extension of Union Hill Road) proposed for the right side of the river would not generally be visible from any of the KOPs associated with the project study area, it is possible that necessary road improvements, such as vegetation clearing and grading, could alter the existing view of the uplands through which the road passes. The steep topography of this area coupled with areas devoid of vegetation and shallow soils allows for an increased potential for erosion to occur; eroded areas, if any, may be partially visible from one or more of the VAUs. This would be a potentially significant impact.

VAU #3 (River Ranch Road Unit)

Alternative 1 removes the river crossing at R-2; therefore, under this alternative there would be no impact to visual resources as viewed from KOP 2, although other project actions associated with R-2 (e.g., alcove and floodplain rehabilitation) would be implemented, resulting in the same impacts for these actions as described in the Proposed Action for this location.

VAU #5 (Douglas City Unit)

Alternative 1 removes the river crossing at R-9; therefore, impacts to visual resources associated with the creation of a crossing at Weaver Creek would not occur under Alternative 1. All other project actions proposed for R-1 would be implemented, resulting in the same impacts for these actions as described under the Proposed Action for this location.

Alternative 2

Potential impacts to visual resources associated with Alternative 2 are common to both the Proposed Action and Alternative 1, except for the impacts described in the following paragraphs.

VAU # 1: (Steel Bridge Road Unit)

Alternative 2 does not include activity areas R-1 and U-1 and the access road. Therefore, under Alternative 2, there would be no degradation and/or obstruction of a scenic view from any vantage point within VAU #1 as a result of construction activities.

VAU # 2: (SR 299 East End Unit)

Alternative 2 does not include activity areas R-1 and U-1 and the access road. Therefore, under Alternative 2, there would be no degradation and/or obstruction of a scenic view from any vantage point within VAU #1 as a result of construction activities.

VAU #3 (River Ranch Road Unit)

Alternative 2 also removes the river crossing at R-2; therefore, under this alternative, there would be no impact to visual resources from KOP 2, although other project actions associated with R-2 (e.g., alcove

and floodplain rehabilitation) would be implemented, resulting in the same impacts as described in the Proposed Action for this location.

Mitigation Measures

No-Action Alternative

No significant impacts have been identified; therefore, no mitigation is required.

Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

- In order to minimize impacts to visual resources resulting from the removal of vegetation within the project study area, mitigation measures 1a through 1d, as described Section 3.7 (Vegetation, Wildlife, and Wetlands), will be implemented where applicable for all alternatives.

Alternative 1

- In order to minimize impacts to visual resources resulting from erosion along the upland access road, Mitigation Measures 3a and 3b, as described in Section 3.3 (Geology and Soils), will be implemented when applicable.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than Significant.

Impact 3.14-2: Implementation of the project could substantially change the character of, or be disharmonious with, existing land uses and aesthetic features. ***No Impact for the No-Action Alternative; Less-than-Significant Impact for the Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2***

No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, the proposed project would not be constructed. No changes would occur to the character or harmony of aesthetic features and existing land uses.

Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2 (All VAUs)

The Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2 have been designed to be not only functional (e.g., enhance fisheries, restore river sinuosity), but to complement the visual resources associated with the site. Overall, these alternatives incorporate the diversity of landscapes and vegetation types into the character of the activity areas. For example, under all alternatives, materials excavated from riverine areas would be removed to upland areas, where they would be placed in a manner that blends the material into the contours of the existing mine tailing piles while not changing the nominal heights of the piles. Retention of existing topographic features would significantly lessen the degree of visual impact.

The activities described in Chapter 2 provide a basis for adjustments to the river channel and floodplain over time, which are flow dependent. Although the alternatives vary in the degree to which the channel and floodplain would be affected, selection of one of the three alternatives would produce gradual, ever-improving changes in the aesthetic quality of this stretch of the Trinity River, while keeping in character with the surrounding land uses. Because changes associated with both the Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2 would retain the character of existing land uses and features, selection of any of these alternatives would result in a less-than-significant impact on aesthetic resources.

Mitigation Measures

No-Action Alternative, Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

No significant impacts have been identified; therefore, no mitigation is required.

Significance after Mitigation: N/A

Impact 3.14-3: The project may be inconsistent with the federal or state Wild and Scenic River Acts or Scenic Byway requirements. ***No Impact for the No-Action Alternative; Less-than-Significant Impact for the Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2***

No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, the proposed project would not be constructed. No changes would occur that would be inconsistent with the federal or state WSRA or Scenic Byway requirements.

Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2 (All VAUs)

Under Section 7 of the WSRA, direct and adverse effects to the values for which the Trinity River was recognized as a Wild and Scenic River are prohibited. Implementation of the Proposed Action, Alternative 1, or Alternative 2 would not be inconsistent with these values because the activities would not be considered substantially out of character with the current aesthetic conditions. Implementation of any of the three alternatives would result in a less-than-significant impact to WSRA and Scenic Byway requirements. The WSRA Section 7 Determination for the proposed action is included as Appendix D.

Mitigation Measures

No-Action Alternative, Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

No significant impacts have been identified; therefore, no mitigation is required.

Significance after Mitigation: N/A

Impact 3.14-4: The project could generate increased daytime glare and/or nighttime lighting. ***No Impact for the No-Action Alternative; Less-than-Significant Impact for the Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2***

No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, no changes in daytime glare or nighttime lighting would occur because the proposed project would not be constructed.

Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2 (All VAUs)

Under the Proposed Action, Alternative 1, or Alternative 2, significant increases in daytime glare and/or nighttime lighting are not anticipated to occur. Construction activities would not take place during nighttime hours; therefore, nearby residences and motorists traveling along the river corridor would not be subjected to the headlights of construction equipment or stationary spotlights. Material removed from the floodplain and deposited into activity areas is generally not reflective and would have a less than significant impact on daytime glare. Some changes may occur in the locations and amounts of glare produced by the widened active river channel, but, overall, these changes would be short-lived as the sun

passes over; the impacts of these changes would therefore be less than significant. The most likely viewer group to be affected by daytime glare would be residents, but only a few homes near the project boundary have views of various portions of the rehabilitation areas and these views are generally somewhat limited. Furthermore, any occurrences of daytime glare produced by the sun reflecting off the water would be of short duration, which would be considered less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No-Action Alternative, Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

No significant impacts have been identified; therefore, no mitigation is required.

Significance after Mitigation: N/A

3.15 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

This section evaluates the types of hazards and hazardous materials that may currently be present within the project boundary. Hazardous materials that could be introduced as a result of project implementation, as well as possible health hazards associated with the proposed project, are also included in this discussion.

3.15.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Regional Setting

Hazardous materials and wastes are regulated by federal, state, and local agencies, and are required to be recycled or disposed of properly. However, illegal storage and disposal and unintentional releases of hazardous materials or waste from leaks and accidents can still occur. In Trinity County and within the general vicinity of the project, hazardous materials and waste are transported primarily via roadways such as SR 299, SR 3, Steiner Flat Road, and Steel Bridge Road. The California Highway Patrol (CHP) under CCR, Title 13, Section 1150-1194 and CFR, Title 49 regulates the transport of hazardous materials. When a spill of a hazardous material or waste occurs on a highway, the CHP is responsible for directing cleanup and enforcement (CCR Section 2450-2453b).

When a hazardous material or waste spill occurs on public land, it is the land management agency's responsibility to initiate and direct cleanup, to initiate investigations and direct enforcement, and to contact the necessary personnel for performing these functions. When a hazardous material/waste spill occurs on private lands, the property owner is responsible for cleanup. Trinity County Environmental Health contacts the proper personnel and ensures that cleanup is completed according to federal, state, and local regulations.

Title 27 of the California Health and Safety Code (Article 1, §15100) established a unified program to deal with hazardous waste and materials in California (California Environmental Protection Agency 2003). The program consolidated six state environmental programs into one program under the authority of a Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA). These programs are the Hazardous Materials Business Plan/Emergency Response Plan, Hazardous Waste, Tiered Permitting, Underground Storage Tanks, Aboveground Storage Tanks (Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure only), and the Uniform Fire Code Hazardous Materials Management Plan. The CUPA is typically a local agency that has been certified by the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) to implement the six state environmental programs within the local agency's jurisdiction.

While larger, more urban areas often benefit greatly from the formation of a CUPA, rural areas such as Trinity County are often overwhelmed by the costs and training required for implementing these programs at the local level. Trinity County has not formed a CUPA for the following reasons (Trinity County 2001):

1. No significant public or environmental health benefit has been identified for implementing these programs in rural areas that do not have an industrial base.

2. The CalEPA incentive funding, allotted in 2001, to the non-CUPA authority was not guaranteed and was dependent on the annual California budget. However, eligibility for such funding required a full commitment from the County to participate as a CUPA.
3. The program requires annual reporting and periodic state audits that would require approximately 100 hours of staff time annually, without any direct benefit to public health.
4. There would be substantial increased County liability from accepting responsibility for enforcing hazardous materials laws.
5. Inspector proficiency would be extremely challenging due to the complexity of the hazardous material laws and the lack of local inspector opportunities. Establishing and maintaining staff proficiency would be a problem and would increase County liability.

Currently, the CalEPA is responsible for administering CUPA programs in Trinity County, since the County has declined to apply for CUPA status itself. The one exception is the County’s Underground Tank Program which has been administered by Trinity County Environmental Health for over a decade. The County has adopted this program as a proactive measure directed at stemming the occurrence of groundwater contamination caused by leaky underground fuel storage tanks. Under this program, fuel tanks must be permitted and inspected annually to ensure operator compliance and to protect the county’s groundwater and drinking water supplies.

Uncontrolled or abandoned places throughout the nation where hazardous waste poses a possible threat to local ecosystems or people are referred to as “Superfund” hazardous waste sites by the EPA, and as such, are included in the EPA’s Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Information System (CERCLIS) database. A search for occurrences of Superfund sites in Trinity County yielded three sites within 25 miles of the project location. Table 3.15-1 provides a summary of the proximity of these three sites to the project location. Although they are Superfund sites, none are included on the National Priorities List, which consists of those sites known or likely to release hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants.

TABLE 3.15-1
 HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES RECORDED IN TRINITY COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Site Name	Status	Location	Approximate Distance from Proposed Action
Cheek Skyline Logging	Active	South of Highway 3 Douglas City, CA	< 5 miles
Kingsbury Creek Mine Lab	Active	Shasta Trinity NF Hayfork, CA	22 miles
USFS Drinkwater Gulch Mine	Active	T31N, R12W, Section 6 Hayfork, CA	24 miles

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 2005 (<http://www.epa.gov/superfund/sites/cursites/index.htm>)

Toxins

Toxicity concerns in the Trinity River focus on polluted run-off from abandoned mines and mining activities, sediment released from subdivision development, land uses (e.g., road use and timber management) in areas susceptible to surface erosion and mass wasting, septic tank use, aboveground and underground tanks, and lumber mills. The possibility of mercury release from tailings and/or fluvial fine

sediments, which could be disturbed and mobilized by rehabilitation activities, is generally acknowledged. The accumulation of mercury in aquatic biota is well documented throughout the Trinity River basin. Consequently, regulatory guidelines default to numeric criteria promulgated by the EPA for priority toxic pollutants (see Section 3.15.2) or the narrative threshold, which states that toxic substances should not occur in concentration levels such that detrimental physiological responses in humans or aquatic life may result. Under the California Toxics Rule, the total allowable concentration of measured mercury in unfiltered water should not exceed 0.050 parts per billion (ppb).

Flooding

Aside from the hazards posed by elemental toxicity, environmental hazards can take many forms, including flooding or fluctuating water levels, unstable land forms, road corridors, and wildfire. Water level fluctuations, particularly those that occur rapidly, pose a distinct hazard to residents and visitors along the waterways in Trinity County. The flood season within the Trinity River basin typically occurs between October and April, when over 90 percent of the annual precipitation falls. Floods on the mainstem Trinity River are controlled to some extent by the TRD, but substantial flood events have occurred as recently as 1997. Section 3.4 provides a detailed discussion of water resources, including the type and variability of flood flows with respect to the TRD.

Seismic Events

Infrequently, seismic events occur in the region, generally in the form of low to moderate levels of ground shaking associated with nearby or distant earthquakes. The potential for landslides triggered by seismic events is not considered significant within the project boundary or upstream in the vicinity of the TRD, due to the low historical seismicity of the region. However, the steep topography and shallow, erosive soils found in much of the region increase the potential for landslides and rockfalls triggered by seismic events, precipitation, or a combination of these two factors. Although landslides are a common occurrence along SR 299, such events typically are intercepted by the highway and rarely contribute material to the river. There is a greater potential for areas downstream of the project boundary to incur slope failures during seismic events due to steeper topography and unstable geologic materials. Possible effects of large downstream landslides associated with seismic events could include temporary landslide damming of the mainstem Trinity River, depending on the volume of failed material and the flow regime at the time of the event. A detailed discussion of geologic hazards is presented in Section 3.3.

Roadways

Due to topography and population density distribution, there are relatively few roads in Trinity County; therefore, equestrians, pedestrians, bicyclists and motor vehicles commonly use the same roadways. Generally well maintained, the county's roads often follow riparian corridors and are typically winding and narrow. The three primary access routes—SR 299, River Ranch Road, and Union Hill Road are two-lane roadways with minimal shoulders. One notable characteristic of Trinity County's roadway system is the lack of any existing traffic signals (LSC Transportation Consultants 2005). Between 1995 and 2002, there were 151 traffic-related accidents on roadways in Trinity County, five of which involved fatalities (LSC Transportation Consultants 2005). The CHP provides patrols on state highways, while the Trinity County Sheriff's Department (TCSD) patrols both state highways and county roads.

Wildland Fire

The steep topography and mosaic of mixed-conifer, hardwood, and chaparral woodlands, coupled with typically hot, dry summers, create an extreme fire danger potential throughout most of Trinity County. Human-caused fires, particularly along roadways and other developed areas, are relatively common, although the county is also frequently subject to lightning-caused fires. Wildland fire, regardless of the cause, is detrimental to watershed function, killing vegetation, burning the organic matter in litter and soil, and forming impervious soil layers, factors that contribute directly to accelerated runoff from the watershed during and immediately after a storm event. Concentrated runoff discharged over a shorter period of time can result in increased flood hazards. Bare soils and increased runoff can also increase the risk of landslides.

Trinity County fire protection needs are currently met by 16 volunteer fire departments dispersed throughout the county, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF), and the USFS. By law, the CDF is responsible for wildland fire protection on all private lands within Trinity County, and the USFS is responsible for wildland fire protection on all federal National Forest lands. Consequently, both the CDF and USFS fire stations are staffed only during the summer fire season, which normally lasts from May to November. CDF also contracts with BLM to provide wildland fire protection on public lands. The Trinity County volunteer fire departments are responsible for structural fire protection and rescue services in Trinity County throughout the year. The Douglas City Volunteer Fire Department provides services within the general area of the Douglas City Community Plan, however, the department routinely responds to calls outside of its legal boundaries if it is dispatched by the 911 Center, which is maintained by the TCSD (Trinity County Planning Department 2002b).

Evacuation Routes

The Safety Element of the Trinity County General Plan identifies specific major evacuation routes in the event of an emergency. Steep topography, the Trinity River, and the sizable Salmon–Trinity Alps substantially restrict evacuation options in the area of Trinity County in which the Proposed Action would be located. In general, SR 299, which extends east/west through the county, is the primary evacuation route for the region (Figure 3.15-1).

Local Setting

No structures or dwellings are present within the activity areas, although the site boundary includes residential, commercial and public properties. Douglas City Elementary School, the Douglas City Volunteer Fire Department, and the Weaverville Community Service Water District are all located northwest of the most western section of the project boundary, on the opposite side of SR 299. Private residences are scattered along the river between Douglas City and Steel Bridge Road.

The reach of the Trinity River between Douglas City and Steel Bridge Road is popular for recreational uses such as rafting, swimming, and angling. In the past 10 years, no hazardous material spills have been recorded in the vicinity of Douglas City (Peter Hedtke, Trinity County Health Department, pers. comm. 2006).

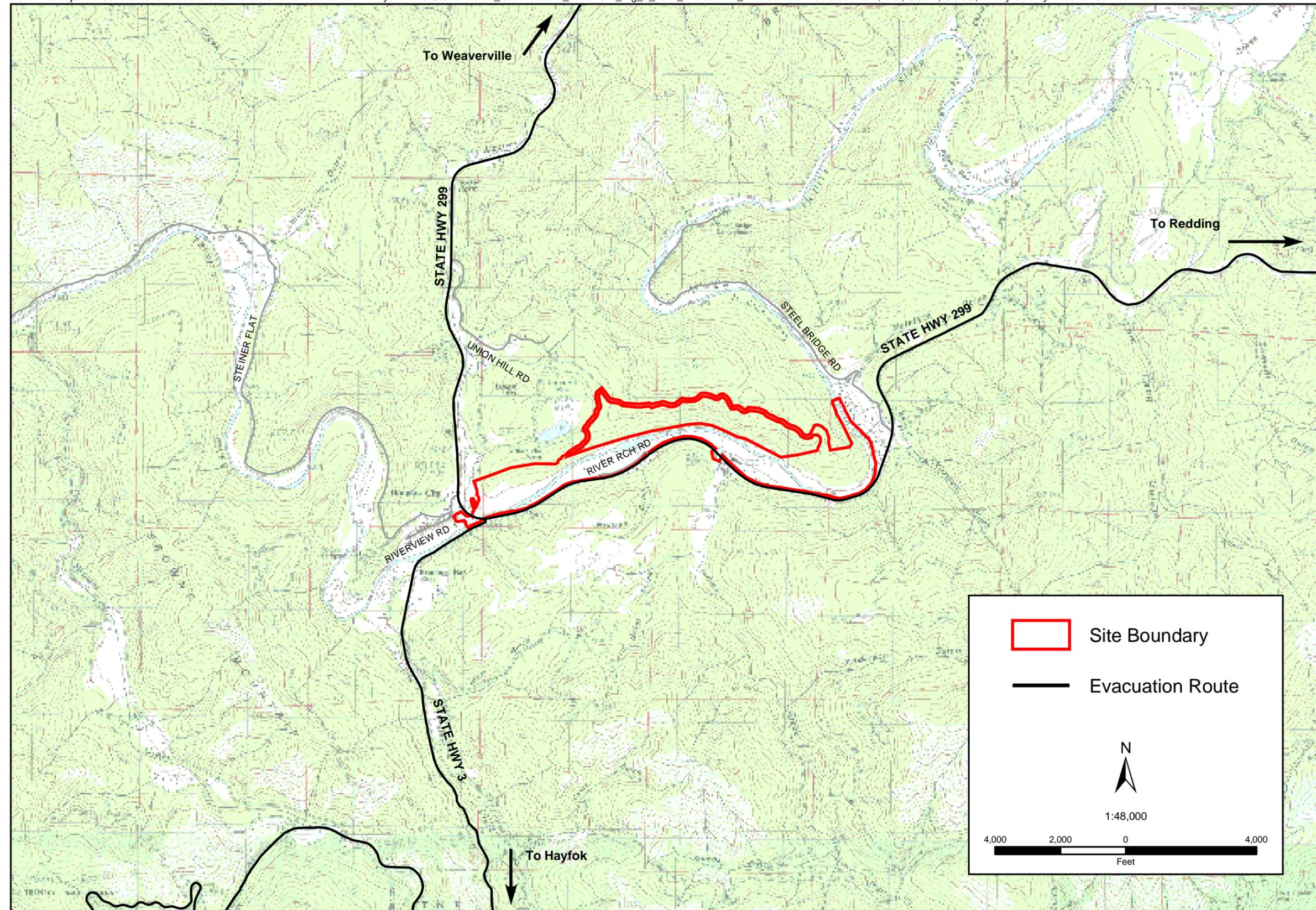


Figure 3.15-1
Major Evacuation Routes

Toxins

The potential hazard posed by latent mercury in the reach of the Trinity River that passes through the project boundary is addressed in Section 3.5, Water Quality. Elevated levels of mercury may occur in placer tailings piles, alluvial deposits of fine sediments (bed and bank), and wetland features associated with dredge tailings and gravel mining pits (e.g., ponds), but availability of mercury to the environment is unlikely to be affected by this project.

Wildland Fire

Since 1911, when documentation of fire start locations and causes (human versus natural) began, a pattern of human-caused fires has emerged along the SR 299 corridor (Trinity County Planning Department 2002a). Concentrated development of the Douglas City area, relative to much of the county, is a factor that contributes to human-caused fire starts. While the surrounding forested uplands are at risk of damage from wildfire, the majority of land included in the project boundary is alluvial in nature with some riparian vegetation.

Evacuation Routes

The primary evacuation route throughout the project site is SR 299 and SR 3. Access to SR 299 from homes located on the left bank of the river within the vicinity of the project boundary is via River Ranch Road, Indian Creek Road and Steel Bridge Road. Access to SR 299 from homes located on the right bank of the river within the vicinity of the project boundary is via Union Hill Road. River Ranch Road provides off-highway access to residents along the river in the central area of the project boundary. Indian Creek Ranch Road provides access to residences along Indian Creek Ranch Road and residences along Wilson Mountain Road in the central area of the project boundary. Steel Bridge Road provides access to rural residential subdivisions located upstream of the project boundary (see Figure 3.15-1). Steiner Flat, Indian Creek Ranch Road and Steel Bridge Road are all dead-end roads and could not be used to evacuate traffic in any direction other than toward SR 299.

3.15.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Pertinent federal, state, and local environmental laws and regulations pertaining to hazards and the storage, handling, and disposal of hazardous waste are summarized below.

Federal Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act

The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) of 1980 is the primary federal statute focusing on past hazardous waste activities. The CERCLA's scope is broader than that of other federal statutes. The CERCLA also initiated development of the National Priorities List, which lists sites that are eligible for remedial action. Section 101(14)(a) of CERCLA states "a hazardous substance is any substance [the] EPA has designated for special consideration under the Clean Air Act (CAA), Clean Water Act, or Toxic Substances Control Act and any hazardous waste under Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)." The EPA maintains and updates a list of all such hazardous substances (40 CFR 302).

Federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act

The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) is a federal regulatory statute designed to provide “cradle to grave” control of hazardous waste by imposing management requirements on generators and transporters of hazardous wastes and on owners and operators of treatment, storage, and disposal facilities.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

The EPA, in addition to having several other responsibilities, regulates disposal of hazardous wastes through the RCRA. Under the RCRA, the EPA regulates the activities of waste generators, transporters, and handlers (any individual who treats, stores, and/or disposes of a designated hazardous waste). The EPA is also responsible for tracking hazardous waste from its generation to its final disposal (i.e., cradle to grave) to assure proper accountability.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is obligated to prepare and enforce occupational health and safety regulations with the goal of providing employees a safe working environment. OSHA regulations apply to the work place and cover activities ranging from confined space entry to toxic chemical exposure. OSHA regulates workplace exposure to hazardous chemicals and activities through promulgating regulations specifying work place procedures and equipment.

U.S. Department of Transportation

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) regulates the interstate transport of hazardous materials and wastes through implementation of the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act. This act specifies driver-training requirements, load labeling procedures, and container design and safety specifications. Transporters of hazardous wastes must also meet the requirements of additional statutes such as the RCRA.

State Superfund Program

In 1981, the California State Legislature enacted the Hazardous Substances Account Act to establish state authority to clean up hazardous substances releases, compensate persons injured from exposure to hazardous substances, and provide funds for payment of the state’s mandatory 10 percent share of cleanup cost under the federal Superfund Law. The California Department of Health Services administers the state Superfund program.

California Environmental Protection Agency Department of Toxic Substances Control

The California Environmental Protection Agency Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) regulates the generation, transportation, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste under the RCRA and the State Hazardous Waste Control Law. Both laws impose “cradle to grave” regulatory systems for handling hazardous waste in a manner that protects human health and the environment.

California Emergency Response to Hazardous Materials Incidents

California has developed an Emergency Response Plan to coordinate emergency services provided by federal, state, and local government and private agencies. Response to hazardous materials incidents is one part of this plan. The plan is administered by the state Office of Emergency Services, which coordinates the responses of other agencies, including the CalEPA, CHP, CDF, the Regional Water Board, local fire departments, and other emergency service providers.

Hazardous Materials Transport

State agencies with primary responsibility for enforcing federal and state regulations and responding to hazardous materials transportation emergencies are the CHP and Caltrans. Together, these agencies determine container types used and license hazardous waste haulers for hazardous waste transportation on public roads.

Trinity County General Plan Goals and Objectives

The Trinity County General Plan contains goals and policies designed to guide the future physical development of the county, based on current conditions. The General Plan contains all the state-required elements, including community development and design, transportation, natural resources, health and safety, noise, housing, recreation, economic development, public facilities and services, and air quality. The following goals and policies related to hazards and hazardous waste issues associated with the proposed project were taken from the applicable elements of the General Plan (Trinity County 2001), including the Douglas City Community Plan (Trinity County 1987).

County-Wide and Community Goals and Objectives – Safety Element

The following goals, objectives, and policies are applicable to hazards and hazardous materials.

Flooding

- Maintain or return the open space lands subject to flooding.
- Protect public and private developments from flood hazards.

Hazardous Material/Waste Safety Goal

- Reduce threats to the public health and the environment caused by the use, storage and transportation of hazardous material and hazardous waste.

Proper Regulation of Transportation and Storage

- Transport of hazardous materials shall be regulated by the CHP under CCR Title 13: 1150-13:1194 and CFR Title 49.

Accessibility

- Roads shall be constructed to provide adequate width, grade and turn-around space for emergency vehicles by complying with appropriate federal, state and local adopted standards. Construction of roads shall protect water quality, slope stability and threat to natural and cultural resources.

- Encourage owners of existing private roads to provide identification signage for emergency access purposes.

Water Quality

- Trinity County shall implement and maintain a water quality monitoring program, including the monitoring of swimming holes, failing sewage treatment systems, herbicides, mine runoff, and baseline monitoring.

Seismic Safety

- The county shall confirm that all construction and grading activities done will not adversely affect the stability of any slope.

Douglas City Community Plan Goals and Objectives

The Douglas City Community Plan covers approximately 35 square miles (22,400 acres) centered on the Trinity River from Grass Valley Creek to an area known as Steiner Flat, downstream of Douglas City.

Hazards

Goal: To protect public and private developments from flood hazards

Goal: To provide an adequate level of fire protection services to resource lands

Goal: To discourage development on unstable slopes or soils

Project Consistency with the Trinity County General Plan and Community Plans

The goals and objectives described in Chapter 1 are generally compatible with the applicable General Plan goals and policies summarized above. The overall goal of the Proposed Action is to rehabilitate the site so that it functions in a manner that is closer to historic conditions (i.e., pre-Lewiston Dam).

Flood attenuation associated with the Proposed Action would contribute to the County's objectives related to flood protection and public safety by rehabilitating the floodplain. Grading of existing, artificially created dredge tailing slopes within the project boundary to a lesser angle may decrease the risk of small-scale landslides and possible flooding, both of which are goals identified in the county and community plans.

3.15.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES/IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Methodology

Field reconnaissance of the project site was conducted by TRRP staff to identify and/or characterize any hazards or potentially hazardous materials. In addition, Trinity County Planning Department and Environmental Health staff was consulted regarding the potential for hazardous substances to occur in the general vicinity of the project boundary.

Significance Criteria

An impact concerning hazards and hazardous materials would be considered significant if the project would

- involve the use, production, or disposal of materials that pose a hazard to people or to animal or plant populations in the area affected;
- create a substantial potential public health or safety hazard due to risk of upset (accidents);
- create a substantial potential public health or safety hazard due to a reasonably foreseeable release of hazardous materials and/or hazardous waste (i.e., from contaminated soil);
- violate applicable laws intended to protect human health and safety or expose employees to working situations that do not meet health standards;
- physically interfere with, or impair implementation of, emergency response plans or emergency evacuation plans;
- substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment);
- be located on a site that is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to *California Government Code* Section 65962.5 and, as a result, create a significant hazard to the public or the environment;
- emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school; or
- expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Table 3.15-2 summarizes the potential hazards and hazardous waste impacts that could result from construction of the project.

TABLE 3.15-2 SUMMARY OF HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS WASTE IMPACTS FOR THE NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE, THE PROPOSED ACTION, ALTERNATIVE 1, AND ALTERNATIVE 2						
No-Action Alternative	Proposed Action	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Proposed Action with Mitigation	Alternative 1 with Mitigation	Alternative 1 with Mitigation
3.15-1. Implementation of the project may increase the potential for release of, or exposure to, potentially hazardous materials that could pose a public health or safety hazard.						
NI	LS	LS	LS	N/A ¹	N/A ¹	N/A ¹
3.15-2. Construction activities associated with the project may interfere with emergency/response/evacuation plans by temporarily slowing traffic flow.						
NI	LS	LS	LS	N/A ¹	N/A ¹	N/A ¹
3.15-3. Implementation of the project may contribute to area wildland fire potential and catastrophic fire behavior.						
NI	LS	LS	LS	N/A ¹	N/A ¹	N/A ¹
3.15-4. Implementation of the project may contribute to an increased risk of landslide and flooding.						
NI	LS/B	LS/B	LS/B	N/A ²	N/A ²	N/A ²

Notes:

LS = Less than Significant S = Significant SU = Significant Unavoidable
 NI = No Impact B = Beneficial N/A = Not Applicable

¹Because this potential impact is less than significant, no mitigation is required.

²Because this potential impact is less than significant for landslides and beneficial with respects to flooding, no mitigation is required.

Impact 3.15-1: Implementation of the project may increase the potential for release of, or exposure to, potentially hazardous materials that could pose a public health or safety hazard. *No Impact for No-Action Alternative; Less-than-Significant Impact for Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2*

No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, construction activities that could potentially release hazardous substances (e.g., oil, gas, diesel, mercury) in a manner that could pose a health or safety hazard to the general public would not occur because the project would not be implemented.

Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

The potentially hazardous materials (e.g., oil, fuels) that would be needed to operate machinery to be used in conjunction with implementation of the proposed project are similar to those transported along SR 299 on a routine basis. The temporary nature of the construction aspects of the proposed project, combined with the implementation of BMPs and the distance from residences and frequently used recreation areas, would minimize the potential for any hazardous materials used by the project to become a public hazard.

Recent studies have determined that toxins such as mercury and methylmercury do not pose a significant hazard to the environment or the public in their current latent form. These are addressed in Chapter 3.5 Water Quality. Further, it has been determined that any disturbance during project implementation of

gravels or sediments that may contain toxins would not result in a significant increase in current background levels of toxins in the environment.

The potential for construction activities under the Proposed Action to result in the significant exposure of the public and the environment to the adverse effects of hazardous substances (e.g., oil, gas, diesel) would be less than those of Alternative 1 due to the decrease in magnitude and duration of the construction activities. Similarly, the potential for construction activities under Alternative 2 to result in the significant exposure of the public and the environment to the adverse effects of hazardous substances (e.g., oil, gas, diesel) would be less than those of the Proposed Project and Alternative 1. Implementation of Alternative 2 would require a shorter construction period and less ground disturbance than the Proposed Action and Alternative 1.

Mitigation Measures

No-Action Alternative, Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

Since no impact was identified, no mitigation is required.

Significance after Mitigation: N/A.

Impact 3.15.2: Construction activities associated with the project may interfere with emergency response/evacuation plans by temporarily slowing traffic flow. ***No Impact for No-Action Alternative; Less than Significant Impact for Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2***

No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, construction activities that could interfere with emergency response/evacuation plans would not occur because the project would not be constructed.

Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

Under the Proposed Action, Alternative 1 and Alternative 2, construction traffic would include the mobilization and demobilization of construction equipment (e.g., scrapers, excavators, bulldozers) to the project site. Once the equipment is on the site, construction traffic would be limited to daily trips for personnel and routine service and supply vehicles. Construction activities would be managed to ensure that emergency response/evacuation plans are not impeded.

Under the Proposed Action, the potential to interfere with emergency response/evacuation plans would be less than under Alternative 1 due to the additional grading activities required for road access under Alternative 1. Under Alternative 2, the potential to interfere with emergency response/evacuation plans would be less than under the Proposed Action and Alternative 1 due a reduction in construction time and a decrease in the area of activities.

Mitigation Measures

No-Action Alternative, Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

Since no significant impacts were identified, no mitigation is required.

Significance after Mitigation: N/A

Impact 3.15.3: Implementation of the project may contribute to area wildland fire potential and catastrophic fire behavior. *No Impact for No-Action Alternative; Less-than-Significant Impact for Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2*

No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, implementation of the project would have no impact on wildland fire potential or catastrophic fire behavior because the project would not be constructed.

Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

Project activities are proposed to occur in the riparian corridor of the Trinity River. Potential fuels within the site boundary (e.g., grasses, herbaceous weeds) are generally non-contiguous, and the river serves as a substantial natural fire break. The types and amounts of fuels and their continuity may be decreased temporarily by implementation of each of the action alternatives, particularly in areas subject to vegetation removal, but any such changes would not be significant with respect to fire potential and behavior. In the long-term, potential fire conditions would be similar to those that currently exist (e.g., potential fuels would be limited to riparian vegetation, sporadic grasses, and herbaceous weeds). The Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2 would all have a less-than-significant impact on wildland fire potential and behavior.

Mitigation Measures

No-Action Alternative, Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

Since no significant impacts were identified, no mitigation is required.

Significance after Mitigation: N/A

Impact 3.15.4: Implementation of the project may contribute to an increased risk of landslide or flooding. *No Impact for No-Action Alternative; Less-than-Significant Impact—landslides, Beneficial—flooding for Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2*

No-Action Alternative

The No-Action Alternative would not affect the potential for landslides or flooding because the project would not be constructed. Because no grading activities would occur, the potential for erosion (i.e., landslides) would not increase. The Trinity River floodplain within the boundary established for the Proposed Action would not be altered, and existing base floodwater surface elevations would remain the same.

Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

The risk of landslides would remain less than significant under each of the action alternatives because most of the activity is proposed to take place in the river channel or floodplain, both of which have relatively flat topography. Furthermore, none of the action alternatives involves alteration of toe-slopes adjacent to any geologically unstable areas with the potential to slide.

If any of the action alternatives are implemented, the placement of excavated material outside of the BFE floodplain would result in no change to or a reduction (beneficial effect) in the existing base floodwater surface elevation.

The potential for flooding would be decreased to varying degrees as a result of the action alternatives. Although some activities proposed under each of the action alternatives differs slightly (i.e., Alternative 2 requires less constructed floodplain and feathered edges), the potential risk of flooding would remain similar to that of the other alternatives.

Mitigation Measures

No-Action Alternative, Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

Since no significant impacts were identified, no mitigation is required.

Significance after Mitigation: N/A

3.16 Noise

This section evaluates the potential noise impacts associated with implementation of proposed rehabilitation activities at the Indian Creek Rehabilitation Site: Trinity River Mile 93.7-96.5. The following evaluation is based on a review of local land use plans and policies pertaining to noise and field reconnaissance to identify potential sensitive receptors within and adjacent to the project boundary.

3.16.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Existing Noise Levels

Noise is generally defined as excessive and unwanted sound emanating from noise-producing objects. Total environmental noise exerts a sound pressure level that is generally measured with an A-weighted decibel scale (dBA), which approximates the range of sound audible to the human ear (where 10dBA is at the low threshold of hearing and 120–140dBA is the threshold of pain). Human responses to noise are subjective and can vary. Intensity, duration, frequency, time pattern of noise, and existing background noises are some factors that can influence individual responses to noise. Table 3.16-1 lists examples of dBA levels for a range of noises.

TABLE 3.16-1

NOISE LEVELS AND ASSOCIATED EFFECTS FOR A VARIETY OF NOISE TYPES{ TC "Table 3.16-1
Noise Levels and Associated Effects for a Variety of Noise Types"

{ B | "1" }

Noise Source at a Given Distance	A-Weighted Sound Level in Decibels ^{a,b}	Noise Environments	Subjective Impression
Civil defense siren (100 ft)	140–130		Pain threshold
Jet takeoff (200 ft)	120		
	110	Rock music concert	Very loud
Pile driver (50 ft)	100		
Ambulance siren (100 ft)	90	Boiler room	
Freight cars (50 ft) Pneumatic drill (50 ft)	80	Printing press Kitchen garbage disposal	Loud
Freeway (100 ft)	70		Moderately loud
Vacuum cleaner (100 ft)	60	Data processing center Department store/office	
Light traffic (100 ft)	50	Private business office	Quiet
Large transformer (200 ft)	40		
Soft whisper (5 ft)	30	Quiet bedroom	Threshold of hearing
	20	Recording studio	
	0-10		

^a A-Weighted Sound Level, dBA = The A-weighted filter de-emphasizes very-low and very-high frequency components of sound similar to the response of the human ear.

Noise measurements are usually taken over time to capture daily or hourly variance in noise levels. Noise levels taken over time are often reported in energy-equivalent noise level (Leq), the day-night average noise level (Ldn), and the community noise equivalent level (CNEL). Leq is an hourly average, while Ldn and CNEL are 24-hour weighted averages.

Noise is not considered to be a problem in Trinity County. Sources of noise in Trinity County include the following:

- highway traffic, especially commercial trucks (e.g., logging trucks, tankers)
- sawmills
- airports (light planes, helicopters)
- mining (sand and gravel excavation)
- other sources, classifiable as miscellaneous residential, commercial, and industrial sources

Noise levels in the general vicinity of the project boundary are primarily dominated by noise from SR 299 traffic, as SR 299 generally parallels the southern boundary of the rehabilitation project. Local residential and commercial vehicle traffic and miscellaneous sources (e.g., river flow, river recreationists, overhead aircraft, barking dogs, children at play) are intermittent sources of noise throughout the area.

A community noise survey was conducted in Trinity County in 2002 (Brown-Buntin 2002) as part of the update currently in progress for the noise element of the County's General Plan. The nearest survey points to the project boundary are Weaverville (approximately 4 miles north of the site) and Lewiston (approximately 5 miles northeast of the site). The community noise survey results indicate that typical noise levels in noise-sensitive areas range from approximately 44 – 52 dB L_{dn}¹. These are low noise levels and are representative of small communities and rural areas. Maximum noise levels observed during the survey were generally caused by local automobile traffic or heavy trucks. Other sources of maximum noise levels included occasional aircraft and construction activities. Background noise levels in the absence of these maximum-noise generating sources are largely attributable to distant traffic, water, wind, livestock, birds, and insects.

Sensitive Noise Receptors

Sensitive receptors are specific geographic points, such as schools, residences, commercial areas, or parks, where people could be exposed to unacceptable levels of noise. Noise-sensitive receptors that have been identified in the general vicinity of the project boundary include private residential areas, commercial enterprises, and persons, primarily recreationists (e.g., hikers, picnickers, anglers, rafters), and wildlife that use the Trinity River corridor. Noise tolerance levels for these groups are subjective, varying widely between individuals.

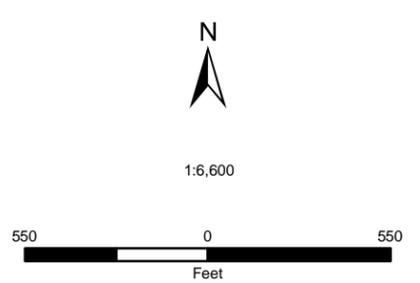
Ten stationary sensitive receptors were identified in the vicinity of the project boundary (Figures 3.16-1a through 3.16-1c). Sensitive receptors one through seven are located within approximately 700 feet of SR 299 and the Trinity River, while sensitive receptors eight through ten are located adjacent to Union Hill Road. Each of these receptors are subjected to varying degrees of ambient noise levels from the highway and the river. Additionally, sensitive receptors eight through ten are subjected to varying degrees of ambient noise levels from intermittent traffic associated with timber management activities. However, vegetation and topography create buffers to these noise sources, reducing the intensity, duration, frequency, and time pattern of generated noise. These natural buffers would also aid in buffering noise

¹dB L_{dn} = The average equivalent sound level during a 24-hour day, obtained after addition of 10 A-weighted decibels to sound levels in the night after 10:00 p.m. and before 7:00 a.m. A-weighted decibels, abbreviated dBA, or dB(a), are an expression of the relative loudness of sounds in air as perceived by the human ear.

from project construction activities. Sensitive receptors identified within 1,000 feet of the project boundary are listed in Table 3.16-2.



- Site Boundary
- River Mile (RM)
- Match Line
- Sensitive Receptor
- Road Type
 - Construction
 - Existing
 - River Crossing
- Proposed Action
 - Riverine
 - Upland
 - Staging Area
 - Wetland Enhancement



Aerial photography:
July 2005

Figure 3.16-1a
Sensitive Receptor Locations

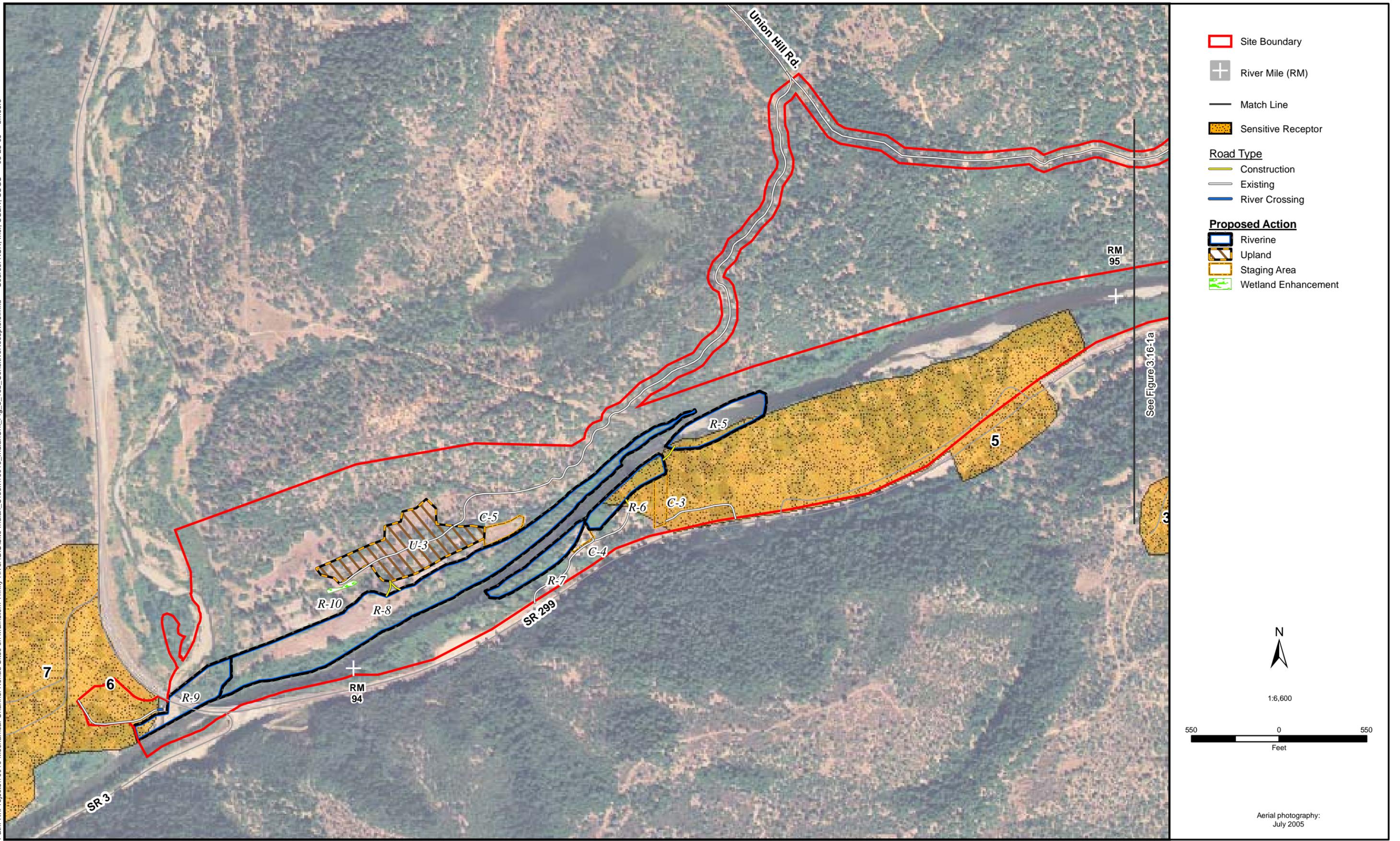


Figure 3.16-1b
Sensitive Receptor Locations

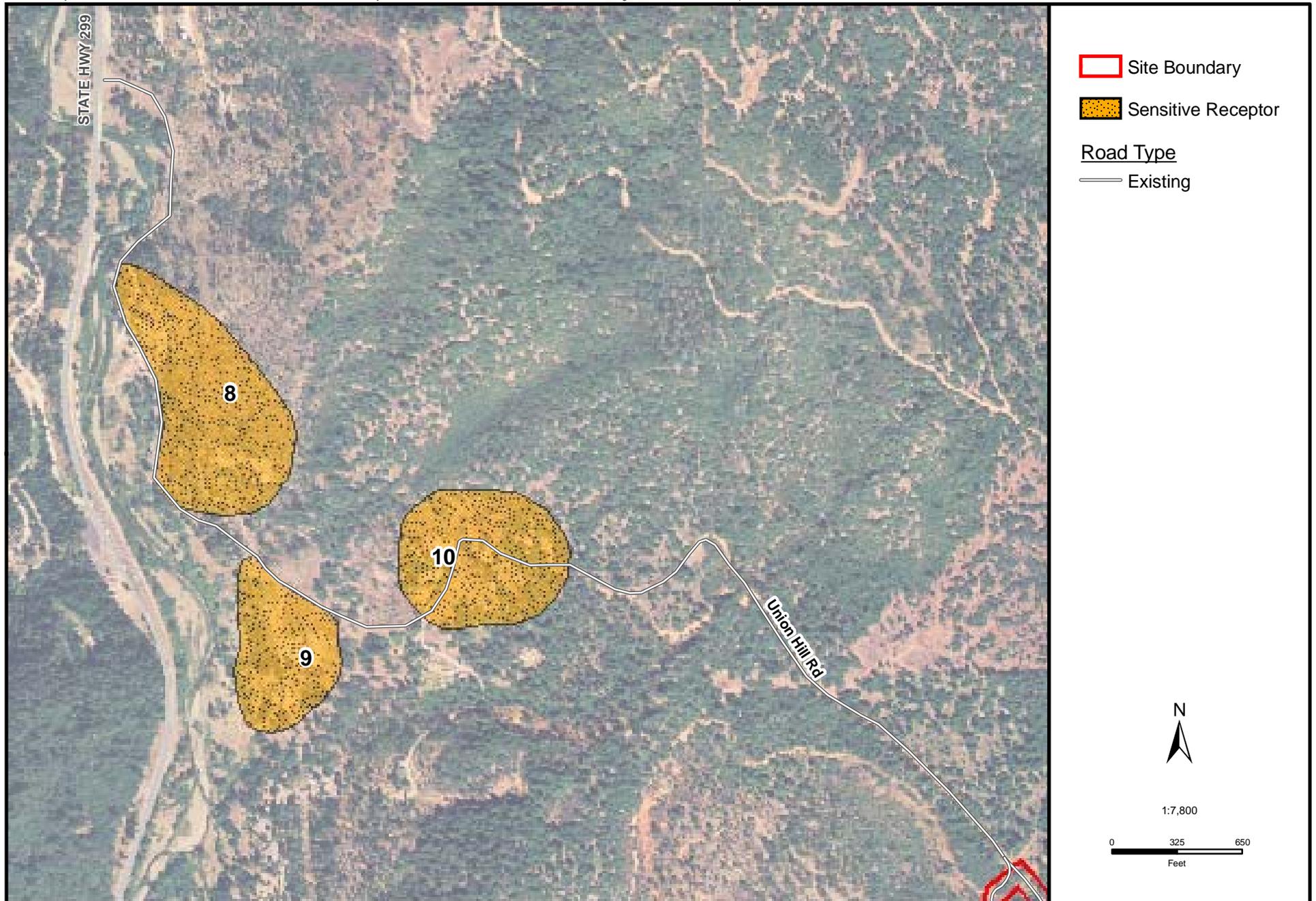


Figure 3.16-1c
Sensitive Receptor Locations

TABLE 3.16-2 { TC "Table 3.16-2 Sensitive Noise Receptors within 1,000 feet of the Indian Creek Rehabilitation Site" \f B \l "1" }
 SENSITIVE NOISE RECEPTORS WITHIN 1,000 FEET OF THE INDIAN CREEK REHABILITATION SITE

Receptor Number	Description	Approximate Distance to Nearest Rehabilitation Area
1	Residential area	100 feet to activity area R-1
2	Residential area	Adjacent to activity area R-2
3	Residential area	Adjacent to activity area R-3
4	Undeveloped recreation area	Adjacent to activity area R-3, C-2 and R-4
5	Residential area	Adjacent to activity area R-5, C-3 and R-6
6	Residential/public service area	Adjacent to activity area R-9
7	Residential/commercial area	550 feet to activity area R-9
8	Residential area	Adjacent to Union Hill Road
9	Residential area	Adjacent to Union Hill Road
10	Residential area	Adjacent to Union Hill Road

Table 3.16-3 lists the U.S. General Services Administration maximum noise levels allowed for government contract construction activities.

TABLE 3.16-3
 U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION MAXIMUM NOISE LEVELS ALLOWABLE FOR GOVERNMENT CONTRACT { TC "Table 3.16-3 U.S. General Services Administration Maximum Noise Levels Allowable for Government Contract" \f B \l "1" }S

Equipment	Sound Level (dBA) at 50 feet
Earthmoving	
Front loader	75
Backhoe	75
Dozer	75
Tractor	75
Scraper	80
Grader	75
Truck	75
Paver	80
Impact	
Pile driver	95
Jack hammer	75
Rock drill	80
Pneumatic drill	80

TABLE 3.16-3
U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION MAXIMUM NOISE LEVELS ALLOWABLE FOR GOVERNMENT CONTRACT
"Table 3.16-3 U.S. General Services Administration Maximum Noise Levels Allowable for Government Contract" \f B \l "1" }S

Equipment	Sound Level (dBA) at 50 feet
Materials handling	
Concrete mixer	75
Concrete pump	75
Crane	75
Derrick	75
Stationary	
Pump	75
Generator	75
Compressor	75
Other	
Saw	75
Impactor	75

Source: Sincero and Sincero 1996

Typical construction noise levels are shown in Table 3.16-4. This table assumes operation of various types of construction equipment, as shown in Table 3.16-5.

TABLE 3.16-4
TYPICAL CONSTRUCTION NOISE LEVELS{ TC "Table 3.16-4 Typical Construction Noise Levels" \f B \l "1" }

Construction Stage	Noise Level (dBA, L_{eq}) ¹
Ground clearing	84
Excavation	89
Hauling	88
Revegetation	65

¹ Average noise levels 50 feet from the noisiest source and 200 feet from the rest of the equipment associated with a given construction stage. Noise levels correspond to public works projects (50 dBA ambient environment). Source: (Bolt 1971)

TABLE 3.16-5
CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT NOISE{ TC "Table 3.16-5 Construction Equipment Noise" \f B \l "1" }

Type of Equipment	Maximum Level, dBA at 50 feet
Truck	75
Scrapers	80
Bulldozers	75

3.16 Noise

Backhoe	75
Pneumatic tools	80

Source: Sincero and Sincero 1996

3.16.2 RELEVANT PLANS AND POLICIES

Trinity County

Trinity County adopted a Noise Element of the General Plan in October 2003 which contains standards for noise. An implementing ordinance is under review for adoption, but it is not required by State law to have an implementing ordinance (Brown-Buntin 2002; Stokely, pers. comm. 2006). The Draft County Noise Ordinance was considered by the County Board of Supervisors for approval in October 2003, and the County Planning Department was instructed to continue working on it and present it at some point in the future. Trinity County staff indicate there is no expectation that a Draft County Noise Ordinance will be approved prior to completion of the NEPA/CEQA process for this project.

The Trinity County General Plan identifies a specific recommendation that is applicable to the Proposed Action. This recommendation states: “It must be realized that although noise is not a health problem in Trinity County, it is a major annoyance in some areas and should be abated, when feasible, to the benefit of everyone.” If necessary, mitigation measures specific to project construction activities will be developed to reduce significant impacts. While a County Noise Ordinance is not in effect, projects subject to Trinity County approval are subject to the Noise Standards in the Noise Element.

Douglas City Community Plan Goals and Objectives

The Douglas City Community Plan covers approximately 35 square miles (22,400 acres) centered on the Trinity River from Grass Valley Creek to an area known as Steiner Flat, downstream of Douglas City.

Natural Resources

Goal: Retain the quiet, unobtrusive nature of development, aside from areas adjacent to SR 299 and SR 3 in the Plan Area

- Review and condition future development proposals to reduce any adverse noise impacts

Project Consistency with the Trinity County General Plan and Community Plans

This section compares the goals and objectives of the Proposed Action to the relevant local planning policies (i.e., Trinity County General Plan, Douglas City Community Plan) to determine if there are any inconsistencies.

The goals and objectives described in Chapter 1 are generally compatible with the applicable General Plan goals and policies summarized above. The overall goal of the Proposed Action and associated alternatives is to rehabilitate the site so that it functions in a manner that is closer to historic conditions (e.g., pre-Lewiston Dam).

3.16.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES/IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Methodology

Since the Proposed Action and associated alternatives would not result in a noticeable increase in traffic volume, the focus of this impact analysis will be on construction noise. Construction noise impacts are based on an assumed mixture of construction equipment and related noise levels. Noise levels of

individual types of equipment are based on industry averages. Assumptions related to construction equipment and industry noise averages were used to evaluate construction-related noise impacts.

Implementation of the Proposed Action or alternatives would occur during a relatively short time period (up to 20 total weeks between approximately November 2006 and October 15, 2007). Associated activities would consist of several distinct phases, including site preparation (minor grading and grubbing), excavation, transport and placement of excavated material, and revegetation of the rehabilitation areas. Noise levels used to evaluate project construction were taken from literature that assumes a typical mix of construction equipment used in the construction of public works projects (Bolt 1971). These construction noise levels were used to determine the noise levels at the nearest sensitive receptors.

Significance Criteria

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the Proposed Action and alternatives would be considered to have a significant direct noise impact if they would result in a noise increase and:

- exposure of persons to or generation of excessive ground-borne vibration or ground borne-noise levels;
- a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project;
- a substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above existing levels; and
- exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the Trinity County General Plan Noise Element, or applicable standards of other agencies.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Table 3.16-6 summarizes the potential noise impacts resulting from construction of the Proposed Action.

TABLE 3.16-6 { TC "Table 3.16-6 Summary of Noise Impacts" \f B \l "1" }
 SUMMARY OF NOISE IMPACTS FOR THE NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE, PROPOSED ACTION, ALTERNATIVE 1, AND ALTERNATIVE 2

No-Action Alternative	Proposed Action	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Proposed Action with Mitigation	Alternative 1 with Mitigation	Alternative 2 with Mitigation
1. Construction activities associated with the project would result in temporary noise impacts to nearby sensitive receptors.						
NI	S	S	S	LS	LS	LS

Notes:

- LS = Less than Significant S = Significant SU = Significant Unavoidable
 NI = No Impact B = Beneficial N/A = Not Applicable

Impact 3.16-1: Construction activities associated with the project would result in noise impacts to nearby sensitive receptors. *No Impact for No-Action Alternative; Significant Impact for Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2*

No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, no change in ambient noise levels would occur because the project would not be constructed.

Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

During the construction phase of the project, noise from construction activities would dominate the noise environment in the immediate area. As shown in Table 3.16-4, construction activities would generate maximum noise levels ranging from 70 to 90 dBA at a distance of 50 feet, although intervening terrain and vegetation could reduce these noise levels. Construction noise would be temporary and is expected to occur intermittently over a 20-week period. There would be no permanent noise impacts as a result of project implementation.

Ten sensitive receptors are located in the immediate vicinity of the project boundary (Figures 3.16-1a – 3.16-1c). Sensitive receptors identified within 1,000 feet of the project boundary are listed in Table 3.16-2. Each of these sensitive receptors would be subjected to varying degrees of construction noise under each alternative. Under the Proposed Action, the access road proposed to extend from Union Hill Road to activity areas on the north side of the river would not be constructed, therefore reducing the noise impacts associated with sensitive receptors 8, 9 and 10. Under Alternative 1, the proposed low-water crossings (Trinity River, Weaver Creek) would not be installed; however, this would not reduce noise impacts to sensitive receptors within this area because other activities would still occur within the immediate vicinity of these river crossings. Under Alternative 2, the access road proposed to extend from Union Hill Road, south to treatment areas R-1, U-1, U-2, and staging area C-1 would not be implemented, therefore reducing noise impacts associated with sensitive receptors 1, 8, 9, and 10.

Under each of the action alternatives it is anticipated that ground vibration associated with project rehabilitation activities will not be detectable at any of the sensitive receptor locations, nor will it result in structural damage. However, during the construction phase of the project, noise from construction activities would dominate the noise environment in the immediate area. This would be considered a significant impact.

Mitigation Measures

No-Action Alternative

Since no significant impact was identified, no mitigation is required.

Significance after Mitigation: N/A.

Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

- 1a.** Construction activities near residential areas (i.e., sensitive receptors 1-3 and 5-6) would be scheduled between 7:00 AM and 7:00 PM, Monday through Saturday. No construction activities shall be scheduled for Sundays or other hours and days established by the local jurisdiction (i.e.,

Trinity County). The contractor may submit for variances in construction activity hours, as needed.

- 1b.** Reclamation shall require in construction specifications that the contractor maintain all construction equipment with manufacturer's specified noise muffling devices.
- 1c.** Reclamation shall require in construction specifications that the contractor place all stationary noise-generating equipment as far away as feasibly possible from sensitive noise receptors or in an orientation minimizing noise impacts (i.e., behind existing barriers, storage piles, unused equipment).

Significance after Mitigation: Less than significant.

3.17 Public Services and Utilities/Energy

This section evaluates potential impacts to public services and utilities from implementation of the Indian Creek Rehabilitation Site: Trinity River Mile 93.7–96.5. Additionally, this section addresses potential impacts to energy resources due to substantial or wasteful use of energy resources during implementation of the Proposed Action and the alternatives. The analysis provided in this section is based on review of applicable local planning documents, communication with local service providers, and field reconnaissance within the general vicinity of the project.

3.17.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Regional Setting

Water Supply and Distribution

Community service districts provide water service to several communities in Trinity County, including Weaverville, Lewiston, and Hayfork. In some instances, local service districts provide water service to small residential areas. Outside these communities, a large portion of the county's population is served by onsite water developments. These developments include wells, springs, and surface intake facilities along the Trinity River and its tributaries.

Surface Water

Surface water is provided by pumps and stilling wells in the Trinity River, as well as developed springs throughout the area. Surface water is primarily used for domestic purposes, including incidental use for gardens, livestock, and fire protection.

Groundwater

The Recent Alluvium formation is the predominant, fresh water-yielding formation along the Trinity River. This formation underlies the project boundary at varying depths. Water quality is highly variable and depends on local geologic features. The most common potential hazards to groundwater quality in Trinity County involve concentration of nitrates and dissolved solids from agricultural practices and septic tank failures. Additional information on this subject is provided in Sections 3.3 and 3.4.

Water Treatment Facilities

Water treatment facilities vary widely throughout the county. Water treatment facilities that serve communities are operated in accordance with established EPA guidelines. Water supplies that serve small subdivisions and private residences often have filtration and treatment systems to address local water quality concerns.

Wastewater Collection and Treatment

Trinity County has very limited wastewater collection and treatment facilities. Septic tanks and drain fields are used throughout most of the county. No public wastewater collection and treatment systems are available to residents in the area encompassed by the Douglas City Community Plan.

Gas Supply and Distribution

Natural gas providers do not serve Trinity County. Liquefied propane gas and kerosene fuels are provided through distributors based in Weaverville and Redding to residents on a case-by-case basis.

Solid Waste Collection and Disposal

Several independent private companies provide subscription garbage collection service to residents of Trinity County. There are also several remote collection sites available for county residents to deliver self-hauled residential, commercial, and industrial refuse, green waste, recyclables, and household hazardous materials. All material collected is transported to the Anderson-Cottonwood Disposal Service landfill in Anderson, California.

Law Enforcement

The TCSD provides law enforcement for the entire county. TCSD headquarters is located in Weaverville and a substation is located in Hayfork. Resident officers are stationed throughout the county and serve as the primary contact point for local communities.

The CHP operates from an office in Weaverville and serves as the primary law enforcement agency for state facilities and transportation corridors. The CHP works closely with the TCSD to provide law enforcement coverage to Trinity County.

The BLM and the USFS provide law enforcement in association with their land management activities. Although the focus of BLM and USFS officers is actions on public lands, they work closely with other agencies to provide law enforcement support throughout Trinity County.

The California Department of Fish and Game has wardens in Trinity County, who also provide law enforcement in association with their fish and wildlife protection responsibilities.

Fire Protection/Emergency Services

Sixteen volunteer fire departments are located throughout Trinity County. These departments work closely with CDF and USFS to meet Trinity County fire protection needs. The volunteer fire departments are responsible for structural fire protection and rescue services in Trinity County throughout the year. The 16 volunteer fire departments are located in the communities of Douglas City, Post Mountain, Hayfork, Wildwood, Junction City, Hyampom, Lewiston, Trinity Center, Coffee Creek, Salyer, Hawkins Bar, Weaverville, Southern Trinity, Downriver, Barker Valley, and Kettenpom-Zenia. These departments currently have a membership of approximately 200 to 225 volunteers. Trinity Center, Hayfork, Lewiston, and Weaverville departments receive tax revenues to support their organizations, although these revenues are limited. These departments routinely respond outside of their legal boundaries to any emergency to which they are dispatched by the 911 center maintained by the TCSD.

By law, CDF is responsible for wildland fire protection on all private lands in Trinity County, and the USFS is responsible for wildland fire protection on all National Forest lands. CDF and USFS fire stations are staffed only during the summer fire season, which normally lasts from May to late October. The

Douglas City Community Volunteer Fire Department (DCCVFD) maintains a station adjacent to the western boundary of the project. During the summer fire season, all fire agencies in the county respond to any reported fire, regardless of legal jurisdiction. CDF and USFS are legally and financially responsible for managing wildland fires within their jurisdiction; however, the volunteer fire departments are often the first to respond wildfires or other incidents (e.g., traffic accident.) CDF and USFS depend on the volunteer fire departments to provide the initial attack on wildfires, and both agencies have agreements with the volunteer fire departments to reimburse the departments for their assistance.

Medical Services

Medical services in Trinity County are provided by a variety of organizations. There are two health clinics run by Trinity County Public Health Department, located in Weaverville and Hayfork. In addition, Mountain Community Medical Services (formerly Trinity Hospital) in Weaverville provides 24-hour emergency services. Trinity Life Support Ambulance and Southern Trinity Area Rescue (STAR) provide ambulance services, while the TCSD maintains an active Search and Rescue Team.

Telephone Service

Trinity County residents receive telephone service through AT&T [formerly SBC] and Happy Valley Phone Company, cellular telephone service is provided by Verizon Wireless and Cal North Cellular. At the present time, no high-speed or fiber optic services are available in the county, and cellular telephone service is limited to select areas (e.g., Weaverville, Junction City.) In some remote areas, satellite service is the only communication option available to customers.

Electrical Service

Trinity Public Utilities District serves most of Trinity County.

Schools

Due to the remote location and isolation of some residents, bus service to Trinity High School is provided for residents throughout the project vicinity. Bus routes for Trinity High School include SR 299, Highway 3, and miscellaneous county roads. Douglas City Elementary School District also provides bus services for local residents.

Local Setting

Douglas City Community Plan Area

The Douglas City Community Plan covers approximately 35 square miles (22,400 acres) centered on the Trinity River from Grass Valley Creek to an area known as Steiner Flat, downstream of Douglas City. The Douglas City Community Services District (DCCSD) serves the 19 square miles around the Douglas City core community area; the only concentrated residential area in the Plan Area not serviced by the DCCSD is Poker Bar (Trinity County 1987).

Water Supply and Distribution

The Weaverville Community Services District (WCSD) supplies water to several residences and the 2 mobile home parks in the Plan area. There are 19 connections in the Plan area which serve multiple residences in the mobile home parks. There are nine connections in the Union Hill Road area. The Steiner Flat BLM campground is also served with WCSD water. However, there will be continued reliance on individual wells, springs and river intakes with future development because not all properties can be conveniently served by WCSD water.

Within the Plan Area, surface water is more frequently used for domestic purposes than is deep well water. Development of surface water tends to be less expensive than development of deep wells. Additionally, concentrations of minerals including iron, magnesium, and calcium have been reported in deep well water in portions of the Plan Area. Finally, competition between adjacent wells can decrease water availability. A large portion of the Plan Area (primarily Browns Creek Watershed, Weaver Creek Watershed, and the upper Indian Creek Watershed) is proposed to incorporate Critical Watershed Overlay Zoning to ensure that future land divisions in these areas must develop individual wells. This is to ensure adequate surface water for a variety of existing uses.

Aside from floodplain areas and the proposed industrial area on State Highway 3 (west of the project boundary), the topography of the Plan Area is generally sufficient to properly drain development sites with only minor modifications.

Surface Water

The Trinity River, Indian Creek and Weaver Creek are the primary surface water sources in the project boundary. These water bodies are subject to dramatic changes in flow on a reoccurring basis either from TRD operations or climatic variation. Residents within the project vicinity use these sources either through direct intakes or stilling wells that intercept shallow subsurface flow adjacent to the river channel. These developed sources are typically located within the active channel or floodplain and require a collection system, pump and distribution system.

Groundwater

Due to the location and nature of the terrain, groundwater levels respond to river stage. The levels typically fluctuate seasonally with river flows. Groundwater wells provide water for domestic and commercial purposes within the vicinity of the project area. All activity areas within the project boundary were located to ensure that these wells are avoided. Many residents within the community of Douglas City use groundwater as their primary or secondary water source.

Water Treatment Facilities

As stated above, WCSD supplies treated water to some commercial, agricultural and residential customers within the Plan Area. However many individual water systems are still present in areas unable to be served by WCSD.

Wastewater Collection and Treatment

There are no community facilities available for wastewater treatment within the Douglas City Plan Area. Septic tanks and drain fields generally provide adequate treatment at a local scale.

The ability of the land to accommodate on-site sewage disposal systems varies considerably throughout the Plan Area. Problem sites generally have one or more of the following constraints: high groundwater, steep slopes, shallow soils, or high clay content soils. Of continuing concern to the Trinity County Health Department is development within floodplain areas or on extensively mined areas. Previously created lots within floodplain areas are constrained by lack of soils (in mined areas), high groundwater, and insufficient area to allow for proper sanitary setbacks from watercourses and wells. Particular problem areas include the southerly end of Steel Bridge Road, which is located approximately 700 feet upstream of the eastern end of the project boundary.

Due to the reliance on individual sewage disposal systems as well as the importance of protecting water quality, densities within the Plan Area must remain fairly low. The Trinity County Health Department has specifically indicated that portions of the southerly end of Steel Bridge Road are severely restricted for future development due to high groundwater and poor soils.

Gas Supply and Distribution

Natural gas providers do not serve northern Trinity County. Liquefied propane gas and kerosene fuels are provided through distributors based in Weaverville and Redding to residents on a case-by-case basis.

Solid Waste Collection and Disposal

The County's single landfill was located in Weaverville, adjacent to the Lonnie Pool Airport. This landfill now operates as a transfer station. Solid waste is collected from transfer stations throughout the County and delivered to the Weaverville facility. From here, all material is transported to the Anderson-Cottonwood Disposal Service landfill in Anderson, California.

Law Enforcement

The TCSD provides law enforcement for the entire county. Resident officers are stationed throughout the county and serve as the primary contact point for local communities such as Douglas City.

Fire Protection

CDF has identified the Douglas City Plan Area as a high fire hazard area. The rural nature of this Plan Area and limited fire station locations results in relatively slow response times, particularly in winter.

Fire protection within or adjacent to the Plan Area is provided by the DCCVFD, CDF, and the Office of Emergency Services. The DCCVFD is the primary fire protection agency for structural fires; it maintains a fire station in the Douglas City core community area with two engines and a quick response vehicle with a 200-gallon slip-on tank. CDF is the primary fire protection agency for wildland fires, and maintains a fire station at Fawn Lodge (approximately 3.5 miles east of the project boundary) and a station in Weaverville (approximately 5 miles north of the project area).

The DCCVFD maintains a second fire station in the Poker Bar-Vitzhum Grade area that is supported by volunteers from the local response area. This station has one engine and a service truck located approximately 2 miles northeast of the project area.

Medical Services

There are no medical services in the community of Douglas City. The nearest medical clinic to Douglas City is a health clinic in Weaverville run by Trinity County Public Health Department. The nearest hospital to Douglas City is Mountain Community Medical Services (formerly Trinity Hospital) in Weaverville, which provides 24-hour emergency services. Trinity Life Support Ambulance, located in Weaverville, is the nearest medical emergency response team to Douglas City.

Telephone

Douglas City residents receive telephone service through AT&T [formerly SBC] and cellular phone service through Verizon Wireless and Cal North Cellular.

Electric

Trinity Public Utilities District serves most of Trinity County, including residences and businesses in Douglas City.

Schools

The Douglas City Plan Area has a student population of 202. Approximately 143 of these students attend Douglas City Elementary School and 59 attend Trinity High School in Weaverville.

3.17.2 RELEVANT PLANS AND POLICIES

Trinity County General Plan Goals and Objectives

The Trinity County General Plan contains goals and policies designed to guide the future physical development of the county, based on current conditions. The General Plan contains all the state-required elements, including community development and design, transportation, natural resources, health and safety, noise, housing, recreation, economic development, public facilities and services, and air quality. The following goals and policies related to public service and utility issues associated with the Proposed Action and alternatives were taken from the applicable elements of the General Plan, including the Douglas City Community Plan (Trinity County 1987).

Douglas City Community Plan Goals and Objectives

The Douglas City Community Plan covers approximately 35 square miles (22,400 acres) centered on the Trinity River from Grass Valley Creek to an area known as Steiner Flat, downstream of Douglas City.

Goal: To guide development in such a manner that an acceptable balance is achieved between the costs for public facilities and services and revenues or improvements required of new developments.

- Encourage development within or adjacent to areas already served with public facilities or services.

- Discourage development which requires expensive facilities or long-range service costs unless an adequate funding source can be assured.

Public Services and Facilities

Goal: Maintain as a priority, the existing level of public services and improvements within areas of the community already served.

- Coordinate road improvements and maintenance activities with the Douglas City Community Service District to ensure all season access to existing and future fire stations.

Project Consistency with the Trinity County General Plan and Community Plans

The goals and objectives described in Chapter 1 are generally compatible with the applicable General Plan goals and policies summarized above. The overall goal of the Proposed Action is to rehabilitate the sites so that they function in a manner that is closer to historic conditions (i.e., pre-Lewiston Dam). The project would not increase a demand for public services (e.g., utilities, emergency services) within the project area.

3.17.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES/IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Methodology

The analysis addresses potential impacts from implementation of the project on the following public services and facilities: water supply and distribution; wastewater collection and treatment; law enforcement; solid waste collection and disposal; fire protection; telephone service; electric service; and schools. The analysis qualitatively addresses potential impacts to energy resources due to substantial or wasteful energy use during project construction. The analysis is based on a review of planning documents applicable to the project area, telephone communication with various agencies, and field reconnaissance.

Significance Criteria

A project would normally have a significant impact on public services or utilities under CEQA if it would

- not comply with published national, state, or local statutes, regulations, or standards relating to solid waste;
- interfere with emergency services;
- degrade the level of service of a public service or utility;
- require relocating infrastructure;
- result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of, or 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 fire protection, police protection, schools, parks, or other public services;

- require substantial improvements to the infrastructure or level of staffing of a public service or utility to maintain its existing level of service;
- require or result in the construction of new water treatment, wastewater treatment, or storm water drainage facilities, or the expansion of such existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects;
- be served by a landfill without sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project’s solid waste disposal needs;
- disrupt utilities service to create a public health hazard or extended service disruption; or
- encourage activities that result in the use of large amounts of fuel or energy, or would use fuel or energy in a wasteful manner.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Table 3.17-1 summarizes the potential impacts on public services and utilities that could result from implementation of the project.

TABLE 3.17-1
 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC SERVICES AND UTILITIES IMPACTS FOR THE NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE, PROPOSED ACTION, ALTERNATIVE 1, AND ALTERNATIVE 2 { TC "Table 3.17-1 Summary of Public Services and Utilities Impacts" \f B \l "1" }

No-Action Alternative	Proposed Action	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Proposed Action with Mitigation	Alternative 1 with Mitigation	Alternative 2 with Mitigation
3.17-1. Implementation of the project could potentially disrupt existing electrical and phone service during the construction phase.						
NI	NI	NI	NI	N/A ¹	N/A ¹	N/A ¹
3.17-2. Construction of the project could result in the generation of increased solid waste.						
NI	LS	LS	LS	N/A ¹	N/A ¹	N/A ¹
3.17-3. Implementation of the project could result in disruption to emergency services or disruption to school bus routes or student travel routes during the construction phase.						
NI	S	S	S	LS	LS	LS
3.17-4. Construction of the project could result in a substantial use of nonrenewable energy resources.						
NI	LS	LS	LS	N/A ¹	N/A ¹	N/A ¹

Notes:
 LS = Less than Significant S = Significant
 NI = No Impact N/A = Not Applicable
¹Because this potential impact is less than significant, no mitigation is required.

Impact 3.17-1: Implementation of the project could disrupt existing electrical and phone service during the construction phase. *No Impact for the No-Action Alternative, Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2*

No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, no construction-related disruption to existing electrical or telephone service would occur because the project would not be implemented.

Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

Under the Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2, no activities would occur to disrupt electrical or telephone service in the project area. Although power poles and phone lines are located within the site boundary (power lines cross the Trinity River in the central portion of the site and a Verizon phone line is buried in the eastern portion of the site), project activity areas have been designed to avoid impacts to these features. Thus, no impacts to existing electrical or telephone service are anticipated to occur as a result of the Proposed Action, Alternative 1, or Alternative 2.

Mitigation Measures

No-Action Alternative, Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

Since no significant impact was identified for the alternatives, no mitigation is required.

Significance after Mitigation: N/A

Impact 3.17-2: Construction of the project could result in the generation of increased solid waste. *No Impact for the No-Action Alternative; Less-than-Significant Impact for the Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2*

No-Action Alternative

Increased quantities of solid waste would not be generated under the No-Action Alternative because there would be no construction activities.

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, construction would result in the generation of solid waste associated with the removal of substantial amounts of vegetation and other construction-related waste (e.g., garbage, cans, buckets). Vegetative materials (e.g., stumps, roots, branches) would be disposed of within the site boundary. Disposal methods may include vegetative chipping to provide mulch, burial, piled for wildlife habitat on site, burned, or left in the floodplain to provide structural habitat for juvenile fish. Solid waste generated by construction activities will be disposed of at an authorized location; either the Weaverville transfer or transported by truck to a landfill located in Anderson, California. The Anderson landfill currently has sufficient capacity and the necessary permits to accommodate construction waste that is non-hazardous. The contractor would be responsible for determining appropriate disposal sites for any hazardous waste. Disposal of potentially hazardous waste is evaluated in Section 3.15, Hazardous Materials.

Alternative 1

Under Alternative 1, construction would result in the generation of the same types of solid waste as the Proposed Action although some increase in vegetative material may be associated with construction of the access road south from Union Hill Road.

Alternative 2

Under Alternative 2, construction would result in the generation of the same types of solid waste as the Proposed Action, but the amounts of vegetation and construction-related waste would be slightly lower since the R-1, U-1, and U-2 activity areas would be excluded.

Mitigation Measures

No-Action Alternative, Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

Since no significant impact was identified, no mitigation is required.

Significance after Mitigation: N/A.

Impact 3.17-3: Implementation of the project may result in disruption to emergency services or disruption to school bus routes or student travel routes during the construction phase. ***No Impact for the No-Action Alternative; Significant Impact for the Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2***

No-Action Alternative

Since there would be no construction activities associated with implementation of the No-Action Alternative, there would not be any disruption to emergency services, school bus routes, or student travel routes.

Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

Although construction activities associated with the Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2 would be confined to the project boundary described in Chapter 2, access for mobilization and demobilization of heavy equipment may require traffic control for SR 299, Union Hill Road, and River Ranch Road. Traffic control would be minimal. In addition, construction personnel and service vehicles would use designated routes throughout the construction phase. Any potential road/bridge closures would be implemented during non-peak hours to avoid traffic circulation impacts. However, a closure, even during non-peak hours (i.e., 11:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.) could have the potential to significantly decrease response time for law enforcement, fire protection, and other emergency services. This would be considered a significant impact.

In the event that road closures would be required during the school year (mid-August through mid-June), these closures would occur only during non-peak hours, consistent with the requirements outlined in Section 3.16 and Section 3.17 and in coordination with the appropriate school district to avoid disruption of student access to bus service.

Mitigation Measures

No-Action Alternative

Since no significant impact was identified, no mitigation is required.

Significance after Mitigation: N/A

Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

- 3a. Reclamation shall stipulate in the contract specifications for construction that the contractor must stage construction work and temporary closures in a manner that will allow for access by emergency service providers.
- 3b. Reclamation shall stipulate in the contract specifications that the contractor must provide 72-hour notice to the local emergency providers (i.e., TCSD, CDF, DCCVFD , and Trinity Life Support Ambulance) prior to the start of temporary closures.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than Significant.

Impact 3.17-4: Construction of the proposed project could result in a substantial use of nonrenewable energy resources. **No Impact for the No-Action Alternative; Less-than-Significant Impact for the Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2**

No-Action Alternative

No use of nonrenewable energy resources would occur under the No-Action Alternative because construction activities would not occur.

Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

Energy expenditures associated with construction under the Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2 would include both direct and indirect uses of energy. Combustion of the refined petroleum products needed to operate construction equipment would be part of the direct energy use. Indirect energy use typically represents about three-quarters of total construction energy usage, with direct energy use comprising the remaining quarter. Though construction energy would be consumed only during the construction phase, it would represent irreversible consumption of finite natural energy resources.

Construction would consume fuel and electricity, along with indirect energy for materials used in construction. Fuel would be consumed by both construction equipment and construction-worker vehicle trips. Electricity would be used by construction equipment, such as welding machines, power tools, and pumps. Energy consumed by construction power equipment would be relatively minimal.

Construction energy consumption would be a short-term impact and would not be an ongoing drain on finite natural resources. Alternative 2 would use slightly less energy than the Proposed Action during the construction phase since there would be slightly less earthwork under this alternative. Construction under the Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2 would consume energy primarily in the form of fuel and electricity and would not have a significant effect on local or regional energy sources. Energy

consumption by construction activities would be a less-than-significant impact, and mitigation is not required.

Mitigation Measures

No-Action Alternative, Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

Since no significant impact was identified, no mitigation is required.

Significance after Mitigation: N/A

3.18 Transportation and Traffic Circulation

This section addresses transportation and traffic issues related to implementation of the Indian Creek Rehabilitation Site: Trinity River Mile 93.7–96.5. The following evaluation is based on a review of local transportation plans and policies, as well as field reconnaissance to document current local roadway conditions.

3.18.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Regional Setting

Regional Roadway Network

The USFS Scenic Byways program was developed to provide alternative uses of national forest lands while meeting the public demand for scenic driving tours on safe, well-maintained roads within or near the boundaries of national forests. Trinity County currently has two Scenic Byways, the Trinity Scenic Byway along SR 299 and the Siskiyou-Trinity Scenic Byway along SR 3 and SR 36. SR 299 was designated the Trinity Scenic Byway in October 1991. It enters Trinity County from the east over Buckhorn summit, descending toward the Trinity River at Douglas City. Following Weaver Creek to Weaverville and then climbing Oregon Mountain, it rejoins the river at Junction City and follows the Trinity River Gorge into Humboldt County. SR 3, historically called the Trinity Heritage Scenic Byway, has recently been renamed the Siskiyou-Trinity Scenic Byway. It extends south from Montague in Siskiyou County through the Scott River Valley and enters Trinity County over the Scott Mountain summit, 55 miles north of Weaverville. It bisects the Salmon–Trinity Alps, past Trinity Lake before continuing on to Weaverville, then south through Hayfork to the end of the highway at its junction with SR 36. This scenic byway continues along SR 36 through Forest Glen before continuing into Humboldt County (Center for Economic Development 2001).

The Douglas City community is a collection of residential and commercial areas connected by SR 299. Steiner Flat Road, Riverview Road, Union Hill Road, River Ranch Road, and Steel Bridge Road are all within the vicinity of the rehabilitation site and are part of the Trinity County road system.

Local Setting

SR 299 provides access to the rehabilitation site on the left side of the Trinity River. Activity areas (i.e., riverine, upland, staging/spoils areas, and crossings) are all located within the project boundary as shown on Figures 2-1a and 2-1b in Chapter 2.

River Ranch Road provides access to activity areas located along the left side of the river, whereas Union Hill Road provides access to activity areas located along the right side of the river. Figure 3.18-1 shows the local roadways within the vicinity of the project. Table 3.18-1 characterizes the roadways that are required to access the project site.

TABLE 3.18-1
 ROADWAY CHARACTERISTICS FOR ACCESS ROADS REQUIRED FOR THE PROJECT{ TC "Table 3.18-1 Roadway Characteristics for Access Roads to the Project Boundary" \F B \L "1" }

Road Name	Ownership	Roadway Class	Number of Lanes	Surface Type	Curb Shoulder	Pedestrian Walkway	Traffic Counts (ADT)	Cross Streets
SR 299	State of California	Highway/ Scenic Byway	2-3	Paved	Yes	No	1,675	River Ranch Road, SR 3, Union Hill Road
River Ranch Road	Trinity County	Local/ residential	1	Chip seal	Earth shoulder	No	< 50	SR 299
Union Hill Road	Trinity County	Local/ residential	1-2	Chip seal	Earth shoulder	No	106	SR 299

Sources:
 Caltrans Information: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/traffops/saferesr/trafdata/2003>
 Taggart, pers. comm. 2006.

Designated Truck Routes

SR 299 is a designated truck route between the Sacramento Valley and the coastal communities of northern California. It is the main access corridor to Trinity County and provides primary access to the Trinity River. Union Hill Road provides access to residential areas and industrial timberlands, both federal and private. River Ranch Road provides access to residential and commercial properties. Apart from SR 299, these roads are not designated truck routes and are not designed for heavy truck traffic.

Public Health

No public health programs or private meals programs for seniors (i.e., Meals on Wheels) or disabled persons currently serve residents in the Douglas City community.

Bikeways/Pedestrian Circulation

Bikeways and pedestrian circulation is limited within the project boundary. The transportation element of the Douglas City Community Plan (Trinity County 1987) contains goals to increase bicycle, pedestrian, and equestrian travel within the planning area; however, these goals have not yet been implemented.

Parking

There is one designated public park and ride area located at the Junction of SR 299 and Steiner Flat Road. A semi-developed parking area is provided by CDFG adjacent to the Trinity River, immediately downstream of Indian Creek (R-3).

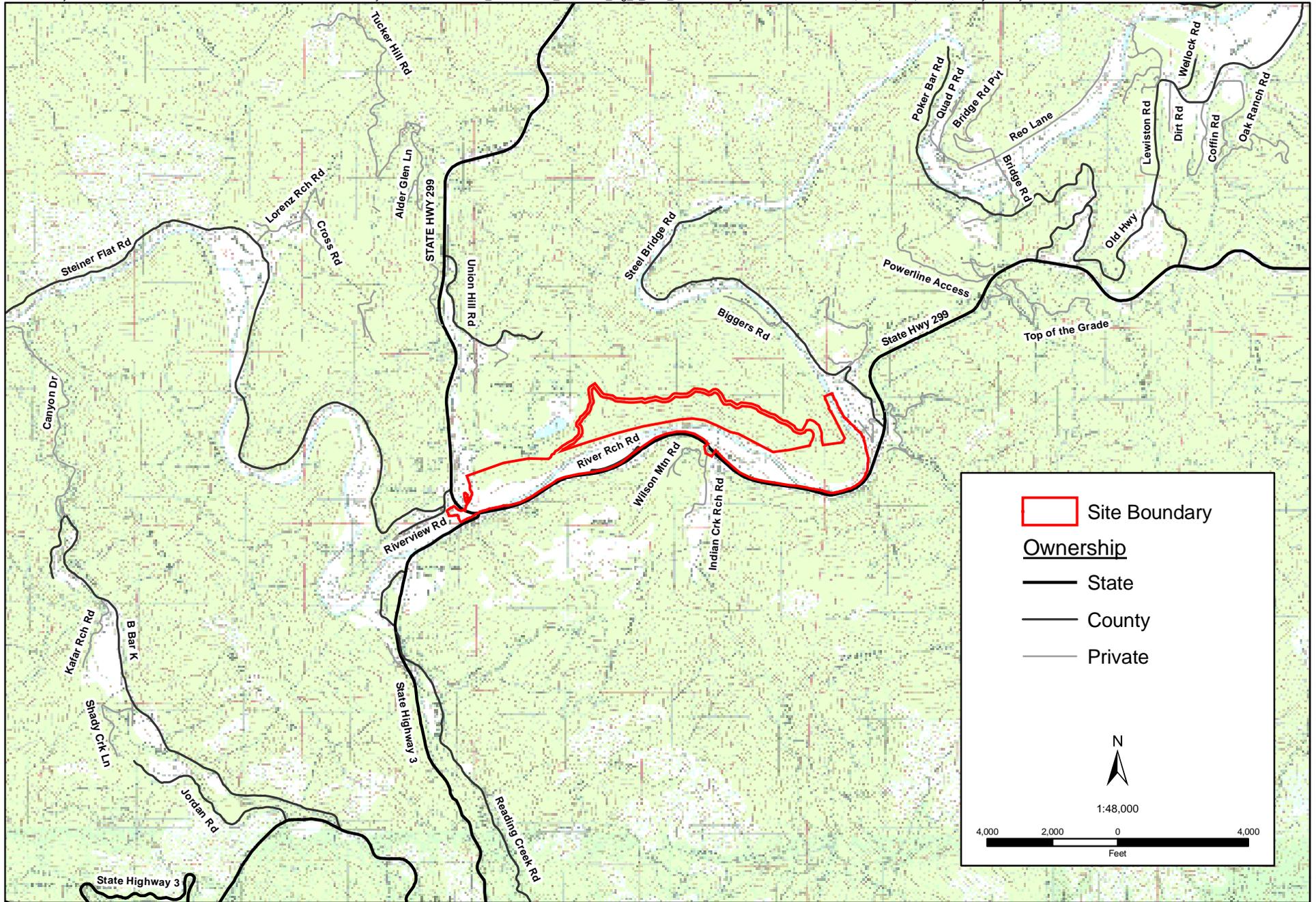


Figure 3.18-1
Local Roadways

3.18.2 REGULATORY SETTING

Trinity County General Plan Goals and Objectives

The Trinity County General Plan contains goals and policies designed to guide the future physical development of the county, based on current conditions. The General Plan contains all the state-required elements, including community development and design, transportation, natural resources, health and safety, noise, housing, recreation, economic development, public facilities and services, and air quality. The following goals and policies related to transportation/traffic issues associated with the Proposed Action, were taken from the applicable elements of the General Plan (Trinity County 2001), including the Douglas City Community Plan (Trinity County 1987).

Circulation Element

The Circulation Element contains the following goal associated with non-motorized transportation.

Goal: To increase bicycle and pedestrian travel by developing a safe and convenient system of bicycle routes, trails, storage facilities and pedestrian walkways, connecting all of Trinity County's major activity centers.

Douglas City Community Plan Goals and Objectives

The Douglas City Community Plan covers approximately 35 square miles (22,400 acres) centered on the Trinity River from Grass Valley Creek to an area known as Steiner Flat, downstream of Douglas City.

Transportation

Goal: To provide a roadway system which effectively, efficiently and safely services transportation.

Goal: To coordinate the transportation and circulation system with planned uses.

- Develop roadway systems, which are compatible with the areas they serve.
- Coordination of public agency development of river access points and trails with their circulation systems.

Public Services and Facilities

Goal: Maintain as a priority, the existing level of public services and improvements within areas of the community already served.

- Coordinate road improvements and maintenance activities with the Douglas City Community Services District (DCCSD) to ensure all season access to existing and future fire stations.

Project Consistency with the Trinity County General Plan

This section compares the goals and objectives of the Proposed Action to the relevant local planning policies (i.e., Trinity County General Plan, Douglas City Community Plan) to determine if there are any inconsistencies.

The following project objectives apply to the lead/responsible agencies for CEQA purposes:

- Provide safe and reasonable access to the site for project planning, implementation, and monitoring.
- Develop partnerships with willing participants, and encourage positive landowner interest and involvement.

California Department of Transportation Regulations

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) requires an encroachment permit to be issued for trucks and other project-related traffic to use SR 299 under certain circumstances. If trucks are using access roads near sharp corners or corners with poor visibility for oncoming traffic, or if the angle of access requires vehicles to pull into oncoming traffic to properly make a turn onto the highway, an encroachment permit is required from Caltrans. These conditions may likely apply to activities on the left side of the Trinity River. Flaggers, spotters with radios, or temporary signs may be necessary.

3.18.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES/IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Methodology

A qualitative assessment of traffic impacts was performed, based on the construction procedures and equipment that will be used, local transportation policies, site review of existing conditions, and traffic levels on key roadways.

Significance Criteria

Significance criteria were developed based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, as well as project-specific issues identified during the scoping process (i.e., access during construction). For the project, significant construction-related impacts would result if the project would:

- cause an increase in traffic that is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume-to-capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections);
- exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county for designated roads or highways;
- affect the form or function of SR 299, specifically the bridges extending over Indian Creek and the Trinity River;
- disrupt existing traffic operations, including vehicular and bicycle traffic;
- significantly degrade the existing conditions of local private roads;
- obstruct access to adjacent land uses, including emergency access;
- affect the operation of the local transit system;
- pose a safety hazard to motorists, bicyclists, or pedestrians;
- cause substantial damage to or wear of public and private roadways; or
- reduce available parking capacity.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Table 3.18-2 summarizes the potential transportation/traffic impacts that would result from implementation of the project.

TABLE 3.18-2
 SUMMARY OF TRANSPORTATION IMPACTS FOR THE NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE, PROPOSED PROJECT, ALTERNATIVE 1 AND ALTERNATIVE 2 { TC "Table 3.18-2 Summary of Transportation Impacts" \F B \L "1" }

No-Action Alternative	Proposed Action	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Proposed Action with Mitigation	Alternative 1 with Mitigation	Alternative 2 with Mitigation
3.18-1. Construction activities would reduce/close existing traffic lanes.						
NI	LS	LS	LS	N/A ¹	N/A ¹	N/A ¹
3.18-2. Construction activities would generate short-term increases in vehicle trips.						
NI	LS	LS	LS	N/A ¹	N/A ¹	N/A ¹
3.18-3. Implementation of the project would obstruct access to adjacent land uses.						
NI	S	S	S	LS	LS	LS
3.18-4. Construction activities would increase local roadway wear-and-tear.						
NI	LS	LS	LS	N/A ¹	N/A ¹	N/A ¹
3.18-5. Construction activities could pose a safety hazard to motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians.						
NI	S	S	S	LS	LS	LS
3.18-6. Affect the form or function of SR 299, specifically the Douglas City Bridge extending over the Trinity River.						
NI	LS	LS	LS	N/A ¹	N/A ¹	N/A ¹

Notes:
 LS = Less than Significant S = Significant
 NI = No Impact N/A = Not Applicable
¹Because this potential impact is less than significant, no mitigation is required.

Impact 3.18-1: Construction activities would reduce/close existing traffic lanes. *No Impact for the No-Action Alternative; Less-than-Significant Impact for the Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2*

No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, there will be no construction-related reduction or closure of traffic lanes.

Proposed Action and Alternative 2

Project construction activities associated with the Proposed Action or Alternative 2 would be managed to ensure that SR 299 and River Ranch Road remain open to through traffic, although traffic control may be necessary during the mobilization and demobilization of heavy equipment. No road closures are

anticipated; therefore, passage for emergency vehicles would not be restricted. The adequate passage of traffic within and through the construction area in the event of an emergency evacuation is discussed in Section 3.15, Hazards and Hazardous Materials. Because any traffic control requirements associated with project access roads would be temporary, this impact is considered less than significant.

Alternative 1

Project construction activities associated with Alternative 1 would be managed to ensure that SR 299, Union Hill Road, and River Ranch Road remain open to through traffic, although traffic control may be necessary during the mobilization and demobilization of heavy equipment. No road closures are anticipated; therefore, passage for emergency vehicles would not be restricted. The adequate passage of traffic within and through the construction area in the event of an emergency evacuation is discussed in Section 3.15, Hazards and Hazardous Materials. Because any traffic control requirements associated with project access roads would be temporary, this impact is considered less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No-Action Alternative, Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

Since no significant impact was identified, no mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation: N/A.

Impact 3.18-2: Construction activities would generate short-term increases in vehicle trips. No Impact for the No-Action Alternative; Less-than-Significant Impact for the Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, short-term increases in vehicle trips would not occur because there would be no construction activities.

Proposed Action and Alternative 2

Construction activities would require a number of truck and worker vehicle trips on area roads leading to and from the construction areas, including SR 299 and River Ranch Road. Heavy equipment (e.g., large trucks, excavators, back-hoes, etc.) would be mobilized to the construction sites at the beginning of work and removed at the end of work at each site. During the construction period when the greatest number of workers and trucks would be required, up to 20 construction workers and their vehicles would need access to the site daily. These vehicle trips would be added to area roads on a daily basis. Throughout construction, Reclamation shall limit the amount of daily construction equipment traffic by staging most construction equipment and vehicles within the project boundary for the duration of work. Post-construction activities (i.e., revegetation, maintenance and monitoring) would require intermittent access for 3 to 5 years, depending on the success of natural revegetation. Because the existing traffic volumes along SR 299 are moderate and the increase in traffic from construction on other area roads would be relatively minor and temporary, increased traffic associated with construction activities is considered a less-than-significant impact.

Alternative 1

Construction activities would require a number of truck and worker vehicle trips on area roads leading to and from the construction areas, including SR 299, Union Hill Road, and River Ranch Road. Heavy equipment (e.g., large trucks, excavators, back-hoes, etc.) would be mobilized to the construction sites at the beginning of work and removed at the end of work at each site. During the construction period when the greatest number of workers and trucks would be required, up to 20 construction workers and their vehicles would need access to the site daily. These vehicle trips would be added to area roads on a daily basis. Throughout construction, Reclamation shall limit the amount of daily construction equipment traffic by staging most construction equipment and vehicles within the project boundary for the duration of work. Post-construction activities (i.e., revegetation, maintenance and monitoring) would require intermittent access for 3 to 5 years, depending on the success of natural revegetation. Because the existing traffic volumes along SR 299 are moderate and the increase in traffic from construction on other area roads would be relatively minor and temporary, increased traffic associated with construction activities is considered a less-than-significant impact.

Mitigation Measures

No-Action Alternative, Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

Since no significant impact was identified, no mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation: N/A.

Impact 3.18-3: Implementation of the project would affect access to adjacent land uses. ***No Impact for the No-Action Alternative; Significant Impact for the Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2***

No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, access to adjacent land uses would not be affected because no construction activities would occur.

Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

As described in Section 3.2, land uses in and adjacent to the rehabilitation site consist mainly of residential areas. No residences occupy the right bank of the Trinity River. Residences and two businesses are present on the left bank within the project boundary. As previously described, construction activities associated with the left side of Trinity River would use primary access points on SR 299. Access to adjacent lands may be restricted if traffic control measures are being used. This would constitute a significant impact. Recreational access to the Trinity River would be restricted within the project boundary on both sides of the river during the construction period; however, several public access points are available adjacent to the project boundary, both upstream and downstream. Impacts relating to recreational activities are discussed under Section 3.8, Recreation.

Mitigation Measures

No-Action Alternative

Since no significant impact was identified, no mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation: N/A

Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

- 3a.** Construction bid documents will require that access be maintained throughout the construction period for all private residences and commercial properties within, or immediately adjacent to, the project boundary, including access roads on the left side of Trinity River.
- 3b.** During the construction phase of the project, Reclamation shall limit the amount of daily construction equipment traffic by staging most construction equipment and vehicles within the project boundary throughout the work period.

Significance After Mitigation: Less than Significant

Impact 3.18-4: Construction activities would increase wear-and-tear on local roadways. *No Impact for the No-Action Alternative; Less than Significant Impact for the Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2*

No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, there would be no wear-and-tear on local roadways because no construction activities would occur.

Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

Under the Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2, construction-related traffic that would be added to area roads would consist of heavy trucks. However, movement of heavy equipment via SR 299 would be minimal because construction equipment (e.g., large trucks, excavators, backhoes) would be mobilized to the project site at the beginning of work and removed at the end of work. Because SR 299 is designed to accommodate a mix of vehicle types, including heavy trucks, the project is not expected to add significantly to roadway wear-and-tear on SR 299. The impacts of the project related to wear-and-tear on SR 299 would therefore be less than significant.

Because of the planning that has occurred to minimize heavy equipment use on the rural roads needed to access the site—River Ranch Road and Union Hill Road—the project is not expected to significantly add to roadway wear-and-tear on these roads. The impacts of the project related to wear-and-tear on rural roads in the project vicinity would therefore be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No-Action Alternative, Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

Since no significant impact was identified, no mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation: N/A.

Impact 3.18-5: Construction activities could pose a safety hazard to motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. *No Impact for the No-Action Alternative; Significant Impact for the Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2*

No-Action Alternative

The No-Action Alternative would not pose a safety hazard to motorists, bicyclists, or pedestrians because there would be no construction activities.

Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

Traffic safety hazards could arise for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists in the vicinity of the construction access routes when heavy construction equipment is entering or leaving the project site. Access to the Trinity River may be limited to identified routes during construction activities to minimize public exposure to construction traffic. Trucks entering and exiting the access road off SR 299 may pose a temporary hazard to cyclists and motorists using the roadway. Although this impact would be limited to brief and intermittent time periods, it is considered significant.

Mitigation Measures

No-Action Alternative

Since no significant impact was identified, no mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation: N/A.

Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

- 5a Reclamation shall include provisions in the contract specifications that require the construction contractor to prepare and implement a traffic control plan that would include provision and maintenance of temporary access through the construction zone, reduction in speed limits through the construction zone, signage and appropriate traffic control devices, illumination during hours of darkness or limited visibility, use of safety clothing/vests to ensure visibility of construction workers by motorists, and fencing as appropriate to separate pedestrians and bicyclists from construction activities.

Significance After Mitigation: Less than Significant

Impact 3.18-6: Construction activities could affect the form or function of SR 299, specifically the Douglas City Bridge extending over the Trinity River. ***No Impact for the No-Action Alternative; Less-Than-Significant Impact for the Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2***

No-Action Alternative

The No-Action Alternative would not pose a safety hazard to motorists, bicyclists, or pedestrians because there would be no construction activities.

Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

SR 299 and the Douglas City Bridge will be used to access treatment areas during construction; however, no modification of the form or function of either structure will occur as a result of project implementation. Therefore, the form and function of SR 99, including the Douglas City Bridge would not be affected as a result of the project.

Mitigation Measures

No-Action Alternative, Proposed Action, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2

Since no significant impact was identified, no mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation: N/A.