

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

INITIAL STUDY WITH MITIGATION MEASURES IN SUPPORT OF

NEGATIVE DECLARATION

FOR

EASTSIDE POTTER VALLEY ROAD IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT

RENOVATION AND SAFETY ENHANCEMENTS

POTTER VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

COUNTY OF MENDOCINO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

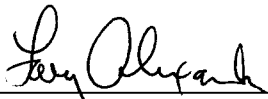
LEAD AGENCY

PREPARED BY

ENVIRONMENTAL STAFF FOR THE ENGINEERING DIVISION
MENDOCINO COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (MCDOT)

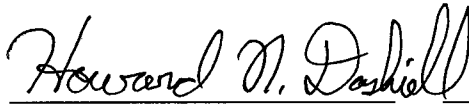
APPROVAL RECOMMENDED BY:

RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION BY:



Larry Alexander
Deputy Director of Transportation, Engineering

April 4, 2008
DATE



Howard N. Dashiell
Director of Transportation

April 4, 2008
DATE

EAST SIDE POTTER VALLEY ROAD RECONSTRUCTION (PHASE I & II)
CR 240, M.P. 2.46-6.42

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**MENDOCINO COUNTY
INITIAL STUDY FOR
EAST SIDE POTTER VALLEY ROAD, IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
EAST SIDE POTTER VALLEY ROAD, CR 240 AT M.P. 2.46 to M.P. 6.42
WPS REVIEW DRAFT – 2/14/08 -- WPS REVIEW DRAFT**

Section I – Project Overview.

- 1. Project title:** East Side Potter Valley Road Improvement Project
- 2. Lead agency name and address:** Mendocino County Department of Transportation
340 Lake Mendocino Drive
Ukiah, Calif. 95482
- 3. Contact person and phone number:** Park Steiner, (707) 463-4265
- 4. Project location:** The project is located on Eastside Potter Valley Road, between milepost 2.46 and milepost 6.42, in Potter Valley, California. This location corresponds to a portion of Sections 17, 20, 21, 28, 29, 32 33, Township 17N, Range 11W and Sections 4 and 5, Township 16N, Range 11W MDB&M; “Potter Valley, California” U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5 minute topographic quadrangle.
- 5. Project sponsor’s name and phone number:** Project will be constructed by the Mendocino County Department of Transportation (707-463-4363) with project funding made possible by the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) through the 2008-2009 Construction Program.
- 6. General Plan Designation:** AG40 - Agricultural
- 7. Zoning:** Agricultural (40 acres)
- 8. Description of Project:**

A. Background

Eastside Potter Valley Road is one of two collector roads through an unincorporated area of Mendocino County known as Potter Valley. The general location and project location is presented in Figure 1. Eastside Potter Valley road is heavily used in the Potter Valley area and is the primary route to Lake Pillsbury Recreation Area.

B. Proposed Project

The County of Mendocino Department of Transportations proposes to remove, reconstruct, and widen a portion of Eastside Potter Valley Road. The current road structure (base and pavement) is severely deteriorated and is in need of reconstruction. The road currently

consists of two 10-foot-wide traveled lanes with ½ foot paved shoulders. The proposed project consists of grinding and recycling the current base and pavement using a process called foamed asphalt. The roadway will be further widened to include gravel shoulder of 1-foot to 5-foot widths.

For the most part, the alignment will not be changed from its current position. There is a 1,400-foot portion of the road with a sharp switchback curve. The alignment of this section of road is to be straightened. The radii of two other curves will be increased to meet speed design criteria and the profile through a crest will be lowered to provide required sight distances.

9. Surrounding land uses and setting:

Land use along East Side Potter Valley Road has been, and remains, primarily agricultural and residential. Two exceptions are the Hoppers Corner Store at 10770 Main Street, and the now defunct Keene Pallet Mill at 10100 East Side Potter Valley Road. The pallet mill was a light industrial facility formerly engaged in the production of wooden pallets of the type commonly used to allow forklifts to lift and move stacks of merchandise; it is now only occasionally used for minor production projects – wood posts, etc.

East Side Potter Valley Road (ESPV) is one of two arterial roads through Potter Valley, an unincorporated area of Mendocino County, California. It is also the primary route to the Lake Pillsbury Recreation Area in the Mendocino National Forest.

The project alignment runs, for the most part, north-south between the mountains along the eastern side of Potter Valley and the East Fork of the Russian River, which lies to the west of the road. The flow of surface and groundwater is generally east to west, from the uplands to the river, with a much smaller component running north to south. The road interrupts surface flow, which complicates drainage because the north-south gradients of the roadside ditches are very shallow.

10. Other public agencies whose approval is required:

Public agencies whose approval is required for this project include:

North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board- for project review, input and approval as part of the grant agreement that helped fund this project.

North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board- 401 Water Quality Certification.

California Department of Fish and Game- 1600 Streambed and Lake Alteration Agreement.

US Army Corps of Engineers- Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit for discharges to waters of the United States.

Mendocino County Board of Supervisors- Adoption of Resolution supporting a Negative Declaration pursuant to CEQA for the project.

Section II – Evaluation of Environmental Impacts.

“Significant effect on the environment” means a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project, including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and aesthetic significance. An economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment. A social or economic change related to a physical change, may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15382).

Will the project result in the following environmental effects:	No Impact	< (less than) Significant Impact	< Significant w/ Mitigation Incorporated	Potentially Significant Impact
I. AESTHETICS -- Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	X			
	No designated scenic vistas are within or adjacent to the project area.			
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	X			
	This is not a state scenic highway, nor is the project area viewable from a state scenic highway.			
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?		X		
	Visual character or quality of the site will not be significantly impacted due to the widening of an existing roadway.			
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	X			
	No reflective materials or lighting is proposed.			
II. AGRICULTURE RESOURCES: In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. Would the project:				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?		X		
	A very small amount of farmland conversion is proposed. The added benefits of a wider road and shoulder will enhance safety for transportation of farm equipment and access on and off the county road for agricultural operations.			

Will the project result in the following environmental effects:	No Impact	< (less than) Significant Impact	< Significant w/ Mitigation Incorporated	Potentially Significant Impact
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	X			
No conflicts with existing zoning are anticipated as a result of the project.				
c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?	X			
No changes of existing land uses are anticipated as a result of the project.				
III. AIR QUALITY -- Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	X			
No foreseeable obstructions to implementation of an air quality management plan are anticipated.				
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	X			
<p>The project area is within a State Designated Naturally Occurring Asbestos Area (NOA). The Mendocino County Air Quality Management District uses a 1-acre or 1 linear mile threshold for projects requiring a permit for construction and grading operations. <i>(Personal communications with office staff by personal visit on 21 November 2007)</i> The proposed project is about 4 miles long and will not be 24 acres in size and subject to permit. However, potential air quality violations as a result of fugitive dust will be minimized through a Water Pollution Control Program per CALTRANS standards that utilized Best Management Practices (BMPs) to minimize the potential for fugitive dust. Any asbestos-containing materials (dirt) will be incorporated within the project and handled in accordance with permit requirements.</p>				

Will the project result in the following environmental effects:	No Impact	< (less than) Significant Impact	< Significant w/ Mitigation Incorporated	Potentially Significant Impact
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	X			
	No criteria pollutants by federal, state or local standards are associated with the project.			
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	X			
	No schools, hospitals or elder care facilities or are located within or adjacent to the project area. Some residences are close to the project but no sensitive receptors have been identified.			
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	X			
	Some individuals may find that construction equipment produces objectionable odors. This will only be temporary during the period of construction and not impact substantial numbers of people due to the remote location.			

Will the project result in the following environmental effects:	No Impact	< (less than) Significant Impact	< Significant w/ Mitigation Incorporated	Potentially Significant Impact
IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES -- Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?			X	
	<p>- Direct substantial adverse effects will be minimized to less than significant through implementation of the Department's Standard Mitigation Measures for Projects identified in Section III of this document. Mitigation Monitoring will be performed by the Mendocino County Department of Transportation to ensure that identified mitigation measures are implemented during construction.</p> <p>- There are several thousand linear feet of roadside ditch, exposed or covered, which must be moved or replaced in order to widen the road. Approximately 25 culverts will be modified or replaced during construction, some affecting existing creek, canal, or ditch vegetation and habitat. Seven of these sites were deemed as warranting restoration or mitigation due to habitat impacts (CDFG / RWQCB site review 7/27/07).</p> <p>- To establish the scope of potential mitigation, each agency-identified impact was evaluated and quantified site by site by the DOT staff biologist. For some sites, mitigation dollar values were approximated utilizing land acquisition costs for habitat replacement. At other sites, costs were calculated by approximating on-site restoration costs.</p> <p>- Space is limited within the County road right-of-way for habitat restoration or enhancement. Also, each agency-identified mitigation is physically small making site-by-site restoration less practical. Therefore, MCDOT has proposed finding other areas within the basin (likely outside the project area) to implement restoration or enhancement. An approved Maintenance and Monitoring Plan (MMP) will be provided as part of the permit process that will detail how alternative mitigation, maintenance, and/or monitoring strategies are to be accomplished. The MMP will also provide for monitoring over a 3 to 5-year period to assure that the mitigation is successfully completed.</p> <p>- The costs calculated by the MCDOT biologist suggests that \$38,000 is a reasonable tribute. The Redwood Valley Outdoor Education Project (RVOEP) has been identified as a local program with on-the-ground restoration projects and curriculums suitable for meeting the mitigation requirements of the overseeing regulatory agencies. Discussions are currently underway with CDFG and NCRWQCB to determine how off-site mitigations might best be conducted through RVOEP.</p> <p>- Other acceptable options might still be considered – perhaps in the nearby McKee County Park or by working with the Mendocino County Resource Conservation District to identify other regional projects.</p> <p>-</p>			

Will the project result in the following environmental effects:	No Impact	< (less than) Significant Impact	< Significant w/ Mitigation Incorporated	Potentially Significant Impact
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?		X		
	No substantial adverse effects are anticipated. While not specifically identified in resource policy, it is anticipated that there will be some modification to existing vegetation in locations where electric transmission poles will need to be relocated. PG&E is regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission and is required by various state and federal laws and codes to maintain clearances to poles and wires for public safety, primarily fire prevention. Tree removal or modifications to pruning schedules is anticipated, but is required by the provisions of statutes regulating the utility. Extent of pruning or removal will vary pole by pole, but the guidelines will necessitate clearance of approximately 15 feet inclusive of a reasonable grow-back buffer.			
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?		X		
	No substantial adverse effects on wetlands are anticipated. The existing riparian habitats are primarily artifacts of the naturalized landscape adjacent to the project (ditches, pond leakage, etc.), and have already been denoted in a COE delineation. Every effort has been made to avoid or minimize habitat impacts through road alignments or retaining walls. The sites have been reviewed by CDFG (1600 permit) and NCRWQCB (401 permit) and mitigations for possible impacts are being finalized.			
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	X			
	The proposed road improvement will widen road and shoulder, replace or lengthen existing culverts, and modify existing man-made ditches. The adjacent natural landscape is already highly modified from agricultural and residential use. Current wildlife movements or uses are already highly defined by fence lines, roads, yards, and ditches, and are not expected to be impacted from this project.			
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	X			
	The proposed project with its associated mitigation is not anticipated to conflict with policies or ordinances intended for protection of the environment.			

Will the project result in the following environmental effects:	No Impact	< (less than) Significant Impact	< Significant w/ Mitigation Incorporated	Potentially Significant Impact
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	X			
Due to the nature and location of the project, there are no anticipated conflicts.				
V. CULTURAL RESOURCES -- Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in § 15064.5?	X			
Seventeen cultural resources were evaluated within the Historic Properties Survey A.P.E. Twenty-seven additional buildings or structures within the A.P.E. were not evaluated because they were constructed after 1961. Fifteen of the seventeen evaluated resources do not appear to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register or California Register. Two of the seventeen evaluated resources do appear to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register or California Register. Neither of these sites is impacted by the project. Additionally, ten structures of the PVID were evaluated, but do not appear to meet the criteria for listing in either the NRHP or appear to meet the standards of historical significance, therefore do not appear to be historical resources for the purposes of CEQA				
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5?			X	
Phase I and Phase II archaeological assessments of the project area have been performed. One in March 2004 assessed overall potential for resources within the areas to be disturbed by project construction. The other in 2007 was part of a more comprehensive geo-arc recovery study to evaluate options for realignment in widening Eastside Potter Valley Road to avoid any significant archeological sites. Historical resources have been identified within the project study area resulting in design changes to avoid these resources as outlined in the attached studies and mitigations.				

Will the project result in the following environmental effects:	No Impact	< (less than) Significant Impact	< Significant w/ Mitigation Incorporated	Potentially Significant Impact
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	X			
	No unique geologic features are associated with the project. The potential for encountering paleontological resources are not anticipated due to the geology and topography of the site. If paleontological resources are encountered during construction, encountered materials and their context will not be altered until a qualified paleontological resource professional has evaluated the situation and determined an appropriate course of action.			
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?		X		
	Human remains were not encountered during extensive archaeological and historical studies, though other artifacts and structures have been identified within the project study area. Efforts have been made to avoid these other resources, decreasing the chance of encountering human remains. If any human remains are encountered during construction, those remains and their context will not be altered until proper protocols concerning such finds are implemented. (See Section III E below.)			
VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS -- Would the project:				
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	X			
	There are no known or mapped active faults delineated within the Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42 that pass through the project area. The nearest know potentially active fault is the Mayacama Fault that runs in a northerly direction through Willits approximately 10 miles to the west.			

Will the project result in the following environmental effects:	No Impact	< (less than) Significant Impact	< Significant w/ Mitigation Incorporated	Potentially Significant Impact
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	X			
	The project site has the potential to experience ground shaking as a result of earthquakes occurring on regional faults. Although the project site could be subjected to strong ground shaking in the event of an earthquake, this hazard is common in Northern California and the effects of ground shaking can be mitigated to a less than significant level by proper engineering design and construction in conformance with the Caltrans Highway Design Standards.			
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	X			
	Due to project location, local topography, and soils, the project is not anticipated to result in significant impacts due to the liquefaction and ground failure. Compliance with the Caltrans Highway Design Standards will ensure that any potential impacts due to liquefaction and seismic induced ground failure are reduced to a less than significant level.			
iv) Landslides?	X			
	No slides are associated with the project area – the majority of ground is relatively flat. The project will not result in a significant increase in geologic hazard.			
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	X			
	Construction activities will implement standard Best Management Practices to reduce sediment imputes as a result of construction through adherence to the Five County's Water Quality and Habitat Protection Manual for County Road Maintenance and other commonly accepted guidance documents and standards. These BMPs are also anticipated to address NPDES goals.			

Will the project result in the following environmental effects:	No Impact	< (less than) Significant Impact	< Significant w/ Mitigation Incorporated	Potentially Significant Impact
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	X			
	<p>Potter Valley is an active geomorphic environment. Alluvial sediments from the Russian river as well as colluvium from surrounding slopes have deposited sediments within the valley.</p> <p>Several soil types are found along the alignment, as shown in the following list. The numerals indicate soil map units as shown in the publication <i>Soil Survey of Mendocino County, Eastern Part, and Trinity County, Southwestern Part, California</i>, United States Dept. of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, 1991. (Bold type indicates prime farmland.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 105: Bearwallow-Hellman-Witherell Complex• 113: Cole Loam• 123: Feliz Loam• 128: Gielow Sandy Loam• 221: Yokayo Sandy Loam• 224: Yokayo-Pinole-Pinnoble Complex <p>Building design and construction in conformance with the Caltrans Highway Design Standards will result in less-than-significant geologic impacts.</p>			
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	X			
	<p>Alluvial sediments from the Russian river as well as colluvium from surrounding slopes have deposited sediments within the valley; the potential for failure as a result of expansion is very low.</p>			
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	X			
	<p>No septic tanks or wastewater disposal systems are proposed as part of the project.</p>			
VII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS -- Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	X			
	<p>This project is for widening an existing county highway. The routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials is not applicable to this project.</p>			

Will the project result in the following environmental effects:	No Impact	< (less than) Significant Impact	< Significant w/ Mitigation Incorporated	Potentially Significant Impact
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	X			
	Eastside Potter Valley Road is classified as a rural major collector that does not serve industries of a legal nature that depend upon the transport of hazardous materials. This project will provide a wider shoulder and driver recovery area with delineators to help ensure that vehicular traffic stays within the designated roadway.			
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	X			
	No facilities are to be constructed that will emit hazardous emissions or acutely hazardous materials. The construction activity itself will not result in hazardous emissions or the handling of acutely hazardous materials.			
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	X			
	The project site is not included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. The project is located in an area of agricultural and rural residential use. As such, the likelihood of contaminated or hazardous sites as a result of legal activities is not likely.			
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	X			
	There are no public use airports within two miles of the project area.			
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	X			
	No active private airstrips within two miles of the project area have been detected (<i>Google Earth, December 7, 2007</i>). The proposed road widening is not anticipated to result in any safety hazards for people residing or working in the project area as a result of private airstrips.			

Will the project result in the following environmental effects:	No Impact	< (less than) Significant Impact	< Significant w/ Mitigation Incorporated	Potentially Significant Impact
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	X			
	During extreme high water flows, the streams in the area watersheds can flood the existing road. This condition will be unchanged after completion of the project. The road is the primary access into Potter Valley; hence, completion of the project should be an enhancement to emergency response and evacuation under most conditions.			
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	X			
	The landscape adjacent to the road is domesticated in nature (agriculture, rural residential) and as such does not pose wildfire hazard. The improved road will serve as an enhanced access for wildland fire fighting in wildlands beyond, and a more reliable option for area evacuation.			
VIII. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY -- Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	X			
	Construction activities will file for coverage under the Construction General Permit if the disturbed project area is equal to or greater than one acre in size. Best Management Practices will be utilized to CALTRANS Water Pollution Control Program standards utilizing the Five County's Water Quality and Habitat Protection Manual for County Road Maintenance and other commonly accepted guidance documents and standards.			
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	X			
	Proposed project does not rely on groundwater resources, nor will proposed activities result in impacts to groundwater resources such as increased use or lowering of the groundwater table.			

Will the project result in the following environmental effects:	No Impact	< (less than) Significant Impact	< Significant w/ Mitigation Incorporated	Potentially Significant Impact
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	X			
	The project will not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area. Existing drainage patterns of the project site will remain largely unchanged with newer culverts.			
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?	X			
	The present drainage crossings are moderately sized culverts. Construction of the widened road will slightly increase impervious areas. The small increase in impervious area is not considered to substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site.			
e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	X			
	As mentioned above, the small increase in impervious area is not considered to substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff to a level which could exceed the capacity of an existing or planned stormwater drainage system.			
	No additional sources of pollution as a result of the Eastside Potter Valley Road widening have been identified.			
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	X			
	No sources of degraded water quality have been identified for the project by DOT or reviewing agencies.			
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	X			
	No housing is proposed as part of this project.			
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	X			
	No structures are included in the project. The majority of project is mapped as Zone C and not located within a designated special flood hazard area. Less than 1% is within Zone A – with no published Base Flood Elevation.			

Will the project result in the following environmental effects:	No Impact	< (less than) Significant Impact	< Significant w/ Mitigation Incorporated	Potentially Significant Impact
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	X			
	The project is mapped as Zone C and not located within a designated special flood hazard area. No local levees or dams that may put the structure or people at risk due to failure have been identified (<i>Google Earth, December 7, 2007</i>). All proposed drainage conduits would be designed to pass the 10-year storm event without flooding the traveled way.			
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?		X		
	The project is not adjacent to or within close proximity to large bodies of water that may produce seiche's or tsunami's. In consideration of the chance of occurrence of a mudflow event, low population density associated with agricultural land uses, and that this is not a critical facility, the impact is considered less than significant.			
IX. LAND USE AND PLANNING - Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?	X			
	Due to surrounding land uses and the nature of the project – widening of an existing road, no impacts are anticipated.			
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	X			
	Project does not conflict with general plan or zoning designations.			
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	X			
	No HCPs or NCCPs are known to exist within the Project bounds nor have been identified by the California Department of Fish and Game.			

Will the project result in the following environmental effects:	No Impact	< (less than) Significant Impact	< Significant w/ Mitigation Incorporated	Potentially Significant Impact
X. MINERAL RESOURCES -- Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	X			
There are no foreseeable impacts to the availability of mineral resources as a result of the project.				
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	X			
There are no foreseeable impacts to the availability of mineral resources as a result of the project.				
XI. NOISE -- Would the project result in:				
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	X			
Proposed road use will not change as a result of this project; thus no additional sources that emit noise are expected. Normal automobile use does not result in noise in excess of noise standards. Temporary increases in background noise levels are anticipated during construction but these will remain within acceptable standards.				
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	X			
No groundborne vibration or groundborne noise is anticipated from the project. Temporary minor increases in local groundborne noise may possibly be experienced during construction.				
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	X			
No significant increases in ambient noise levels as a result of the project are anticipated.				
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	X			
Very minor increases in temporary or periodic ambient noise levels above pre-project conditions are anticipated as a result of improved road conditions.				

Will the project result in the following environmental effects:	No Impact	< (less than) Significant Impact	< Significant w/ Mitigation Incorporated	Potentially Significant Impact
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	X			
	This project is not located within an airport land use plan, nor is it within two miles of a public airport. No significant increases in exposure to ambient noise levels are anticipated.			
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	X			
	This project is not located within the vicinity of any active private airstrip that would expose people working on the project to excessive noise levels.			
XII. POPULATION AND HOUSING -- Would the project:				
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	X			
	Predominate land uses surrounding the project area are designated as Agriculture Lands, Range Land, Forest Lands, Remote Residential, and includes and access to Public Lands. As pertains to lands made more accessible by road improvements, Forest Lands and Range Lands predominate			
	Substantial population growth as a result of the proposed project is not anticipated.			
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	X			
	No housing will be displaced as a result of the project.			
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	X			
	No people will be displaced as a result of the project.			

Will the project result in the following environmental effects:	No Impact	< (less than) Significant Impact	< Significant w/ Mitigation Incorporated	Potentially Significant Impact
XIII. PUBLIC SERVICES				
a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
Fire protection?	X			
No new fire protection services will be required.				
Police protection?	X			
No new police protection services will be required.				
Schools?	X			
No new school facilities will be required.				
Parks?	X			
No new parks or open space will be required.				
Other public facilities?	X			
No other public facilities will be required.				
XIV. RECREATION				
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	X			
There are no neighborhood or regional parks within the immediate project area. Existing recreational activities within surrounding areas require travel to the National Forest somewhat distant from the project. Recreational use in the Forest is not anticipated to change significantly.				
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	X			
Project does not include recreation facilities or require the expansion or construction of additional facilities.				

Will the project result in the following environmental effects:	No Impact	< (less than) Significant Impact	< Significant w/ Mitigation Incorporated	Potentially Significant Impact
XV. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC -- Would the project:				
a) Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?	X			
	No substantial increases in traffic are expected as a result of the project.			
b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	X			
	Level of service standards will not be exceeded.			
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	X			
	Air traffic patterns will not be affected by the proposed project.			
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	X			
	The project improves road alignment and is designed in accordance with existing County Road Standards and California Department of Transportation minimum requirements.			
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	X			
	The proposed project will actually improve emergency access by improving road width, surface, and alignment.			
f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?	X			
	Existing parking capacity will not be adversely impacted as a result of widening improvements.			
g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?	X			
	Project will not conflict with adopted policies, plans or programs for alternative transportation enhancements.			

Will the project result in the following environmental effects:	No Impact	< (less than) Significant Impact	< Significant w/ Mitigation Incorporated	Potentially Significant Impact
XVI. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS -- Would the project:				
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	X			
	No wastewater will be generated from the road widening. Waste management BMPs will be utilized during construction.			
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	X			
	No wastewater treatment utilities or service systems will be required.			
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	X			
	No stormwater drainage facilities are proposed. Project will be designed and built using the design standards of the County Road Standards.			
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	X			
	No water supplies or entitlements will be needed.			
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	X			
	No wastewater will be generated requiring the services of a wastewater treatment provider.			
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	X			
	No solid waste disposal services will be required on the project has been built. All waste generated during construction will be disposed of in accordance with standard County operating procedures for waste disposal from construction projects.			

Will the project result in the following environmental effects:	No Impact	< (less than) Significant Impact	< Significant w/ Mitigation Incorporated	Potentially Significant Impact
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	X			
No solid waste will be generated by the completed project. All waste generated during construction will be disposed of in accordance with standard County operating procedures pursuant to federal, state and local regulations.				
XVII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE				
a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	X			
As discussed in the preceding sections, the project does not have the potential to significantly degrade the quality of the environment, including effects on animals or plants and required habitat elements, or to eliminate historic or prehistoric sites.				
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	X			
As discussed in the preceding sections, both short-term and long-term environmental effects associated with the project will be less than significant. When impacts associated with the project are considered alone or in combination with other impacts, the project-related impacts are insignificant.				
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	X			
The above discussions do not identify any substantial adverse impacts to people as a result of the project.				
<p>Note: Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21087, Public Resources Code. Reference: Sections 21080(c), 21080.1, 21080.3, 21082.1, 21083, 21083.3, 21093, 21094, 21151, Public Resources Code; Sundstrom v. County of Mendocino, 202 Cal.App.3d 296 (1988); Leonoff v. Monterey Board of Supervisors, 222 Cal.App.3d 1337 (1990).</p>				

Section III – Mitigation Measures to Reduce Environmental Impacts of the Project to a Less than Significant Level.

The Mendocino County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) will be responsible for implementation of BMPs, mitigation, and monitoring to ensure that BMPs and mitigation are carried out by MCDOT and the construction contractor(s) during the project.

The following BMP and mitigation measures are to be implemented to reduce the environmental impacts of the project to a less-than-significant level:

III A. Guidance to Minimize Impacts to Water Quality and Biological Resources

On a site-specific basis, project planners will incorporate the appropriate measures regarding: disturbance from construction, protection of water quality, impacts from soil disturbance and exposure, disturbance of riparian vegetation, and a late-season storm contingency plan.

Measures to Minimize Disturbance from Road Widening, Culvert Replacement, and Ditch Reconfiguration:

- Construction should generally occur between July 15th and October 15th. Construct during the dry season if the channel is seasonally dry. This construction season may be extended or initiated sooner if warranted by low flow conditions and approved by permitting agencies.
- Prevent any construction debris from falling into the stream channel or roadside canal or ditch. Any material that does fall into a stream or drainage during construction should be immediately removed in a manner that has minimum impact to the streambed and water quality.
- Where feasible, the construction shall occur from the bank, or on a temporary pad underlain with filter fabric.
- Temporary fill should be removed in its entirety prior to October 15th.
- Areas for fuel storage, refueling, and servicing of construction equipment shall be located in an upland location.
- Prior to use, all equipment should be cleaned to remove external oil, grease, dirt, or mud. Wash sites should be located in upland locations so that dirty wash water does not flow into stream channel or wetlands.
- All construction equipment should be in good working condition showing no signs of fuel or oil leaks.
- Petroleum products, fresh cement, or other deleterious materials should not enter the stream channel.
- Operators should have spill clean-up supplies on site and be knowledgeable in their proper use and deployment.
- In the event of a spill operators should immediately cease work, start clean-up, and notify the appropriate authorities.

Measures to Minimize Degradation of Water Quality:

- On a site-specific basis, project planners should incorporate the appropriate measures regarding: water quality impacts from soil disturbance and exposure, disturbance of riparian vegetation, and pollution prevention controls.
- Construction should generally occur within the dry season or during extended dry periods during the winter period. To this end, DOT and its designated contractors shall comply with work windows specified in the permits issued by CDFG, NCRWQCB, and COE.
- Prevent any construction debris from having access to water-bodies and drainage facilities. Any materials that do make their way to water-bodies or drainage facilities during construction should be immediately removed in a manner that has minimum impact.
- Areas for fuel storage, refueling, and servicing of construction equipment shall be located in an upland location away from water-bodies and drainage facilities.
- All construction equipment should be in good working condition showing no signs of fuel or oil leaks.
- Petroleum products, fresh cement, or other deleterious materials should not enter or have the capability to enter waterways and drainage facilities.
- Operators should have spill clean-up supplies on site and be knowledgeable in their proper use and deployment.
- In the event of a spill, operators should immediately cease work, start clean-up, and notify the appropriate authorities.
- Erosion control measures should be in place at all times during construction if there is potential to degrade water quality. Do not start construction until all temporary control measures (straw bales, silt fences, designated concrete washout area, etc.) are in place.
- Maintain a supply of erosion control materials onsite so that one can quickly respond to unanticipated storm events or emergencies.
- No temporary stockpiling of materials in areas that have direct access to water bodies and drainage facilities.
- Use source control BMPs to protect and stabilize construction materials to prevent movement of materials.
- Immediately after project completion and before October 15th, stabilize all exposed soil with mulch, seeding, or placement of erosion control blankets.
- If project construction continues after October 15th, disturbed soils should not be left exposed overnight. Contractors should obtain at least daily weather forecasts and be prepared to cease work and stabilize construction site prior to forecasted storms. Any work extending past work windows specified in resource agency permits shall be done only following consultation with and approval by the appropriate permitting agencies.

III B. Guidance to Minimize Impacts to Riparian Vegetation during Road and Shoulder Widening, Culvert Replacement, and Ditch Reconfiguration

- Prior to construction, determine locations and equipment access points that minimize riparian disturbance without affecting less stable areas.

- Retain as many trees and under-story plants as feasible, emphasizing shade-producing and bank-stabilizing vegetation.
- Minimize soil compaction by using equipment that is either capable of a greater reach or that exerts less pressure per square inch on the ground – resulting in less overall area disturbed and less compaction to disturbed areas.
- If riparian vegetation is to be removed with chainsaws, utilize saws currently available that operate with vegetable-based bar oil.
- Loosen (rip) compacted soils at project completion as the heavy equipments exits the construction area.
- Revegetate disturbed and loosened (ripped) areas, preferably with native species specific to the project location that comprise a diverse community of woody and herbaceous species characteristic of the area.

III C. Off-site Mitigations for Impacts to Natural Resources at Culvert Replacement/Road Widening Sites

ROAD CONSTRUCTION: On July 27, 2007 Park Steiner, Ron Caviglia, and Kathy Perry (environmental and right-of-way staff for Mendocino County DOT) accompanied Stephen Bargsten (North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board) and Tracie Nelson (California Department of Fish and Game) to review impacted sites along the length of the East Side Potter Valley Road (ESPV) Improvement Project. During that review, seven sites were deemed as impacted from the proposed project, and were, therefore, appropriate for mitigation. The sites were primarily culvert replacements where an older culvert would be replaced or upgraded during construction. At one site, approximately 125' of ditch will be converted to buried culvert. At most sites, there was loss of some vegetation or minor tree removal. At one site, there was slight encroachment into a man-made wetland. (Final design may ameliorate this impact by means of a retaining wall or other design elements.) Due to the small size of each individual mitigation site and the already "domesticated" nature of the project landscape, it was felt that multiple site-specific mitigations would be difficult to implement or of limited biological value. As a result, the concept of doing a larger collective mitigation at an alternative site was discussed with the resource agency staff.

Acknowledging the domesticated state of the habitat at the sites and their immediate surroundings, the resource agencies' staff supported the concept of off-site mitigation for the ESPV Improvement Project. They asked that MCDOT formulate a mitigation proposal for agency consideration. MCDOT Director Howard Dashiell further discussed mitigation options with the resource agencies, noting that funding a mitigation project within Potter Valley would be problematic given that MCDOT is constrained to projects done on County or other public properties, and that such public sites in Potter Valley were generally not suitable. Projects done on private lands, even when conducted through a public agency such as a RCD, were considered unlikely for consideration due to potential public perception of favoritism.

In the discussions between MCDOT and the resource agencies, the agencies noted that the mitigation proposal from MCDOT could contain an educational component related to the habitat and water quality issues that originally triggered the mitigations. With this

educational option available, MCDOT suggested that the Redwood Valley Outdoor Education Program (RVOEP) might provide the opportunities necessary for the ESPV combined-site mitigation.

RVOEP is an environmental education program operated through the Ukiah Unified School District. The program is located on a 45-acre site comprised of natural woodlands bordering the Russian River. Their site is geographically near Potter Valley, approximately 6 miles west of the ESPV Project. Both are located within the Russian River Basin and share similar topography and natural habitats. The RVOEP teaching program is primarily directed at K-6 students but the site, with its system of trails, is available to the community for hiking and nature study.

MCDOT quantified the value of the seven individual site mitigations for the ESPV Project and determined that collectively they might be valued at approximately \$38,000. This value was based on the costs of land acquisition, tree planting, and invasive plant control if the mitigations were to be done at the project sites. MCDOT then worked with RVOEP to evaluate how these funds could be used to provide more effective and long-lasting off-site mitigations for the ESPV Project. To meet agency expectations, it is proposed that there would be on-the-ground project work to protect water quality (erosion control for slides and ORV damage) and to enhance habitat (invasive plant control, native vegetation plantings). Educational components will strengthen units on water quality, wetland values, and habitat protection. Interpretive signage will be improved for the benefit of students and the general public using the Redwood Valley site.

In a joint meeting with MCDOT on February 22, 2008, both resource agencies (North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board and the California Department of Fish and Game) tentatively agreed to off-site mitigation of the ESPV Project utilizing the site and curriculum of the RVOEP. Details of those mitigations are being finalized at this time.

On February 26, Park Steiner met with Helen Magruder Menansian, Educational Coordinator for RVOEP. The site was walked to evaluate potential mitigation projects that might be pertinent mitigation for the impacts identified by agency staff during the ESPV field reconnaissance the preceding summer. It was determined that impacts could be addressed at two levels, (1) from on-the-ground habitat restoration and enhancement work, and (2) through education and interpretive projects.

From the project side, RVOEP has ongoing invasives removal/replacement projects (primarily blackberry and *Vinca*) at various locations on the site. The most focused of these efforts is in the riparian corridor of the Russian River where removed invasives have been successfully displaced with planted native White Root Sedge (*Carex barbarea*), a species historically used by Pomo Indians for basketry. Other oak woodland areas are overgrown with dense, even-aged stands resulting from historical firewood harvest. Some of these areas would benefit from selective thinning of surplus growth, allowing for release of stronger individuals. These types of activities could also be partially funded with mitigation dollars from the ESPV project.

There is also a sedimentation/water quality situation on the RVOEP site that could benefit from focused project work. An adjacent large parcel of land was recently cleared for vineyard development. Inadequate erosion control caused soil movement and rapid storm

runoff onto the RVOEP property. The results have been sediment deposition and gully formation. There is strong opportunity here, not only to repair damage, but also to work cooperatively with the adjacent landowner to remediate the problem. These mitigation-assisted activities could lessen threats for additional habitat disruption on the RVOEP property while reducing sedimentation into the Russian River.

The RVOEP property also has a unique site immediately adjacent to their learning center that could be modified to accommodate a demonstration wetland. This area is approximately 0.2 acres, flat, open, and was historically heavily disturbed as a storage and dumping area. The current plan for this area calls for the building of winding trails and the planting of various native and ornamental shrubs to create an interpretive “butterfly meadow”. Mitigation funds could enhance this plan by incorporating a perennial wetland habitat as an additional learning feature. Though this area is not currently a wetland, well water is readily already available at this location to facilitate such a conversion. A created wetland could support numerous obligate plant and invertebrate species not currently available to the students.

A portion of the mitigation funding would be designated for an educational and interpretive component. At present, the RVOEP is a program of the Ukiah Unified School District; unfortunately, no District funds are available for operations. The land is owned and provided to the program by the District, but the program staff positions and activities are funded primarily through grants and direct donations from community residents. As proposed, a portion of the ESPV mitigation monies would be available for program activities such as student bussing, educational staff, reference materials, and field equipment.

Another portion of the educational funding could be used to develop new curriculum units for students, and new interpretive signage along the trail systems could benefit both students and adult hikers alike. Both would aim at topics related directly to ESPV mitigation issues such as habitat function, water quality, erosion, and sedimentation.

It is not intended that the ESPV mitigation dollars be rigorously assigned to individual funding categories at the RVOEP, but rather that the monies be used in such ways as to best demonstrate and address the mitigation issues that initially generated those dollars at the ESPV project. To this end, RVOEP staff and Board are to allocate these funds relative to the discussion topics thus far presented.

III D. Local Mitigations for Impacts to Vegetative Resources Resulting from Mandated Vegetation Maintenance to Maintain Required Clearances to Relocated Power Poles and Wires.

UTILITIES RELOCATION: As a result of road improvement project, more than 100 power poles will need to be relocated to provide adequate clearance to the widened road. These power distribution poles are owned and maintained by Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E). PG&E is mandated by numerous rules and regulations to maintain safe clearances between their power poles and surrounding vegetation, thus insuring public safety and electric service reliability. To this end, PG&E will need to evaluate the impacts to surrounding trees (more rigorous pruning regimes or possible removal) at each of the poles scheduled for relocation.

There is a range of impacts that will occur as a result of the pole relocations. A significant number of the poles are located in fields or other open locations where there are no trees or brush to conflict with the moving of the poles. The remaining poles, though, are generally near enough to some trees to require pruning or removal. Most of the impacted trees are naturally occurring valley (white) oaks while others are ornamentals or non-indigenous “natives” planted as ornamentals.

In an effort to consolidate permitting efforts, MCDOT is incorporating the discussion of impacts and mitigations from both PG&E’s pole relocation and MCDOT’s road improvement project within this CEQA Mitigated Negative Declaration.

Pole relocation will require PG&E to exercise vegetation management to meet their regulatory obligations to provide for public safety and electric service reliability. It is PG&E’s responsibility to maintain a 15-foot clearance between poles, wires, and any potentially combustible vegetation. In the locations where relocation will place the pole and lines closer than 15 feet to existing vegetation, PG&E will choose to either prune or remove this vegetation to maintain the required clearances. How this is done will be based on PG&E’s procedures and past experience. This type of vegetation management is ongoing where the distribution system is currently located along East Side Road in Potter Valley. The road widening will result in that same vegetation management being implemented within the new pole alignment.

The pruning or removal oaks or other species native to Potter Valley is not directly regulated by local, state, or federal statute. Indirectly, though, these maintenance activities can come under the jurisdiction of one or more resource agencies if the pruning or removal activities affect the survival of a listed species, impact a migratory bird species, or has direct impacts on water quality. There are no listed species directly associated with these trees or their habitats in Potter Valley, so this is not an issue. Migratory birds are a consideration, so all pruning or removal activities will be avoided to the extent possible until after the nesting seasons for those species (typically after August 15th). Water quality would be a consideration if trees were removed within a defined streamcourse. Where new placement of lines may span such streamcourses, trees will be retained and only pruned as needed to provide the required safety clearances. Selectively pruning these streambank trees instead of removing them will preserve their soil retention and habitat functions.

PG&E provided the following comments regarding pole relocation on April 2, 2008:

“Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Initial Study for the Mendocino Co. DOT Potter Valley Road Widening. As we discussed today, PG&E has concerns about the road widening which will require the relocation of approximately 110 poles along 5 miles of Potter Valley Road. The issues we have identified include (but are not limited to) biological and cultural resource impacts due to the relocation, as well as access and easement rights for the relocated facilities. Typically, distribution poles require a 30 foot wide right of way for public safety as well as service reliability. These impacts will need to be addressed prior to start of construction. In addition, PG&E facilities need to be included in all permit authorizations acquired by the County as part of the overall project scope requirements. PG&E staff will work

with you to provide information for your permit submittals to ensure all permitting and mitigation requirements are adequately addressed. Please call me if you have any questions or require additional information.”

MCDOT is working with PG&E to coordinate permitting activities on the various levels as noted by PG&E. There appears to be significant overlap in environmental review as a result of studies already conducted by MCDOT. Coordination with PG&E will entail identifying areas of study overlap, completion of further studies if warranted, and submission of resource agency permits incorporating the pole relocation element.

While formal agency mitigations may not be required for the pole relocation activities, MCDOT wishes to reduce any habitat impacts that could result from this required vegetation management. As a voluntary mitigation for any significant impacts to existing vegetation in Potter Valley, MCDOT will work within the community to inform residents how they might enhance wildlife habitat and protect water quality by planting or protecting native oak trees on their private lands. Educational materials, guest speakers, and protective fencing materials (exclosure hoops) will be provided to interested residents. These oak enhancement activities will be proposed at the Potter Valley public meeting on April 16, 2008, with a sign-up for interested parties. A workshop will be scheduled for early fall in Potter Valley when acorns become available and timing is appropriate for tree planting. Conducting this oak workshop and providing materials for successful establishment of native oaks at various locations in Potter Valley should result in impacts from pole relocation being mitigated to a level that is less than significant.

III E. Guidance to Minimize Impacts to Archaeological Sites during Construction

Through extensive archaeological studies, MCDOT has delineated the known significant cultural resource sites at the project to a level of detail that will allow us to avoid disturbance [see “Archaeological Investigations at Four Prehistoric Sites (CA-MEN-391, CA-MEN-1822, CA-MEN-3341, and CA-MEN-3368), Eastside Potter Valley Road Improvements Project, Mendocino County, California” by Alex DeGeorgey, February 2008]. As a result of our studies, protections are called for at two of the four sites identified, MEN-1822 and MEN-3368. Design work has taken these findings and recommendations into consideration, and both sites will be avoided during construction. Artifacts collected during the studies have been repatriated to the Potter Valley Tribe.

If previously unidentified cultural materials are unearthed during construction, MCDOT will abide by Caltrans’ policy that work be halted in that area until a qualified archaeologist can assess the significance of the find. Additional archaeological surveys will be needed if project limits are extended beyond the present survey limits.

Other cultural resource protections are provided for in the Mendocino County Code Title 22 – Land Use:

Sec. 22.12.090 Discoveries. (Portion of)

- (A) Any person who in the preparation for or in the process of excavating or otherwise disturbing earth, discovers any archaeological site shall take all of the following

actions:

- (1) Cease and desist from all further excavation and disturbances within one hundred (100) feet of the discovery;
- (2) Make notification of the discovery to the Director of Planning and Building Services;.....

Sec. 22.12.100 Discoveries of Human Remains. (Portion of)

- (A) The provisions of this section shall apply in addition to the provisions of Section 22.12.090 of this Chapter whenever any human remains are discovered.
- (B) Any person who, while excavating or otherwise disturbing earth, discovers any bones or other human remains, whether or not as part of an archaeological site, shall immediately cease and desist from all further excavation and disturbance and shall immediately telephone or otherwise notify the Sheriff-Coroner of Mendocino County. If an archaeological site is involved, the Sheriff-Coroner shall thereupon notify a designated representative of the Commission and if the remains are considered to be those of a Native American Indian, the Sheriff-Coroner shall also make notification as required by Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code.

Section IV – Determination.

On the basis of this initial evaluation, it has been determined that:

Although the project, as proposed, could have had a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because mitigation measures for the project will reduce potentially significant effects to a less than significant level, therefore, it is recommended that a MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION be adopted.