

# CHAPTER 2.0

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## INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 PURPOSE OF THE EIR

#### INTRODUCTION

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in order to assess potential impacts associated with the Hyampom Road Improvements Project, PM 6.5-8.5.

In accordance with CEQA *Guidelines*, Section 15121, the purpose of this document is to provide information to County and State officials, agency personnel, and the general public regarding the potentially significant environmental effects of the project, to identify possible means to minimize those effects, and to describe reasonable alternatives to the project. In addition, this document discloses growth-inducing impacts, significant cumulative impacts, effects found not to be significant, and significant environmental impacts that cannot be avoided.

It is not the purpose of the EIR to recommend approval or denial of the project. However, the County must respond to each significant effect identified in the EIR and is required to certify that it has reviewed and considered the information contained in the Final EIR prior to taking action on the project.

CEQA requires that a lead agency neither approve nor carry out a project unless significant environmental effects have been reduced to an acceptable level, if possible. However, CEQA also requires that decision-makers balance the benefits of a proposed project against its unavoidable environmental risks. If environmental impacts are identified as significant and unavoidable, Trinity County may still approve the project if it believes that social, economic, or other benefits outweigh the unavoidable impacts. The County would then be required to state in writing the specific reasons for approving the project based on information in the EIR and other information in the public record as a “statement of overriding considerations.”

#### TYPE OF EIR

The CEQA *Guidelines* identify several types of EIRs, each applicable to different project circumstances. This EIR is prepared as a Project EIR pursuant to the Public Resources Code Section 21156. A Project

EIR examines the environmental impacts of a specific project (CEQA *Guidelines* Section 15161). This type of EIR focuses primarily on the physical changes in the environment that would occur as a result of project implementation and examines all phases of a particular project (i.e., planning, construction, and operation). Ultimately, the EIR is used by the Lead Agency as a tool in evaluating a proposed project's environmental impacts and can be further used to modify, approve, or deny approval of a proposed project based on the analysis provided in the EIR.

## 2.2 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

Trinity County initiated the environmental review process for the EIR with the circulation of a Notice of Preparation (NOP) dated February 20, 2002, pursuant to Section 15082 of the CEQA *Guidelines*. The NOP was available for public and agency review and comment for a 30-day period, which ended March 22, 2002. The NOP included a summary of probable effects of the proposed Hyampom Road Improvements Project, PM 6.5-8.5. The NOP and comments received are included in Appendix B. An on-site agency scoping meeting was held on February 6, 2002 allowing an opportunity for the California Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Forest Service to review the proposed roadway improvements in the field. Concerns and issues raised regarding the proposed project during the NOP comment period and as a result of the agency field meeting have been addressed in the EIR.

Additional scoping has been held in connection with a project by the Federal Highway Administration, Central Federal Lands Highway Division, (CFLHD) on other segments of Hyampom Road. The CFLHD, in cooperation with Trinity County and the Shasta-Trinity National Forest, has initiated environmental studies and design to rehabilitate and reconstruct portions of Hyampom Road within the National Forest, from the Forest Boundary at Post Mile 3.7 to the eastern terminus of this project, and from the western terminus of this project at Post Mile 8.3 through the one-lane segment to Post Mile 14.3. More information on this project can be found in Section 3.3 *Project Background* and Section 3.7 *Other Projects Proposed in the Vicinity*.

The CFLHD held a meeting and field review on May 21, 2002, with representatives from Trinity County, Shasta-Trinity National Forest, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and California Department of Fish and Game. Discussion and field review included consideration of the County's project from Post Miles 6.8 to 8.3.

The CFLHD has also solicited public input on the overall project, including the County's segment. They announced the project and requested public input in advertisements published in the Redding Record Searchlight on August 12 and 17, 2002, and in the Trinity Journal on August 15, 2002. They then opened an exhibit booth at the Trinity County Fair on August 23 through August 25, 2002. An informal gathering was held in Hyampom on August 23, 2002, and an Open House public meeting was held in Hayfork on August 26, 2002. On September 7, 2002, an announcement was mailed to every post office

box in Hyampom and Hayfork, soliciting input on the project. On November 12, 2002 an Open House public meeting was held in Hyampom.

## **DRAFT EIR**

This document constitutes the Draft EIR and contains a description of the project, description of the environmental setting, identification of project impacts, and proposed mitigation measures for impacts found to be significant, as well as an analysis of project alternatives.

This Draft EIR will be circulated for a 45-day public and agency review period. Copies of the document have been made available to applicable local, state, and federal agencies and to interested organizations and individuals wishing to review and comment on the report. The publication of this document marks the beginning of the 45-day comment period, during which written comments will be received by the Trinity County Department of Transportation at the following address:

Trinity County Department of Transportation  
Attn: Hyampom Road Comments  
P.O. Box 2490  
Weaverville, CA 96093  
Fax (530) 623-5312

One or more Public Hearings will be held before the Trinity County Planning Commission during the review period, at which the public may make oral comments on the Draft EIR. Public notices announcing the hearing date(s), time(s) and location(s) will be published in the Trinity Journal at least 10 days prior to the hearing, and distributed to Post Office boxes in Hayfork and Hyampom.

## **FINAL EIR AND EIR CERTIFICATION**

Written and oral comments received in response to the Draft EIR will be addressed in the Final EIR, which will include comments received on the Draft EIR, responses to comments, and any revisions to the Draft EIR, which, together with the Draft EIR and the Mitigation Monitoring Program (MMP), will constitute the Final EIR. After reviewing the project and the EIR, the Trinity County Planning Commission, in a public hearing, will recommend to the Board of Supervisors whether to certify the EIR and approve or deny the proposed project. The County Board of Supervisors will then review the project, the EIR, the Planning Commission's recommendations, and public testimony and will decide whether to certify the EIR and approve or deny the project. If the County certifies the EIR and approves the project, they will file a Notice of Determination With the Trinity County Clerk and the State Governor's Office of Planning and Research.

## MITIGATION MONITORING PROGRAM

CEQA Section 21081.6(a) requires lead agencies to adopt a reporting or monitoring program for the changes made to the project or conditions of project approval, adopted in order to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment. The specific monitoring program required by CEQA is not required to be included in the EIR. Throughout the EIR, however, mitigation measures have been clearly identified and presented in language that will facilitate establishment of a monitoring program. Any mitigation measures adopted by the County as a condition of approval of the project will be included in a Mitigation Monitoring Program (MMP). The MMP will include the required mitigation measures identified in **Chapter 4.0** of this EIR. Parties responsible for implementing and monitoring the implementation of each of the mitigation measures will also be identified in the MMP. The MMP would be adopted by the Board of Supervisors at the time the Board certifies the EIR.

## 2.3 TERMINOLOGY USED IN THE EIR

- This Draft EIR uses the following terminology to describe environmental effects of the proposed project.
- **Significance Criteria:** A set of criteria used by the lead agency to determine at what level or “threshold” an impact would be considered significant. Significance criteria used in this EIR include local, state (CEQA), and federal regulatory standards and guiding and implementing goals and policies identified in the General Plan.
- **Beneficial Impact:** A beneficial impact would result in the improvement of an existing physical condition in the environment (no mitigation required).
- **Less Than Significant Impact:** A less than significant impact would cause no substantial adverse change in the environment (no mitigation required).
- **Potentially Significant Impact:** A potentially significant impact may cause a substantial adverse change in the environment; however, additional information is needed regarding the extent of the impact. For CEQA purposes, a potentially significant impact is treated as if it were a significant impact.
- **Significant Impact:** A significant impact would cause a substantial adverse change in the physical conditions of the environment. Significant impacts are identified by the evaluation of project effects using specified significance criteria. Mitigation measures and/or project alternatives are identified to reduce significant impacts to the environment.
- **Significant and Unavoidable Impact:** A significant and unavoidable impact would result in a substantial change in the environment that cannot be avoided or mitigated to a less-than-significant level if the project is implemented.

- **Cumulative Significant Impact:** A cumulative significant impact would result in substantial changes in the environment from effects of the project as well as other projects and reasonably foreseeable development in the surrounding area.

## 2.4 EIR ORGANIZATION

This Draft EIR is organized into the following chapters:

**Chapter 1.0, Executive Summary.** This chapter presents a summary of the project description and project need, issues to be resolved and areas of concern, alternatives to the proposed project, and significant environmental impacts that are expected to result from project construction and implementation. This chapter also presents a summary of mitigation measures proposed to reduce or eliminate expected impacts.

**Chapter 2.0, Introduction.** This chapter describes the purpose and organization of the EIR, uses of the EIR and the EIR preparation, review, and certification process. This chapter also defines terminology used in the EIR. Information on environmental regulatory requirements for the project is also presented in this chapter.

**Chapter 3.0, Project Description.** This chapter describes the proposed project features, construction methods and schedule.

**Chapter 4.0, Environmental Analysis.** This chapter includes discussions of environmental issue areas for which impacts could result from the proposed project. For each of these environmental issue areas, a description of the environmental setting; a discussion of planning document goals, objectives, and policies; a discussion of expected impacts resulting from the proposed project; a discussion of proposed mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate expected impacts; and a discussion of potential cumulative impacts are presented.

**Chapter 5.0, Analysis of Alternatives.** This chapter presents a description of project alternatives and their expected impacts.

**Chapter 6.0, Growth-Inducing Impact of the Proposed Project.** This chapter discusses development and growth trends in Trinity County and the project vicinity as well as growth-inducing impacts of the proposed project.

**Chapter 7.0, Other Statutory Considerations.** This chapter provides a discussion of significant unavoidable adverse impacts, and a discussion of significant irreversible environmental effects.

**Chapter 8.0, Document Preparers.** This chapter presents a list of EIR authors.

**Chapter 9.0, Bibliography.** This chapter presents a list of references contacted and materials consulted during the preparation of the EIR.

**Appendices.** The appendices consist of the Figures and drawings; Notice of Preparation (NOP) and comments concerning the NOP; agency correspondence; Conceptual Trinity Bristlesnail Mitigation Plan and Species Lists prepared for the project.

## 2.5 INTENDED USES OF THIS EIR

The Trinity County Board of Supervisors will use this Draft EIR, public and agency comments, testimony at public hearings, County staff responses to comments and recommendations of County staff and the County Planning Commission, in their decisions regarding certification of the Final EIR, selection of alternatives, and approving or denying the project.

When certified as a Final EIR, the final document will provide required CEQA compliance for the County actions required to implement the project, including negotiating a Special Use Permit from the Shasta-Trinity National Forest, and construction of the roadway improvements.

The County Floodplain Administrator will consider the information in this EIR when issuing a Floodplain Development Permit for the fill within the 100-year floodplain of Hayfork Creek.

The Certified Final EIR will also provide CEQA compliance for other actions by State agencies connected with construction of the new road, trails and bridges, including:

- California Transportation Commission to allocate future funding for design, right-of-way and construction.
- California Department of Fish and Game to issue an Incidental Take Permit for take of the Trinity Bristlesnail, and Coho Salmon, both State listed threatened species, pursuant to Section 2081 of the California Endangered Species Act.
- California Department of Fish and Game to issue a Streambed Alteration Agreement (Section 1601) for the construction of facilities in waters of the State (bridge over James Creek, extension of pier walls of Nine Mile Bridge over Hayfork Creek and at locations where rock slope protection will be placed on the banks).
- North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board for water quality certification or waiver for discharge of fill in waters of the U.S. (Section 401 certification).
- State Water Resources Control Board for coverage under General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction Activity (NPDES permit).

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## **2.6 RELATED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND CONSULTATIONS**

### **NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA)**

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is the funding agency for this project, and is required to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). FHWA intends to issue a Categorical Exclusion for this project, provided the ongoing environmental studies verify that the project will have no significant impacts on the physical or human environment. The FHWA will use the Final NEPA document to issue future funding to Trinity County for construction, through the California Transportation Commission.

### **FEDERAL ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT**

As required by Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act the Federal lead agency, FHWA, or its non-federal representative, Caltrans, will conduct formal or informal consultation with NOAA Fisheries (formerly National Marine Fisheries Service) regarding potential impacts to the federally threatened Southern Oregon/Northern California Coho salmon, and its critical habitat, and with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding potential impacts to the northern spotted owl. The consultation will also address potential impacts to Essential Fish Habitat for the Coho salmon and Upper Klamath and Trinity Rivers Chinook salmon as required by the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996, which amended the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. A Biological Assessment has been prepared to initiate this consultation process (May and Associates, 2002)

### **NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT**

The FHWA has completed consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office regarding potential impacts to cultural (historic and archaeological) resources, as required by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. An Historic Property Survey Report, Bridge Evaluation Report and an Archaeological Survey Report were prepared and submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office by FHWA for their concurrence on February 21, 2002. (HEC 2001 - Confidential). The State Historic Preservation Office concurred with the evaluations and determinations in those reports, in a letter dated March 25, 2002, included in Appendix C.

### **CALIFORNIA ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT**

In addition to the federal consultation requirements, Trinity County will consult with the California Department of Fish and Game regarding potential impacts to the state-threatened Trinity Bristlesnail and Coho salmon, under Section 2080.1 of the California Endangered Species Act.

### **CLEAN WATER ACT – SECTION 404**

Section 404 of the Clean Water Act requires Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) approval prior to the discharge of dredged or fill material into “waters of the U. S.” In general, work in rivers, streams, or wetlands requires an ACOE 404 permit. For this project, the permit would cover fill placed within the Ordinary High Water of Hayfork Creek and James Creek. The limits of ACOE jurisdiction within the project area have been delineated, and the ACOE has concurred with the delineation, in a letter dated December 10, 2002, which is included in Appendix C. Nationwide Permits authorize activities that result in relatively minimal adverse effects on aquatic environments. A Nationwide Permit #13 for rock slope protection and a Nationwide Permit #14 for widening of Nine-mile Bridge and replacement of the James Creek culvert with a bridge will be obtained from the ACOE prior to the construction of the proposed project.

### **CLEAN WATER ACT – SECTION 401**

Pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, every applicant for an ACOE 404 Permit must obtain state certification that the proposed activity will not violate state or federal water quality standards. A 401 Water Quality Certification or Waiver will be obtained from the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (NCRWQCB).

### **NATIONAL POLLUTANT DISCHARGE ELIMINATION SYSTEM (NPDES)**

The Federal Program is administered in California by the State Water Resources Control Board, which has issued a General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction Activity disturbing one or more acres (NPDES permit). The County will obtain coverage under the General Permit by filing a Notice of Intent with the NCRWQCB, and preparing and implementing a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP).

### **SPECIAL USE PERMIT FROM SHASTA-TRINITY NATIONAL FOREST (STNF)**

Because this project is within the Shasta-Trinity National Forest, and because the realignment and widening and the staging activities in support of construction will, at some locations, be outside the existing Federal DOT easement for Hyampom Road, a Special Use Permit will be required from the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. TCDOT is coordinating with STNF, and providing the required studies needed by STNF to comply with the Northwest Forest Plan, the STNF Land and Resource Management Plan, NEPA and other Federal environmental regulations in issuing the Special Use Permit. The Use Permit is good for 10 years. By the end of the 10-year permit period, the new alignment of Hyampom Road created by this project and the CFLHD project will be the subject of a revised DOT easement.

## 2.7 RELATED ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS

The following reports and technical studies have been prepared specifically for this project, and the data and conclusions have been used as a basis for the data and conclusions presented in this EIR. The technical reports listed below are available for review at the Trinity County Department of Transportation at 303 Trinity Lakes Boulevard (SR 3) in Weaverville, the Trinity County Planning Department at 190 Glen Road in Weaverville, the Hayfork Library in Hayfork, the Shasta Trinity National Forest Hayfork Ranger Station in Hayfork and the Weaverville Library at 211 Main Street in Weaverville.

- Final Project Study Report in Trinity County 11 k west of Hayfork for the Widening and Realignment of Hyampom Road and the Rehabilitation of the Hayfork Nine Mile Bridge prepared by Psomas for the Trinity County Transportation Commission, October 1999, including
  - Advance Planning Study for Hayfork Creek Bridge Hyampom Road Trinity County Bridge No. 5C-67, by Psomas
  - Preliminary Environmental Assessment Report (PEAR) for the Hyampom Road Project, by Hughes Environmental Consultants
  - Geotechnical Review Hyampom Road – Nine Mile Bridge, Trinity County, by Taber Consultants
- Biological Assessment for Federal and State Listed, and Proposed Species Potentially Affected by the Hyampom Road Improvement Project (PM 6.5-8.8) by May & Associates, Inc. November 2002.
- Delineation of Waters of the United States for the Nine-mile Bridge Replacement and Hyampom Road Improvement Project, Trinity County, California, by May & Associates, October 2002.
- Mitigation Recommendations for U.S. Forest Service Survey and Manage Species Potentially Affected by the Proposed Hyampom Road Improvement Project (PM 6.5-8.3), Trinity County, by May & Associates, November 2002.
- Flood Study, Hayfork Creek adjacent to Hyampom Road, Trinity County, by Pacific Hydrologic Inc. October 15, 2002.

In addition, confidential cultural resources reports by Hughes Environmental Consultants, including the Historic Properties Survey Report (HPSR), Archaeological Survey Report (ASR) and Bridge Evaluation Report are available at the Trinity County Department of Transportation in Weaverville for review by qualified individuals on an as-needed basis.

Other documents referred to in this EIR, but not prepared specifically for this project, including planning documents such as the Trinity County General Plan elements, Regional Transportation Plan, Hayfork Community Plan, and documents prepared for related projects such as the Initial Environmental Study for the TCDOT project at Post Miles 0-3.7 and the Reconnaissance and Scoping Report for the CFLHD project are also available at the Trinity County Planning Department and the Trinity County Department of Transportation. The Shasta Trinity National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan is available for review at the Shasta Trinity National Forest headquarters in Redding, the Hayfork Ranger Station, Weaverville Ranger Station, or at the Trinity County Department of Transportation.