

**NOTICE OF EXEMPTION****TO:**

- ☒ **Office of Planning and Research**  
PO Box 3044  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044
- ☒ **Siskiyou County Clerk**  
510 N. Main St.  
Yreka, CA 96097

**FROM:**

**City of Dunsmuir**  
5915 Dunsmuir Avenue  
Dunsmuir, CA 96025

**Project Title: Hedge Creek Falls Trail Improvements Project**

**Project Location:**

As shown in **Figure 1**, the proposed Project is located within the City of Dunsmuir city limits in Section 13, Township 39N, Range 4W, of the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) Dunsmuir 7.5-minute quadrangle. The parking area for the trail is located on the southeast side of Mott Road, immediately east of Siskiyou Avenue. The trailhead is located on the northwest side of Mott Road.

**City:** Dunsmuir

**County:** Siskiyou

The Project includes improvements and minor modifications to the existing Hedge Creek Falls Trail. The purpose of the Project is to provide ADA accessibility. Proposed improvements include:

- Moving the trailhead south of its current location and realigning the trail west of an existing gazebo (±250 linear feet)
- Installing a drinking fountain drain downslope of the gazebo
- Cutting back an existing culvert (utilized/maintained by Caltrans), and installing rip-rap in the stream channel
- Installing a free-span pedestrian bridge immediately downslope of the above referenced culvert
- Installing a retaining wall (±105 linear feet) to achieve the necessary grade for switchback construction to the east
- Extending two switchbacks located midway between the trailhead and the falls (±270 linear feet)
- Replacing a failed traction mat immediately south of the falls with crushed basalt (±50 linear feet); supplementing existing dacite rock behind and immediately north of the falls with crushed basalt (±105 linear feet)
- Re-routing the trail east of the viewing platform (±165 linear feet)
- Installing a retaining wall immediately east of the viewing platform, which will serve to raise the trail so it is flush with the platform (the current platform includes steps)
- Extending the trail from its current terminus near the viewing platform downslope to the Sacramento River (±245 linear feet)
- Restoring abandoned trail segments to original grade and overtopping with forest duff and branches for sediment/erosion control

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** City of Dunsmuir

**Name of Person/Agency Carrying out the Project:** Mt. Shasta Trail Association

**Local Agency Contact Person:** Todd Juhasz, City Manager. 530.235.4822 x103

**Exempt Status: Categorical Exemption:**

California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3 (CEQA Guidelines):

Class 1, §15301 (Existing Facilities)

Class 3, §15303 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures)

Class 4, §15304 (Minor Alterations to Land)

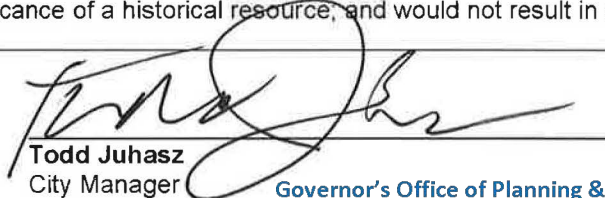
**Reason Why Project Is Exempt:**

Class 1 includes the repair, maintenance, or minor alteration of existing public facilities, including pedestrian trails and topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use; Class 3 includes the construction and location of limited numbers of new, small structures; and Class 4 includes minor alterations in the condition of land that do not involve removal of healthy, mature, or scenic trees, including minor trenching and backfilling where the surface is restored.

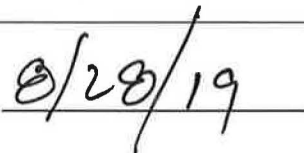
The Project is consistent with the categorical exemptions noted above because work would consist of repair, maintenance, and minor alterations to the existing trail; no expansion of use would occur; the pedestrian bridge and retaining walls are considered small structures; no healthy, mature, scenic trees would be removed; and the ground surface would be restored following construction.

As documented in **Attachment A**, the proposed Project would not have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances; would not result in damage to scenic resources within a Scenic Highway; is not located on a hazardous waste site pursuant to §65962.5 of the Government Code; would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource; and would not result in cumulative impacts.

Signature:

  
Todd Juhasz  
City Manager

Date:



Governor's Office of Planning & Research

**AUG 28 2019**

Date Received for Filing at OPR:

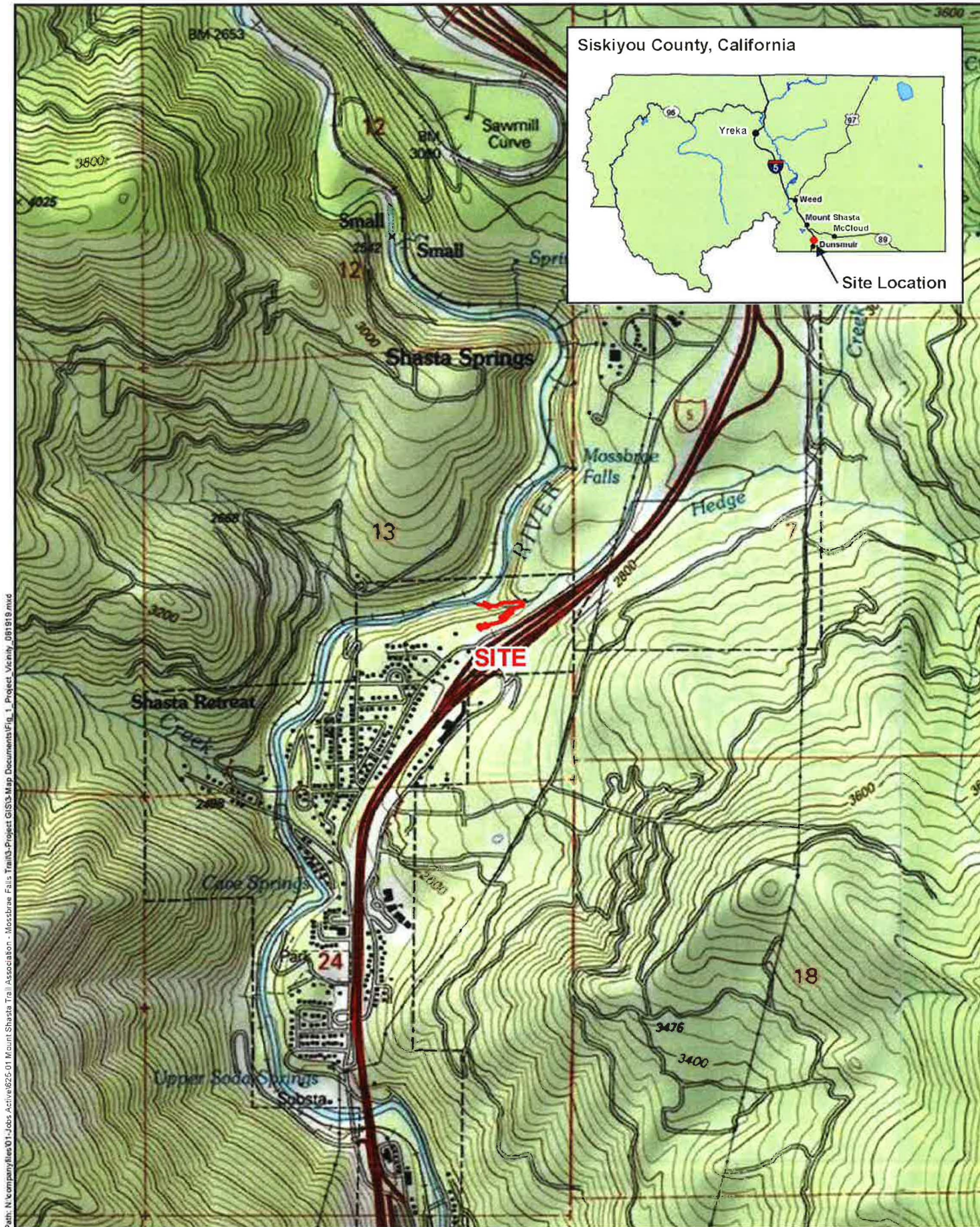
**STATE CLEARINGHOUSE**

**Attachments:**

Figure 1: Project Vicinity and Location

Attachment A: Documentation in Support of a Categorical Exemption





Path: N:\comp\p\l\01-Jobs Active\025-01 Mount Shasta Trail Association - Mossbridge Falls Trail\GIS\Map Documents\Fig\_1\_Project\_Vicinity\_081919.mxd



0 2,000 Feet

Figure 1  
Project Vicinity

All depictions are approximate. Not a survey product.

08.19.19

ENPLAN



# ATTACHMENT A

## Documentation in Support of a Categorical Exemption

### Hedge Creek Falls Trail Improvements

As described in the Notice of Exemption (NOE), the proposed Project is categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to §15301 (Class 1-Existing Facilities); §15303 (Class 3-New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures); and §15304 (Class 4-Minor Alterations to Land) of the CEQA Guidelines. CEQA Guidelines §15300.2 identifies exceptions that override a lead agency's ability to use a categorical exemption. These exceptions are listed below, followed by documentation of why each exception does not apply to the proposed Project.

**1. Cumulative Impact.** *All exemptions are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time, is significant.*

The Project involves improvements and minor modifications to the existing Hedge Creek Falls Trail. Although similar improvements are proposed to the Mossbrae Falls Trail on the opposite side of the Sacramento River, the projects would not be constructed concurrently, and impacts for both projects would be temporary and cease at completion of the improvements. Therefore, the proposed Project's impacts would not be cumulatively considerable.

**2. Significant Effect.** *A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.*

An "unusual circumstance" exists if the project's circumstances differ from the general circumstances of projects covered by the applicable exemption, and, if so, whether there is a reasonable possibility of a significant effect on the environment *due to* the unusual circumstances. As documented below, there are no unusual circumstances that would preclude a categorical exemption for the proposed Project.

**Aesthetics:**

The proposed trail improvements include construction of a small ground-level free-span pedestrian bridge and two small retaining walls that are necessary to achieve the necessary grade while minimizing earth disturbance. These structures would be designed to complement the natural environment. Although a few small trees would need to be removed to construct the trail extension to the river, no mature, scenic trees would be removed. Abandoned trail segments would be restored to original grade and would be overtopped with forest duff and branches to minimize visual impacts. There are no unusual circumstances associated with the Project in terms of aesthetics.

**Agriculture and Forest Resources:**

No agricultural land is located in the Project area. Although the Project site includes areas considered forest land and timberland, no mature trees would be removed to accommodate the proposed improvements.

**Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions:**

The proposed Project would result in the temporary generation of ROG, NO<sub>x</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub>, and other regulated pollutants during construction. ROG and NO<sub>x</sub> emissions are associated with employee vehicle trips, delivery of materials, and construction equipment exhaust. PM<sub>10</sub> is generated during site preparation, excavation, road paving, and from exhaust associated with construction equipment. Construction activities are anticipated to be complete in 30 days. Due to the limited duration of construction activities, temporary impacts would be negligible. The Project does not include any components that would result in a long-term increase in emissions. There are no unusual circumstances associated with air quality that would preclude a categorical exemption for the proposed Project.

### **Biological Resources:**

The evaluation of potential impacts to special-status species and sensitive habitats was based on a records search and field observations. Records reviewed for the evaluation consisted of California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDB) records for special-status plants, animals, and natural communities; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) records for federally listed, proposed, and Candidate plant and animal species under jurisdiction of the USFWS; National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) records for anadromous fish species under the jurisdiction of the NMFS; soils records maintained by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service; and National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) maps.

#### ***Special-Status Plants***

USFWS records identify three special-status plant species with the potential to occur in the Project area: Gentner's fritillary, Hoover's spurge, and slender Orcutt grass. CNDDB records do not identify any special-status plants in the Project site.

CNDDB records identify seventeen special-status plant species with the potential to occur within a five-mile radius of the Project site: Aleppo avens, broad-nerved hump moss, Cascade grass-of-Parnassus, Castle Crags harebell, Castle Crags ivesia, Jepson's dodder, Klamath fawn lily, marsh skullcap, northern adder's tongue, Oregon fireweed, rattlesnake fern, Shasta chaenactis, Siskiyou clover, thread-leaved beardtongue, Waldo daisy, woodnymph, and woolly balsamroot. In addition, CNDDB records identify two non-special status plant species with the potential to occur within a five-mile radius of the Project site: Pacific fuzzwort and three-ranked hump moss.

#### ***Special-Status Animals***

USFWS records identify thirteen special-status animal species with the potential to occur in the Project area: fisher, gray wolf, North American wolverine, northern spotted owl, yellow-billed cuckoo, California red-legged frog, Oregon spotted frog, delta smelt, longfin smelt, valley elderberry longhorn beetle, conservancy fairy shrimp, vernal pool fairy shrimp, and vernal pool tadpole shrimp. According to NMFS, there are no anadromous fish in the Project area because Shasta and Keswick Dams block upstream passage to spawning areas in the upper Sacramento River.

CNDDB records show that thirteen special-status animal species have been reported within a five-mile radius of the Project site: American peregrine falcon, bank swallow, black swift, Cascades frog, fisher, foothill yellow-legged frog, northern goshawk, Pacific tailed frog, spotted bat, Suckley's cuckoo bumble bee, western bumble bee, western mastiff bat, and western yellow-billed cuckoo. In addition, CNDDB records show that seven non-status animal species have been reported within the five-mile search radius: bilobed rhyacophilan caddisfly, Castle Crags rhyacophilan caddisfly, confusion caddisfly, Natural Bridge megomphix, North American porcupine, obscure bumble bee, and Pacific marten.

#### ***Botanical and Wildlife Surveys***

To determine the presence/absence of special-status plant and animal species, botanical and wildlife screening evaluations were completed by an ENPLAN biologist on April 12, 17, and 29, May 23, and June 11, 2019. Some of the special-status species potentially occurring in the Project area would not have been evident at the time the fieldwork was conducted. However, determination of their potential presence could readily be made based on observed habitat characteristics. No special-status species were identified during the field surveys, nor are any expected to be present.

#### ***Natural Communities***

USFWS does not identify any critical habitats in the project area. CNDDB records do not identify any sensitive natural communities in the Project area. Field review identified one perennial stream (Hedge Creek) and one unnamed intermittent stream in the Project site. Installation of rip-rap in the intermittent stream would impact 0.002 acres of the stream; however, this would have a beneficial effect and would improve water quality by stabilizing the eroding channel/banks and preventing further erosion. Supplementing/overtopping a segment of the trail with crushed basalt would affect 0.006 acres of the perennial stream; this also would have a beneficial effect by reducing the potential for sediment-laden water to discharge to the creek.

***Nesting Migratory Birds***

Construction activities would commence in October and be completed in about 30 days. Because work would occur outside of the nesting season, no impacts to nesting birds are anticipated.

**Energy**

The proposed Project does not include any components that would result in environmental impacts due to the wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources in the long-term. There are no unique circumstances related to energy use during construction of the proposed Project that would result in more significant impacts than other similar construction projects.

**Geology and Soils:**

According to the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map for Siskiyou County, the nearest Alquist-Priolo Special Study Zone to the Project area is the Rocky Ledge Fault Zone, approximately 38 miles to the southeast in the USGS Burney Falls quadrangle. No active or potentially active faults are identified in the study area. Soils on the Project sites are mapped by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as Ponto sandy loam, 2 to 15 percent slopes (286); Neer gravelly sandy loam, 50 to 75 percent slopes (257); Dunsmuir family, 15 to 40 percent slopes (50); and Neer gravelly sandy loam, 50 to 75 percent slopes (257im). These soil types are found throughout the Dunsmuir area and are not unique to the Project site.

**Hydrology and Water Quality:**

Construction activities would result in the temporary disturbance of soil and would expose disturbed areas to potential storm events, which could generate accelerated runoff, localized erosion, and sedimentation. However, this is a temporary impact during construction activities, and no long-term impacts would occur. Soil stabilization measures (e.g., covering disturbed areas with mulch, temporary seeding, use of soil binders, or installation of soil blankets) would be implemented to prevent damage to streams, watercourses, and aquatic habitats. Sediment control measures would include the use of silt fencing, fiber rolls, and/or erosion control blankets.

**Land Use and Planning:**

The Project includes improvements and minor modifications to an existing trail system. The Project does not include any components that would divide an established community. With implementation of applicable regulatory agency permit requirements, the Project would not conflict with any land use plan or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

**Mineral Resources:**

The California Geological Survey has not designated any Mineral Resource Zones in the study area. In addition, there are no properties in the Project area that are zoned for mining activities.

**Noise:**

Construction activities would generate noise and would temporarily increase noise levels in the area; however, there are no sensitive receptors in proximity to the Project site. The Project does not include any components that would result in a permanent increase in noise levels.

**Population and Housing:**

The Project does not include any components that would induce population growth.

**Public Services/Recreation:**

Because the Project would not induce population growth, the Project would not generate a demand for additional public services or recreational facilities.

**Transportation/Traffic:**

There would be short-term increases in traffic in the area associated with construction workers and equipment; however, this is a temporary impact that would cease at completion of the Project. Because the Project would not induce population growth, the Project would not directly or indirectly result in a permanent increase in traffic.

**Utilities and Service Systems:**

The Project would not require the relocation of sewer lines, electric facilities, storm drains, natural gas, or other utility infrastructure. The Project does not include any components that would result in an increased demand for water or wastewater treatment.

**Wildfire:**

The proposed Project does not include any development or improvements that would increase the long-term risk of wildland fires or expose people or structures to wildland fires. There are no unique circumstances associated with the proposed Project that would result in more significant impacts than other similar projects in the area.

**3. Scenic Highways.** *A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a State Scenic Highway.*

According to the California Scenic Highway Mapping System, there are no officially designated State Scenic Highways in the Project area; therefore, there would be no impact.

**4. Hazardous Waste Sites.** *A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to §65962.5 of the Government Code.*

The following databases were reviewed to locate "Cortese List" sites.

- List of Hazardous Waste and Substances sites from the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) EnviroStor database.
- SWRCB GeoTracker Database.
- List of solid waste disposal sites identified by SWRCB with waste constituents above hazardous waste levels outside the waste management unit.
- List of active Cease and Desist Orders and Clean-Up and Abatement Orders from the SWRCB.

None of these databases identified any active clean-up sites or hazardous waste sites within a one-mile radius of the Project site.

**5. Historical Resources.** *A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.*

A Cultural Resources Inventory Report (CRI) was completed for the proposed Project by ENPLAN. The study included a records search, Native American consultation, and field evaluation. The records search included review of records at the Northeast Information Center of the California Historical Resources Information System (NEIC/CHRIS), and a review of historic maps, the *National Register of Historic Places*, *California Register of Historic Resources*, *California Historical Landmarks*, *California Inventory of Historic Resources*, and *California Points of Historic Interest*, and the directory of properties in the Historic Property Data Files for Siskiyou County.

The records search was conducted at the NEIC/CHRIS on February 9, 2018, and covered a half-mile radius around the Project's Area of Potential Effects (APE). The records search revealed that 15 archaeological surveys have been conducted within a half-mile radius of the APE, one of which follows a fiber-optic corridor



and partially covers the APE. There are 13 previously recorded archaeological sites within a half-mile radius of the APE. No cultural resources have been previously recorded within the Project's APE.

On February 13, 2018, the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) conducted a search of the Sacred Lands File, and indicated that no known Native American sacred sites or cultural resources are located in the Project area. The NAHC also provided contact information for several Native American representatives and organizations, who were contacted on February 20, 2018, with a request to provide comments on the proposed Project.

Kelli Hayward responded on behalf of the Wintu Tribe of Northern California on February 21, 2018. Ms. Hayward stated she was not certain that the project was located in her ancestral territory. She requested to be informed if the Shasta Nation responded to the first round of request for comment letters.

Follow-up correspondence was conducted on March 15, 2018. Virginia "Ginger" Mike Mercado responded and stated the Project is located in the ancestral territory of the Winnemem Wintu. She stated Caleen Sisk, Chief of the Winnemem Wintu Tribe should be contacted. Follow-up correspondence was sent to Caleen Sisk; no response was provided. No other comments were submitted.

Archaeological fieldwork took place on November 16, 2017, June 11, 2018, and July 9, 2019, during which the APE was intensively surveyed to identify cultural resources that would be potentially affected by the proposed Project.

The CRI concluded that the Project would have no effect on any known cultural resources. Based on the geomorphological and topographic characteristics of the project area, the results of the records and literature search, and the age of the soils mapped in the area, the Project area is considered to have a moderate potential for buried historic and prehistoric resources. Because there is always some potential for previously unknown cultural resources to be encountered during site excavation, the following standard construction measures would be included in construction contracts for the Project to address the inadvertent discovery of cultural resources and human remains:

1. In the event of any inadvertent discovery of cultural resources (i.e., burnt animal bone, midden soils, projectile points or other humanly-modified lithics, historic artifacts, etc.), all work within 50 feet of the find shall be halted until a professional archaeologist can evaluate the significance of the find in accordance with PRC §21083.2(g) and §21084.1, and CEQA Guidelines §15064.5(a). If any find is determined to be significant by the archaeologist, the City shall meet with the archaeologist to determine the appropriate course of action. If necessary, a Treatment Plan prepared by an archeologist outlining recovery of the resource, analysis, and reporting of the find shall be prepared. The Treatment Plan shall be reviewed and approved by the City prior to resuming construction.
2. In the event that human remains are encountered during construction activities, the City shall comply with §15064.5 (e) (1) of the CEQA Guidelines and PRC §7050.5. All project-related ground disturbance within 100 feet of the find shall be halted until the County coroner has been notified. If the coroner determines that the remains are Native American, the coroner will notify the NAHC to identify the most likely descendants of the deceased Native Americans. Project-related ground disturbance in the vicinity of the find shall not resume until the process detailed in §15064.5 (e) has been completed.

#### DOCUMENTATION:

**California Department of Conservation**, California Geological Survey. SMARA Mineral Land Classification Maps. <http://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/informationwarehouse/index.html?map=mlc>. Accessed August 2019.

\_\_\_\_\_. Siskiyou County Important Farmland Map. <ftp://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/dlrp/FMMP/pdf/2016/sis16.pdf>. Accessed August 2019.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1997. Special Publication 42, Fault-Rupture Hazard Zones in California. <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/EART/UONLY/CDMG/north/sp42.pdf>. Accessed August 2019.

\_\_\_\_\_. Earthquake Zones of Required Investigation. 2019. <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/EQZApp/app/>. Accessed August 2019.



**California Department of Transportation.** 2016. California State Scenic Highway Mapping System. Siskiyou County. <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16 livability/scenic highways/index.htm>. Accessed August 2019.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2019. Caltrans ARS Online (v2.3.09) (potentially active faults). <http://dap3.dot.ca.gov/ARS Online/index.php>. Accessed August 2019.

**California Environmental Protection Agency.** 2019. Cortese List Data Resources. <http://www.calepa.ca.gov/sitecleanup/corteselist/>. Accessed August 2019.

**ENPLAN.** 2019. Cultural Resources Inventory Report, Hedge Creek Falls Trail Project.

**U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service.** 2019. Web Soil Survey. <https://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/WebSoilSurvey.aspx>. Accessed August 2019.