

## NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

**TO:**

**Office of Planning and Research**  
PO Box 3044  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

**Plumas County Clerk**  
520 Main St., Room 102  
Quincy, CA 95971

**FROM:**

**American Valley CSD**  
900 Spanish Creek Rd.  
Quincy, CA 95971

**Project Title:** American Valley CSD Spring Water Supply Ultraviolet (UV) Disinfection System

**Project Location:**

The project is located in an unincorporated area of Plumas County in the community of Quincy. Proposed improvements would occur at the Goodwin Water Tank site at the southern terminus of Buchanan Street (see Figure 1); Township 24 North, Range 9 East of the U.S. Geological Survey Quincy quadrangle.

**City:** Quincy (unincorporated)

**County:** Plumas

**Project Description:**

Claremont Spring provides about 25 percent of the water supply for residents and businesses in the community of Quincy; however, the water has periodically tested positive for coliform. When this occurs, the Spring source must be taken offline, and the American Valley Community Services District (District) relies on increased pumping from the District's wells in East Quincy until coliform is no longer detected in the Spring supply. The purpose of the Project is to ensure a safe and reliable drinking water supply by providing for disinfection of the District's Spring water source.

The proposed Project includes construction of a ±288 square foot building for ultraviolet (UV) disinfection equipment (i.e., UV disinfection module, turbidimeter, magnetic flowmeter, electrical/telemetry system, and controls). A new waterline would be installed from the UV building to the existing 6-inch Spring waterline south of the new UV building using open-cut trenching; a level/pressure control valve would be installed on the new waterline. A propane tank and emergency backup propane generator would be installed immediately north of the UV building. Electrical service would be extended to the UV building from the District's existing service box located southeast of the existing Goodwin Water Tank using open-cut trenching.

Proposed improvements would be installed in previously disturbed areas. The site is flat and only minor grading of ±460 square feet would be required to accommodate the improvements. No trees or other significant vegetation would be removed.

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** American Valley Community Services District

**Name of Agency Carrying out the Project:** American Valley Community Services District

**Local Agency Contact Person:** Jim Doohan, General Manager

**Exempt Status: Categorical Exemption:**

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

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

Class 4, §15304 (Minor Alterations to Land)

**FILED**

JUN 25 2019

KATHLEEN WILLIAMS,

PLUMAS CO. CLERK-RECORDER

Notice of Exemption: American Valley CSD Spring Water Supply UV Disinfection System Improvements

*Julie Haagwood*  
REC'D #32-86252019-015 DEPUTY

DOC# 2019-015

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**Reason Why Project Is Exempt:**

Class 3 includes construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure. Class 4 includes minor alterations to the condition of the land (e.g., clearing, grading, trenching, and backfilling) that do not involve the removal of any healthy, mature, scenic trees, and do not involve grading in wetlands or other waters, provided that the surface is restored following construction.

The Project is consistent with the categorical exemptions noted above because work would consist of the construction of a small structure, installation of UV disinfection equipment inside the new structure, installation of a new propane tank and emergency backup propane generator, and minor extension of electrical service to the new building. Only minor earth disturbance would be required to accommodate the proposed improvements, and the ground surface would be restored following construction. No mature trees would be removed, and no expansion of the District's water system would occur. No wetlands or other waters are present on the Project site.

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

**Signature:****Jim Doohan**

General Manager

**Date:**6-25-19**Date Received for Filing at OPR:** \_\_\_\_\_**Attachments:**

Figure 1: Vicinity Map

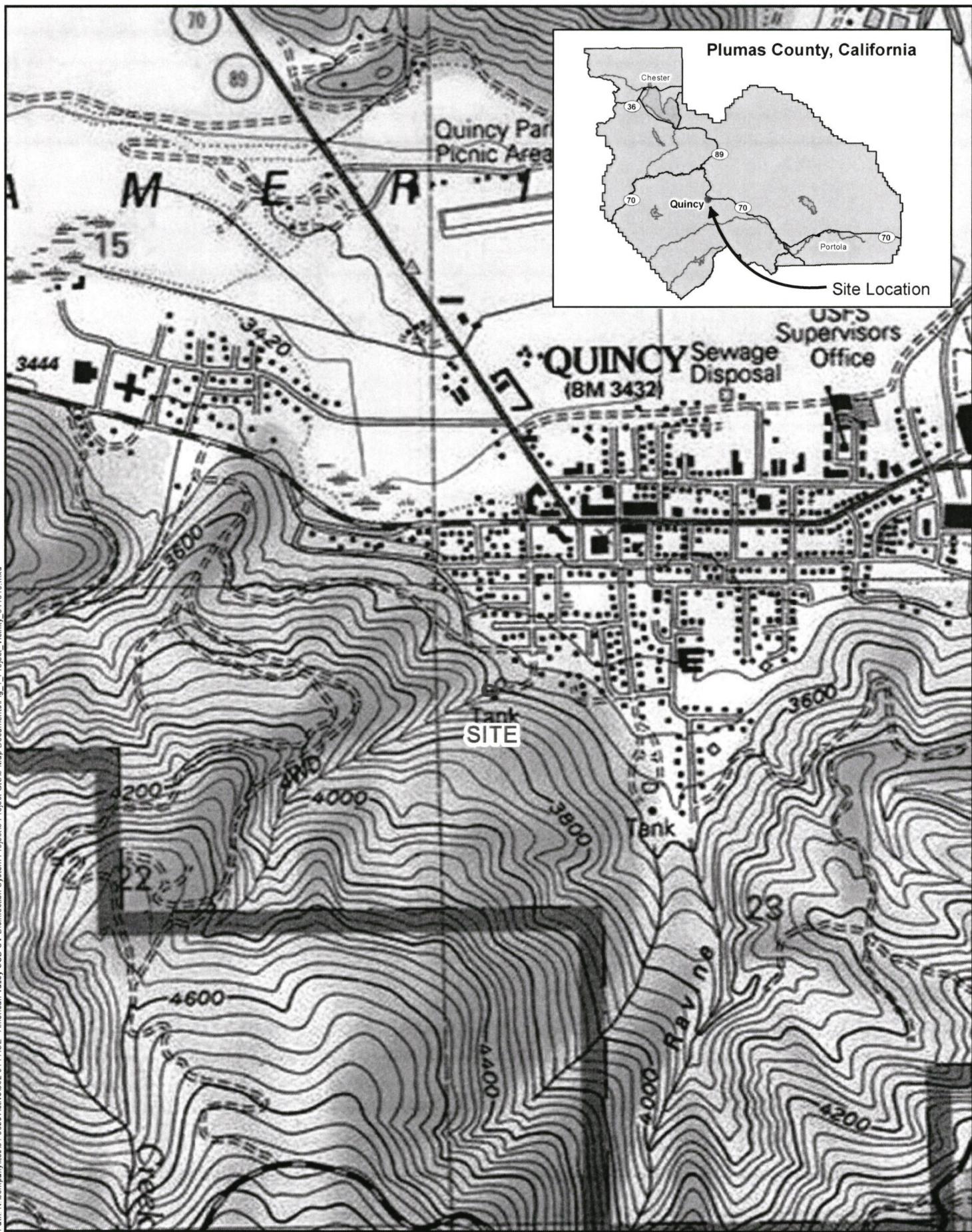


Figure 1

## Project Vicinity

All depictions are approximate. Not a survey product.

04.10.19

**ENPLAN**



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— Feet  
1,000

## ATTACHMENT A

### Notice of Exemption

#### American Valley CSD Spring Water Supply Ultraviolet (UV) Disinfection System

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

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

The Project involves improvements to existing components of the American Valley Community Services District's (District) water system that are required in order to ensure a safe drinking water supply for the District's customers. There are no other closely related past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future projects in the Project area that would cause related impacts. Impacts from the proposed Project would be temporary and cease at completion of the Project. Therefore, the proposed Project's impacts would not be cumulatively considerable.

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

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

**Aesthetics:**

The Project site is not visible from a public viewpoint or from neighboring properties. No trees or other significant vegetation would be removed to accommodate the proposed improvements. Temporary visual impacts due to construction and staging activities would cease at the completion of the improvements.

**Agriculture and Forestry Resources:**

According to the California Department of Conservation, the Project site is not designated as prime, unique, or important farmland and is not under a Williamson Act contract. Although the Project site is located in a forested area, improvements would occur in previously disturbed areas adjacent to an existing water tank. No trees would be removed, and no indirect impacts to forestland would occur.

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

The proposed Project would result in the temporary generation of ROG, NOx, PM<sub>10</sub>, and other regulated pollutants during construction. ROG and NOx emissions are associated with employee vehicle trips, delivery of materials, and construction equipment exhaust. PM<sub>10</sub> is generated during site preparation, excavation, road paving, and from exhaust associated with construction equipment. Although emissions would occur during operation of the generator, the generator would be used only in the event of an emergency. The Project does not include any other components that would result in a long-term increase in emissions. There are no unusual circumstances associated with air quality that would preclude a categorical exemption for the proposed Project.

## **Biological Resources:**

### **Special-Status Plant Species**

Review of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) species list for the Project area did not identify any federally-listed plant species as potentially occurring in the Project area. The USFWS species list does not identify designated critical habitat in the study area for any federally listed plant species.

A review of California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDB) records showed that Webber's ivesia a federally-listed plant, has been broadly mapped in the general Project area. The plant was reported one time in 1886 and has not been observed in the area since that time. The following special-status plants have been reported within a five-mile radius of the Project site: Caribou coffeeberry, Constance's rockcress, Follett's monardella, hairy marsh hedge-nettle, northern coralroot, Plumas rayless daisy, pointed broom sedge, sticky pyrrocoma, tall alpine-aster, and watershield. One non-status plant, Quincy lupine, also has been reported within the search radius. Because work would occur in previously disturbed areas, no special-status plants would be affected by the proposed Project.

### **Special-Status Wildlife Species**

Review of the USFWS species list for the Project area identified the following federally listed animal species as potentially being affected by the proposed Project: California red-legged frog, Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog, and Delta smelt. The USFWS species list does not identify designated critical habitat in the study area for any federally listed animal species.

CNDDB records showed that three special-status wildlife species have been broadly mapped as potentially occurring within the Project area: American badger, foothill yellow-legged frog, and yellow rail. In addition, eleven special-status wildlife species have been reported within a five-mile radius of the Project site: bald eagle, bank swallow, greater sandhill crane, northern goshawk, osprey, pallid bat, Sierra Nevada mountain beaver, Sierra Nevada red fox, Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog, southern long-toed salamander, and Townsend's big-eared bat. The following non-status animals also have been mapped within the search radius: fringed myotis, long-legged myotis, North American porcupine, western bumble bee, and western pearlshell.

Although some of the special-status animals noted above may be present in the general Project area, improvements would occur in a previously disturbed area on the Goodwin Water Tank site, and there is no suitable habitat in the Project site for special-status animals.

## ***Natural Communities***

There are no sensitive communities in or adjacent to the Project site that would be affected by the proposed improvements.

## ***Nesting Migratory Birds***

The USFWS identified the following Birds of Conservation Concern as potentially being affected by the proposed Project: bald eagle, California spotted owl, Cassin's finch, golden eagle, Lewis's woodpecker, olive-sided flycatcher, rufous hummingbird, Williamson's sapsucker, and willow flycatcher.

Construction activities would not directly affect nesting migratory birds because no trees or other significant vegetation would be removed to accommodate the proposed improvements. There are no unusual circumstances associated with nesting migratory birds that would preclude a categorical exemption for the proposed Project.

## **Energy:**

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

**Geology and Soils:**

According to the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map, there are no Alquist-Priolo Special Study Zones in the Project area. The nearest Alquist-Priolo Special Study Zones occur approximately 33 miles northeast of the community of Quincy near Honey Lake. The 2010 Fault Activity Map, prepared by the California Geological Survey, indicates that there are potentially active faults north, east, and west of Quincy; however, this is not unique to the Project site.

According to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), one soil type, Kistern-Aiken-Deadwood families complex, 30 to 50 percent slopes, is mapped on the Project site. This soil type is found throughout the community of Quincy and is not unique to the Project site.

**Hydrology and Water Quality:**

The site is flat and only minor grading of  $\pm 460$  square feet would be required to accommodate the improvements. Grading would expose disturbed areas to potential storm events, which could generate accelerated runoff, localized erosion, and sedimentation. However, this is a temporary impact during construction activities, and no long-term impacts would occur. In addition, Best Management Practices for spill prevention and erosion/sediment control would be implemented to prevent indirect impacts to streams, watercourses, and aquatic habitats. There is nothing unique about the Project site that would result in significant impacts to water quality.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map (Panel 06063C0912E), effective March 1, 2005, the Project site is not located within a designated flood hazard zone.

**Land Use and Planning:**

The proposed Project would not conflict with the County's General Plan, applicable County Codes, or standard construction measures and does not include any components that would physically divide an established community.

**Mineral Resources:**

The California Geological Survey has not designated any Mineral Resource Zones in the Project area and the Project site is not zoned for mining activities.

**Noise:**

Construction of the Project would result in a temporary increase in ambient noise levels. However, the Project does not involve pile driving, use of vibratory hammers, or other similar activities that would create excessive noise or vibration. Further, there is nothing unique to the Project that would result in more significant impacts than other similar construction projects.

The Project includes installation of a propane generator; however, the generator would be used only in the event of an emergency. The closest sensitive receptor is a single-family residence about 300 feet northeast of the generator location. Due to intervening structures, trees, and topography, noise levels from the generator would not be significant at the exterior of the residence. Further, the Noise Element of the Plumas County General Plan specifically exempts emergency generators from the County's noise level standards. The Project does not include any other components that would result in a permanent increase in noise levels.

**Population and Housing:**

The purpose of the Project is to ensure a safe drinking water supply for the District's customers. Because the Project would not increase capacity in the District's water distribution system, the Project would not induce population growth in the area beyond that currently projected in the County's General Plan.

**Public Services:**

Because the Project does not include any components that would increase capacity in the District's water system, the Project would not induce population growth in the area beyond that currently projected in the County's General Plan. Therefore, the Project would not generate a demand for additional fire protection, police protection, schools, parks, or other public services.

**Recreation:**

There are no unique recreational facilities or resources in or adjacent to the Project site. In addition, because the Project would not induce population growth, the Project would not indirectly impact recreational facilities or result in the need for additional recreational facilities.

**Transportation:**

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

**Utilities and Service Systems:**

Electric service would be extended to the new UV building from the District's existing service box located southeast of the existing Goodwin Water Tank. Improvements would occur in a previously disturbed area of the Project site, and no impacts related to the electrical service extension would occur. The Project would not require water or wastewater service, nor would the Project generate solid waste. The Project would not increase capacity in the District's water system and would not induce population growth in the area beyond that currently projected in the County's General Plan; therefore, there would be no indirect impacts to utilities and service systems.

**Wildfire:**

The proposed improvements would occur in a previously disturbed area adjacent to an existing water tank. There are no unique circumstances associated with the proposed Project that would result in more significant impacts than other projects in the area.

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

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

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

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

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

Review of Cortese List records revealed that the closest active clean-up site is a leaking underground storage tank approximately 0.33 miles northeast of the Project site. Due to the distance from the Project site, the Project would not affect or be affected by the clean-up site.

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

A records search was conducted on February 6, 2019, to identify potential cultural resources in the Project area and included review of records at the Northeast Information Center of the California Historical Resources Information System (NEIC/CHRIS), and a review of historic maps, the *National Register of Historic Places*, *California Register of Historic Resources*, *California Historical Landmarks*, *California Inventory of Historic Resources*, and *California Points of Historic Interest*, the directory of properties in the Historic Property Data File for Plumas County, the Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 8, California, and Historic Spots in California.

The records search revealed that seven archaeological surveys have been conducted within a half-mile radius of the APE, one of which encompassed the APE. There are six previously recorded historic resources within a half-mile radius of the APE. None of these sites are within the Project's APE. Based on the geomorphological and topographic characteristics of the project area, the results of the records and literature search, and the age of the soils mapped in the area, the Project area is considered to have a low potential for buried historic and prehistoric resources. However, there is always some potential for previously unknown cultural resources to be encountered during site excavation. The following standard construction measures would be included in construction contracts for the Project to address the inadvertent discovery of cultural resources and human remains:

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

**DOCUMENTATION:**

**California Department of Transportation.** 2019. California State Scenic Highway Mapping System. Plumas County. [http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16\\_livability/scenic\\_highways/index.htm](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16_livability/scenic_highways/index.htm). Accessed March 2019.

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

**California Natural Diversity Database.** February 2019.

**Plumas County.** 2012. Plumas County General Plan. <http://www.plumascounty.us/index.aspx?NID=2116>. Accessed March 2019.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2018. Plumas County Code of Ordinances. [https://library.municode.com/ca/plumas\\_county/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances](https://library.municode.com/ca/plumas_county/codes/code_of_ordinances). Accessed March 2019.

**Federal Emergency Management Agency.** National Flood Hazard Map (Panel 06063C0912E), effective March 1, 2005. <https://hazards-fema.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=8b0adb51996444d4879338b5529aa9cd>. Accessed March 2019.

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

\_\_\_\_\_. Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. 2019. California Important Farmland Maps. <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/ciff/> . Accessed March 2019.

\_\_\_\_\_. Division of Land Resource Protection. 2013. Plumas County Williamson Act 2008/2009. [https://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/wa/Pages/stats\\_reports.aspx](https://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/wa/Pages/stats_reports.aspx). Accessed March 2019.

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

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

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.** List of Threatened and Endangered Species. February 2019.

**U.S. Geological Survey.** 2019. Interactive Fault Map. <http://earthquake.usgs.gov/hazards/qfaults/map/>. Accessed March 2019.