PRELIMINARY DRAFT

LAGUNA DE SANTA ROSA WATERSHED RECONCILIATION PROJECT

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

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A. PROJECT TITLE

Laguna de Santa Rosa Reconciliation Project (Project)

B. LEAD AGENCY NAME AND ADDRESS

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D. PROJECT LOCATION

The Laguna de Santa Rosa (Laguna) watershed is located in the southern-most portion of the North Coast Region (Figure 1). The Laguna drains an area of approximately 254 square miles and is the largest tributary to the Russian River. It empties into the Russian River approximately 22.5 river miles upstream of the Russian River's estuary. The Laguna watershed includes all of the tributaries to the Laguna mainstem and is affected by the interactions between the hillslopes, the channels, and the floodplains. The mainstem of the Laguna itself has its headwaters on the slopes of Sonoma Mountain, where Copeland Creek originates. Its four major tributaries are Santa Rosa Creek, Mark West Creek, and Windsor Creek to the east and Blucher Creek to the west. The Town of Windsor and the cities of Santa Rosa, Sebastopol, Rohnert Park, and Cotati are all located within the Laguna watershed.

E. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The North Coast Water Board is developing an implementation plan for the Laguna watershed (Action Plan) to address sediment, phosphorus, nitrogen, and temperature impairments (Project). The Project focuses on reconciling natural ecological function with the anthropogenically-altered landscape. Whereas a restoration project focuses efforts on restoring an area to a previous condition, a reconciliation project such as the current Project considers system-wide approaches to restoring lost function within a given set of constraints, including the developed landscape and ongoing human habitation. Reconciliation implies a combination of management practices, source control, traditional restoration to a natural condition, managed restoration, and engineered solutions as indicated by available space and ecological needs within the watershed.

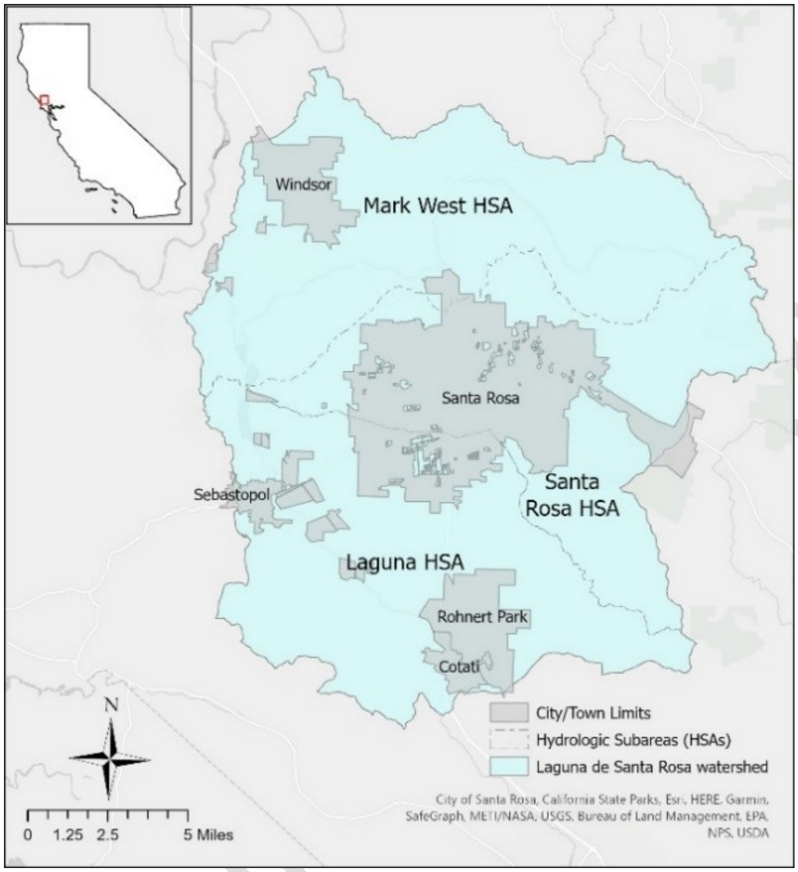

Figure 1: Laguna Project Area depicting local jurisdictional boundaries and hydrologic subareas (HSAs).

The goals of the Action Plan will be to restore supporting conditions for the beneficial uses of water (e.g., cold water fish), mitigate the impacts of biostimulatory conditions, control pollutants of concern, and expand the assimilative capacity of the Laguna to manage pollutant loads. The Action Plan will consider load allocations (pollutant contributions from management-related nonpoint sources), waste load allocations (pollutant contributions from point sources), and other numeric targets. The Project will implement the North Coast Water Board's Temperature Policy[1], Sediment TMDL

[1] Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Region, chapter 4, section 4.3.1.2.B: [Policy for the Implementation of the Water Quality Objectives for Temperature](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/basin_plan/190204/Chapter4Implementation_lmb.pdf) (https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/basin_plan/190204/Chapter4Implementation_lmb.pdf)

Implementation Policy[2], and the Policy in Support of Restoration in the North Coast Region[3] to protect the watershed's most sensitive beneficial uses. A peer reviewed staff report will summarize the science underlying the Action Plan, pollutant allocations, and recovery strategy.

F. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Human changes to the landscape in the Laguna watershed have both increased the influx of pollutants and decreased the capacity of waterways to assimilate those pollutants. Reduction in wetland acreage, a loss of floodplain access, and diminished function of foothill sausals have led to impairment of the watershed. Degraded water quality contributes to biostimulation, a situation in which physical, chemical, and biological conditions interact to promote the growth of aquatic primary producers such as algae and aquatic macrophytes. Biostimulation impacts a number of beneficial uses in the Laguna watershed, the most sensitive of which is the use of water that supports cold water ecosystems including, but not limited to, preservation or enhancement of salmonid species. Elevated turbidity levels reduce salmonid growth rates; stream temperatures often exceed lethal thresholds for fish species; and increased nutrient inputs promote aquatic plant growth that in turn depletes dissolved oxygen, creating anoxic conditions that prevent successful spawning and rearing.

The North Coast Water Board is developing an Action Plan that will describe regulatory and nonregulatory actions necessary to restore and maintain conditions for species survival. By supporting the water quality conditions that protect salmonid populations, other less sensitive beneficial uses will be protected as well.

The North Coast Water Board is undertaking the development of an Action Plan under its authority in the state Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (Porter Cologne).[4] Any reference or use of federal Clean Water Act (CWA) terms and concepts in the development of the Action Plan does not limit the North Coast Water Board's authority under state law to address pollution or protect beneficial uses. Under state law, the North Coast Water Board may establish a program of implementation to meet water quality objectives and address water quality problems (i.e., pollution, as described in Porter Cologne), including in waters that are not listed on the CWA Section 303(d) list of impaired waters (303(d) List). Section 13050.l of Porter-Cologne defines the term

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[2] Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Region, chapter 4, section 4.3.1.2.A: [Sediment TMDL Implementation Policy](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/basin_plan/190204/Chapter4Implementation_lmb.pdf)
(https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/basin_plan/190204/Chapter4Implementation_lmb.pdf)

[3] Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Region, chapter 4, section 4.2.5: [Policy in Support of Restoration in the North Coast Region](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/basin_plan/190204/Chapter4Implementation_lmb.pdf)
(https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/basin_plan/190204/Chapter4Implementation_lmb.pdf)

[4] Water Code §§ 1300 et seq.

“pollution” to mean “an alteration of the quality of the waters of the state by waste to a degree which unreasonably affects either of the following: (A) The waters for beneficial uses or (B) facilities which serve these beneficial uses.”

Waters within the Laguna watershed are listed on the 303(d) List as impaired for sediment, phosphorus, temperature, and dissolved oxygen. Nitrogen is also being addressed by the Project because of its past status as a pollutant causing impairment and its association with invasive aquatic macrophytes, such as *Ludwigia sp.*, that are supported by and contribute to biostimulation. Sediment and temperature impairment exists watershed-wide, Colgan Creek is additionally impaired for dissolved oxygen, and the mainstem Laguna is additionally impaired for both dissolved oxygen and phosphorus. The 303(d) listings in the Laguna watershed triggered a number of water quality studies. These studies, conducted under the guidance of North Coast Water Board staff, entailed a watershed-wide source analysis for pollutants that could cause or contribute to biostimulation, including nitrogen. These studies confirmed: (1) that specific land covers and management practices discharge pollutants, (2) that various point sources also discharge pollutants, and (3) these sources are located throughout the watershed. Because land covers, management practices, and point sources known to discharge pollutants are distributed watershed-wide, these studies produce evidence of pollution watershed-wide. Indeed, the fact that the Laguna mainstem (which, for the purposes of this document includes Mark West Creek below the confluence with the Laguna) is 303(d) listed as impaired for sediment, nutrients, temperature, and dissolved oxygen indicates that upstream pollutants arriving via tributaries must be addressed in the Action Plan to solve the water quality problems in the Laguna mainstem. That is, to restore and protect downstream conditions, reconciliation will require the control of pollutant discharges, including nitrogen, even if the receiving water they discharge to is not currently impaired for the specific pollutant requiring control.

G. REASONABLY FORESEEABLE COMPLIANCE MEASURES

The staff report that will summarize the science underlying the Action Plan, pollutant allocations, and recovery strategy of the Project constitutes Substitute Environmental Documentation (SED) that is subject to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) scoping at the programmatic level. Potential negative environmental impacts of the Project are therefore considered broadly and at a high level. Source control and restoration projects implemented as part of the Project’s recovery strategy will be required to go through more refined, individual CEQA scoping during which site-specific impacts are considered in greater detail.

Project impacts that will be considered as part of CEQA scoping are those that exceed baseline conditions. Under CEQA, the baseline is generally existing conditions, including those conditions resulting from existing permitting actions. For example, actions undertaken as part of existing National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits for wastewater treatment plants and municipal stormwater conveyance systems are included as part of baseline conditions. Scoping for the current Project addresses only additional reasonably foreseeable compliance actions relative to the baseline.

Reasonably foreseeable compliance measures, also known as implementation measures or actions, are the measures/actions that may be implemented to control the identified sources of pollution or to increase the assimilative capacity of the Laguna system necessary to achieve desired water quality conditions. The purpose of this CEQA environmental checklist is to identify the potential environmental impacts associated with implementing the reasonable foreseeable compliance measures, including those implemented to address sediment sources (road-related erosion; soil creep, gullies, and landslides; sheet and rill erosion; and channel incision and widening), nutrient sources (upland sources; colluvial bank erosion; point source discharges; atmospheric deposition; and net exchange with sediment), and temperature impairment caused by riparian shade deficiencies and altered flow regimes.

Specific reasonably foreseeable compliance measures and actions designed to recover supportive water quality conditions can be grouped into broad categories associated with the respective source loads listed above and may include the following:

- Sediment impairment: slope stabilization, road storm-proofing measures in areas at risk of gully erosion and landslides, reduction in soil erosion potential through modifications in land management activity, management of the capacity of runoff to transport sediment, and various other erosion control best management practices (BMPs);
- Phosphorus and nitrogen impairment: land management activities that reduce direct discharge from the landscape of both the dissolved and particulate form of these nutrients, the stabilization of areas with increased risk of colluvial bank erosion, the management of point source effluent levels, and the management of in-channel nutrient loads associated with ongoing sediment exchange processes;
- Sediment, phosphorus, and nitrogen impairment: implementation of projects designed to increase the capacity of the watershed to assimilate pollutants. Such projects may include but are not limited to flood plain restoration and reconnection; stormwater detention, retention, and groundwater replenishment; rotational grazing, the use of cover crops, and the removal of invasive aquatic species that contribute to biostimulation;
- Temperature impairment: the preservation or restoration of riparian shade conditions and other actions designed to increase and preserve the availability of cold-water resources; and
- Dissolved oxygen impairment: the reasonably foreseeable compliance measures described above are expected to address the biostimulatory conditions that result in dissolved oxygen impairment. Improved sediment, nutrient, and temperature conditions are expected to result in improved dissolved oxygen conditions, therefore no additional compliance measures directed at this pollutant are expected.

The environmental impacts checklist and discussion (sections H and I) that follow constitute a preliminary assessment subject to revision following public input received during the CEQA scoping process and other outreach efforts. As the Project develops, the assessment of potential environmental impacts will be modified accordingly. Additional public review of the revised Project, including a staff report, this CEQA checklist, and the Action Plan will be conducted at a later stage.

H. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS - CEQA CHECKLIST

The North Coast Water Board is soliciting input from Tribes, public agencies, and members of the public on all possible environmental impacts from the Project that may result from Project implementation and compliance including: the range of Project actions, alternatives, reasonably foreseeable methods of compliance, significant impacts to be analyzed, cumulative impacts if any, and mitigation measures that will reduce impacts to a less than significant level.

The checklist below represents an initial draft of potential environmental impacts. North Coast Water Board staff will solicit and consider public comments related to the general scope of reasonably foreseeable measures and potential impacts. North Coast Water Board staff are especially interested in comments on the level of environmental impact and potential mitigation options of runoff management and modified land use actions to potentially take place with respect to agricultural land and stormwater conveyance systems.

1. AESTHETICS

The level of impacts to aesthetics are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below, except as provided in Public Resources Code section 21099. Will the Project:

Table 1: Project impacts on aesthetics.

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
A	Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?			X	
B	Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and		X		

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	historic buildings within a state scenic highway?				
C	In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings (public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point)? If the Project is in an urbanized area, would the Project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?			X	
D	Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?		X		

2. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY 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 Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment Project; forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board.

The level of impacts to agriculture and forestry resources are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the Project will:

Table 2: Project impacts on agriculture and forestry resources.

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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			
B	Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract?				X
C	Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?				X
D	Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest				X

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	land to non-forest use?				
E	Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	X			

3. AIR QUALITY

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. The level of impacts to air quality are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the Project will:

Table 3: Project impacts on air quality.

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
A	Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?				X
B	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?		X		

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
C	Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?		X		
D	Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?		X		

4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The level of impacts to biological resources are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the Project will:

Table 4: Project impacts on biological resources.

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?		X		
B	Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans,		X		

	policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?				
C	Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?		X		
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		
E	Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?				X
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

5. CULTURAL RESOURCES

The level of impacts to cultural resources are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the Project will:

Table 5: Project impacts on cultural resources.

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
A	Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to section 15064.5?		X		
B	Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to section 15064.5?		X		
C	Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?		X		

6. ENERGY

The level of impacts to energy are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the Project will:

Table 6: Project impacts on energy.

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
A	Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during Project construction or operation?				X

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
B	Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?				X

7. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

The level of impacts to geology and soils are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the Project will:

Table 7: Project impacts on geology and soils.

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
A	Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:		X		
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

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
ii	Strong seismic ground shaking?				X
iii	Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?				X
iv	Landslides?		X		
B	Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?		X		
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		
D	Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?				X
E	Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?				X
F	Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource		X		

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	or site or unique geological feature?				

8. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

The level of impacts to greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the Project will:

Table 8: Project impacts on greenhouse gas emissions.

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
A	Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?		X		
B	Conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?				X

9. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

The level of impacts to hazards and hazardous materials are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the Project will:

Table 9: Project impacts on hazards and hazardous materials.

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
A	Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?		X		
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		
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
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

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No 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 result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the Project area?				X
F	Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				X
G	Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires?				X

10. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

The level of impacts to hydrology and water quality are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the Project will:

Table 10: Project impacts on hydrology and water quality.

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
A	Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?		X		
B	Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the Project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?				X
C	Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:		X		
i	result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?		X		
ii	substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner				X

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	which would result in flooding on- or offsite?				
iii	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
iv	Impede or redirect flood flows?		X		
D	In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to Project inundation?				X
E	Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?				X

11. LAND USE AND PLANNING

The level of impacts to land use and planning are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the Project will:

Table 11: Project impacts on land use and planning.

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
A	Physically divide an established community?				X
B	Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?				X

12. MINERAL RESOURCES

The level of impacts to mineral resources are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the Project will:

Table 12: Project impacts on mineral resources.

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
A	Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be a value to the region and the residents of the state?			X	

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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	

13. NOISE

The level of impacts to noise are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the Project will:

Table 13: Project impacts on noise.

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
A	Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the Project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?		X		
B	Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?		X		

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
C	For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or 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

14. POPULATION AND HOUSING

The level of impacts to population and housing are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the Project will:

Table 14: Project impacts on population and housing.

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
A	Induce substantial unplanned 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

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
B	Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				X

15. PUBLIC SERVICES

Levels of impact to public services are evaluated in the matrix below. This takes into account any foreseeable need for new or physically altered governmental facilities and potential adverse environmental impacts in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives associated with these public services:

Table 15: Project impacts on public services.

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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		X		

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
i	Fire protection?		X		
ii	Police protection?				X
iii	Schools?				X
iv	Parks?				X
v	Other public facilities?				X

16. RECREATION

The level of impacts to recreation are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the Project will:

Table 16: Project impacts on recreation.

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
A	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
B	Does the Project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities				X

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?				

17. TRANSPORTATION

The level of impacts to transportation are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the Project will:

Table 17: Project impacts on transportation.

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
A	Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?				X
B	Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3, subdivision (b)?				X
C	Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?				X
D	Result in inadequate emergency access?				X

18. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

The level of impacts to Tribal cultural resources are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the Project will cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, or cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American Tribe, and that is:

Table 18: Project impacts on Tribal cultural resources.

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
A	Would the Project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code § 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:		X		
i	Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k) or		X		

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
ii	A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code § 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code § 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.		X		

19. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

The level of impacts to utilities and service systems are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the Project will:

Table 19: Project impacts on utilities and service systems.

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
A	Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or		X		

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?				
B	Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the Project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?				X
C	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
D	Generate solid waste in excess of state or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?				X
E	Comply with federal, state, and local management reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?				X

20. WILDFIRE

The level of impacts to wildfires are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below. If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the Project:

Table 20: Project impacts on wildfire.

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
A	Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				X
B	Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose Project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?		X		
C	Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?				X
D	Expose people or structures to significant risks, including				X

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?				

21. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The level of impacts to mandatory findings of significance are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below:

Table 21: Project impacts on mandatory findings of significance.

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
A	Does the Project have the potential to substantially 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, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate		X		

Item	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?				
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	
C	Does the Project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?			X	

I. ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST DISCUSSION

The North Coast Water Board is soliciting input from public agencies and members of the public on all possible environmental impacts from the Project from Project implementation and compliance including: the range of Project actions, alternatives, reasonably foreseeable methods of compliance, significant impacts to be analyzed, cumulative impacts if any, and mitigation measures that will reduce impacts to a less than significant level. Listed below are the issues for which North Coast Water Board staff have initially identified as most likely to have a "less than significant impact" or higher. Issues identified as “no impact” are not included in this section.

1. AESTHETICS

Will the Project:

1a. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

- Less than Significant Impact
- See 1c. discussion below.

1b. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

- Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated
- Temporary construction activities associated with pollutant control BMP installation may result in less than significant, short-term impacts to state highway scenic resources. Restoration activities and installation of structural BMPs could have the potential to damage scenic resources on State Routes 116 and 12. The land disturbance associated with these activities, such as the construction of a settling basin or a riparian fence, may include minor surface soil excavation or grading during construction, which could result in increased disturbance of the soil. If, however, scenic resources were identified at the site, impacts would be mitigated by avoiding where possible, and, when avoidance is not possible, using standard construction techniques and erosion and sediment control practices that require revegetation and would not result in permanent damage to scenic resources.

1c. In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings (public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point)? If the Project is in an urbanized area, would the Project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

- **Less than Significant Impact**
- 1a and 1c. Compliance measures such as planting trees and/or retaining trees are generally regarded as positive aesthetics. Scenic vistas usually include well vegetated areas. In some cases, the planting or retention of large woody vegetation could reduce visibility to an adjacent water body; however, vegetation also provides habitat for wildlife and is known to enhance water quality which would improve the overall landscape. Compliance measures such as riparian restoration, modifications to water

supply and water storage practices in agricultural lands, and erosion and sediment control measures may modify the appearance of an area; however, these measures are not likely to result in the elimination of agricultural occupations thereby eliminating areas of open space. Construction activities associated with pollutant control BMP installation and restoration activities may result in less than significant, temporary impacts on aesthetic vistas both in urbanized and non-urbanized areas.

1d. Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

- **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated**

- The construction of an off-stream storage facility (e.g., retention or detention ponds) may be expected to occasionally create a new source of substantial glare. Mitigation measures to reduce the significance of the impacts include proper siting, constructing berms or structural divides around the perimeter of the facility, or planting vegetation along the perimeter of the facility.

2. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

Will the Project:

2a. 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?

- **Potentially Significant Impact**

- See 2e. discussion below.

2e. Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

- **Potentially Significant Impact**

- 2a and 2e. The Project may incorporate component projects designed to increase the capacity of the watershed to assimilate pollutants and/or restore hydrologic function. Associated compliance measures may include restoration of wetlands, riparian buffers, and floodplain access. These projects may result in the incidental conversion of some Farmland to non-agricultural use.

- These losses on a watershed-wide basis would only affect a very narrow band of land on either side of the watercourse, and as derived from the readily accessible information from the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agriculture Statistics Service, it is estimated that no more than 12% of the Laguna watershed is mapped as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance.

- Additionally, some areas that are mapped as prime, unique or important may comply with the proposed Project while others may not. Although there are many factors that affect this determination, it can be assumed that agricultural lands that implement restoration projects to restore pollutant assimilation capacity could be taking land out of production. While avoidance and minimization measures can be used to lessen impacts, there is no mitigation for loss of land; therefore, this is a potentially significant and unavoidable impact.

- Because CEQA scoping for the Project is conducted at the programmatic level, the specific impacts of such potential land use conversion will be addressed by the CEQA scoping conducted for individual projects.

3. AIR QUALITY

Will the Project:

3b. 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?

- **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.**

- See 3d. discussion below.

3c. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

- **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.**

- See 3d. discussion below.

3d. Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?

- **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.**

- 3b, 3c, and 3d. The Project could potentially result in temporary cumulative net increases of particulate matter or the concentration of other pollutants and odor-causing emissions during construction and maintenance activities associated with compliance measures. Any such impacts would be temporary, and would be mitigated by standard construction operations, such as the use of moisture to reduce the transfer of particulates and dust to air and conducting operations when air quality in the watershed is good (i.e., no catastrophic wildfires). The emissions of air pollutants during construction of facilities for compliance are unlikely to have a significant effect on ambient air quality.

- Actions such as riparian preservation and restoration will sequester carbon from the atmosphere through plant photosynthesis. In addition, trapping soils through erosion and sediment control will reduce GHGs when carbon is locked up in trapped sediments, as well as living vegetation. Therefore, the overall long-term benefits of the Project will aid in the reduction of GHGs and help provide resilience in the condition of the Laguna watershed.

4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES DISCUSSION

Will the Project:

4a. 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 Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

- **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.**

- The Project is designed to benefit, enhance, restore and protect biological resources, including fish, wildlife, and rare and endangered species. Adoption of the Project and implementation of required BMPs will not result in a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The Project may result in some incidental short term sediment discharge, however, substantial impacts resulting from the Project would not occur because the Project requires implementation of mitigating BMPs designed to improve and restore stream habitat, to provide a long-term benefit to both anadromous salmonids and other fish and wildlife.

4b. 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 Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

- **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.**

- Reasonably foreseeable implementation actions - road maintenance practices, erosion control projects, stream maintenance activities, and invasive species control – would result in an overall enhancement of riparian habitat conditions. Road erosion control actions will shift the particle size distribution of sediment supply closer to natural distribution enhancing sediment sorting and the diversity of substrate patch types in riparian habitats, which in turn would enhance the diversity of riparian habitats and communities. Riparian shade enhancement projects will restore vegetation heights to better reflect natural shade conditions. Invasive aquatic vegetation removal and other instream projects with the potential to adversely affect fish and wildlife resources by changing the bed, channel, or bank of a waterbody may require a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement (LSA) with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Permits for these activities will include appropriate BMPs and mitigation measures to reduce environmental impacts to less than significant levels.

4c. Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

- **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.**

- Project-related implementation actions would likely involve sediment and nutrient pollution control and riparian shade enhancement actions, a fraction of which could occur within and/or overlap with wetlands. The adverse impacts on wetlands would not be substantial, however, because under the Nationwide or individual permit programs administered by the US Army Corps of Engineers, there are general conditions that require projects that may adversely affect all wetlands, as defined under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, responsible parties must demonstrate that avoidance, minimization, and mitigation has occurred to the maximum extent practicable to ensure that adverse impacts to the aquatic environment are minimal. Furthermore, for all potential projects where wetland losses would exceed 0.1 acres, applicants are required to provide compensatory mitigation at a ratio that is greater than or equal to 1:1. For projects where wetland losses are less than 0.1 acre, on a case-by-case basis, compensatory mitigation may be required. If implementation projects are proposed that could have the potential to disturb wetlands, they also would be subject to the Water Board's review and approval under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act and the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, and the North Coast Water Board must, consistent with its Basin Plan, require mitigation measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to less-than-significant levels. As specified in the Basin Plan, the North Coast Water Board uses the U.S. EPA Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines for dredge and fill material in determining the circumstances under which the filling of wetlands may be permitted. This policy requires that avoidance and minimization be emphasized and demonstrated prior to consideration of mitigation. Furthermore, the California Wetland Protection Policy also is incorporated into the Basin Plan. The goals of this policy include ensuring "no overall net loss" and "long-term net gains in the quantity, quality, and permanence of wetland acreage and values …" (Governor's Executive Order W-59-93). Wetlands not subject to protection under Sections 404 and 401 of the Clean Water Act are still subject to regulation, and protection under the California Water Code. Please also see discussion in part b) above relating to sensitive natural communities, some of which are wetland types.

4d. <u>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?</u>

- **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.**

- Project-related implementation actions – in-channel sediment excavation and channel and riparian corridor restoration – would result in an overall enhancement of habitat conditions. A portion of these actions could potentially result in temporary impediments to anadromous salmon migration routes. These temporary potential impacts would be offset by a net, long-term improvement in habitat conditions. Compliance measures and BMPs such as riparian fencing (for cattle exclusion), silt fence and straw wattles (for sediment control) have been known to entrap or entangle terrestrial wildlife (such as elk and deer) as well as some aquatic species (salamanders) and reptiles (snakes). Some specific areas are more prone to creating barriers to wildlife and can best be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. If there is a potential for an adverse impact to wildlife migration and/or use of a native wildlife nursery, the timing of the discharge, the location or the type of the compliance measure can be changed to avoid or minimize the impact to less than significant levels. For example, rotational grazing practices and hot wire fences are alternatives to exclusionary fencing that have the potential to impede wildlife migration. Another example is concentrating efforts on erosion control methods to avoid using silt fences in sensitive areas. Additionally, natural fiber straw waddles without plastic netting are available to use as alternatives to sediment control technologies that may be a migration barrier. Based on the site-specific situation, the case-by-case flexibility associated with the Project and the avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures associated with a particular component project, the potential impacts are less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

5. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Will the Project:

5a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to section 15064.5?

- **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.**
- See 5c. discussion below.

5b. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to section 15064.5?

- **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.**
- See 5c. discussion below.

5c. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?

- **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.**
- 5a, 5b, and 5c. It is unlikely that the majority of compliance measures would cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical or archaeological resource pursuant to Cal. Code Regs., title 14, section 15064.5. The implementation of compliance measures resulting from the Project would not result in the alteration of a significant historical or archaeological resource. However, in cases where the installation or expansion of compliance measures may involve large scale excavations or earth disturbing activities, a cultural resources investigation should be conducted before any substantial disturbance. The cultural resources investigation will include, at a minimum, a records search for previously identified cultural resources and previously conducted cultural resources investigations of the project parcel and vicinity.

- In the event that avoidance is infeasible, the component projects will be required to follow Native American Heritage Commission's mandate for Native American human burials and skeletal remains, in partnership with affected tribe(s), in order to adequately provide for recovering scientifically consequential information for the site. In the event that the ground disturbances uncover previously undiscovered or documented resources, California law protects Native American burials, skeletal remains, and associated grave goods regardless of the antiquity and provides for the sensitive treatment and disposition of those remains (Health & Safety Code, Section 7050.5; Public Resource Code, Section 5097.9 et seq). A record search should include, at a minimum, contacting the appropriate information center of the California Historical Resources Information System, operated under the auspices of the California Office of Historic Preservation. In coordination with the information center or a qualified archaeologist, a determination regarding whether previously identified cultural resources will be affected by the proposed project must be made and if previously conducted investigations were performed to satisfy the requirements of CEQA. If not, a cultural resources survey would need to be conducted. The purpose of this investigation would be to identify resources before they are affected by a proposed project and avoid the impact. If resources are identified site-specific implementation will minimize impacts. Even with such measures incorporated, impacts may still be potentially significant and unavoidable.

7. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Will the Project:

7a.iv. Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: landslides?

- **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.**
- See 7c. discussion below.

7b. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

- **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.**
- See 7c. discussion below.

7c. 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?

- **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.**

- 7a.iv, 7b, and 7c. The geographic scope of the activities covered under the Project may include areas that are susceptible to soil erosion, gully formation, soil creep, and shallow landslides due to the presence of steep slopes, high rainfall rates, and/or underlying geology. The reasonably foreseeable compliance measures section (G) includes BMPs that are designed specifically to reduce erosion and landslide potential. As a result of the incorporation of soil erosion and landslide control BMPs and mitigation measures, the potential for the Project to result in increased soil erosion, loss of topsoil, or landslides is less than significant. There is no reasonably foreseeable potential for the Project to result in lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse.

- Due to the construction and maintenance of structural BMPs and the construction associated with restoration activities, limited grading may occur that could temporarily increase erosion and sedimentation rates. Implementation of compliance measures may result in minor temporary soil excavation or disturbance during implementation of compliance measures that involve construction of structural BMPs such as road drainage installation, field leveling for irrigation management or installation of off channel stock watering ponds. Construction related erosion impacts should cease with the cessation of construction activity. With appropriate implementation and maintenance of BMPs, the potential for increased soil erosion or loss of topsoil is less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

7f. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geological feature?

- **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.**

- In cases where the construction or maintenance of structural BMPs related to compliance measures may involve large scale excavations or earth disturbing activities, a paleontological and geological investigation should be conducted before any substantial disturbance. The investigations will include, at a minimum, a records search for previously identified paleontological or geological resources and previously conducted paleontological and geological resources investigations of the project parcel and vicinity. Investigations will allow project proponents to avoid significant impacts to unique paleontological or geological resources, sites, and features.

8. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Will the Project:

8a. Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

- **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.**

- Project-related implementation actions may result in the generation of a limited amount of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions during the installation and maintenance of structural BMPs and construction activities associated with restoration activities. GHG emissions related to the exhaust from equipment and vehicles used in construction would be short-term and of limited magnitude.

- The California Department of Water Resources (CDWR) has developed a suite of BMPs, summarized below, designed to reduce GHG emissions from construction projects.[5] The environmental impacts from GHG emissions can be mitigated by implementing these BMPs when applicable.
  - Use of repowered engines, electric drive trains, or other high-efficiency technologies.
  - Perform on-site material hauling with trucks equipped with on-road engines.
  - Avoid use of generators when possible, use alternative fuels, when generator use is unavoidable.
  - Produce concrete on-site, when possible.
  - Use concrete mix designs that reduce GHG emissions while maintaining performance standards.
  - Limit material and equipment deliveries to off-peak traffic hours.
  - Reduce the amount of cement used in concrete when appropriate.
  - Limit material hauling to off-peak traffic hours.
  - Restrict equipment idling time.

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[5] CDWR, 2023. Climate Action Plan Phase 1: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Plan, Update 2023 (https://water.ca.gov/-/media/DWR-Website/Web-Pages/Programs/All-Programs/Climate-Change-Program/Climate-Action-Plan/Files/Exhibit-C-CAP-Phase-1-Update-2023.pdf).

- Maintain equipment in proper working condition and perform preventative maintenance.
- Maintain appropriate equipment tire inflation.
- Encourage the use of carpooling, public transit, and bicycling when possible.
- Require equipment be turned off at the end of the business day and use high efficiency lighting and Energy Star compliant climate control units.
- When possible, use a SmartWay1-certified truck for deliveries and hauling distances in excess of 100 miles where a heavy-duty class 7 or class 8 semi-truck or 53-foor or longer box trailer is required.
- Develop a construction debris recycling program.

9. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Will the Project:

9a. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

- Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.
- See 9b discussion below.

9b. 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?

- **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.**
- 9a and 9b. At a fraction of sites, hazardous materials or substances that pose spill risks such as machinery fuel or hydraulic fluid may be used during construction activities associated with the Project. Additionally, excavation activities may discover other hazardous materials or substances. Required remediation actions of such spills or discoveries would include the proper disposal and transport of contaminated soils, but such waste is expected to be of small volume. Proper handling in accordance with relevant laws and regulations would minimize hazards to the public or the environment, and the potential for accidents or upsets. Appropriate implementation of hazardous waste transport and disposal BMPs would reduce the environmental impacts to less-than-significant levels.

10. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Will the Project:

10a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?

- **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.**
- Restoration actions implemented as part of the Project may potentially result in the violation of water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or the degradation of surface or groundwater quality. While temporary violations and degradation are possible, the focus of such projects would be on long-term, sustained recovery of water quality conditions. All appropriate BMPs would be implemented to mitigate impacts on water quality.

10c.i. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?

- **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.**
- See 10c.iv. discussion below.

10c.iv. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would impede or redirect flood flows?

- **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.**
- 10c.i. and 10c.iv. Infiltration basins, grading, road construction, and in-stream restoration are all activities which could potentially cause an alteration of the existing drainage pattern of a site. In most cases however, these compliance measures would be installed with appropriately designed mitigation measures to limit any alteration of the existing drainage pattern, unless beneficial to the environment. In general, such compliance measures could be installed without resulting in substantial erosion of siltation on- or offsite. For example, scheduling, straw, seed, silt fence, straw waddle, straw bales, drip protection, vehicle cleaning and maintenance, and site inspections are all methods that can be employed. Permittees are commonly required to install and maintain erosion control measures (e.g., waterbars, rolling dips, mulch, rock rip-rap) to prevent

discharge of excess sediment from soil disturbing activities. The potential impacts of flood flow alterations can be mitigated to less than significant levels with flow modeling and monitoring and through the proper design, siting, and operational timing of projects.

12. MINERAL RESOURCES

Will the Project:

12a. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be a value to the region and the residents of the state?

- **Less than Significant Impact.**
- See 12b. discussion below.

12b. 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?

- **Less than Significant Impact.**
- 12a. and 12b. None of the compliance measures identified contemplate the use of non-structural or structural BMPs that would 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 or 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. It is possible that access to certain areas for gravel, gold, or other mineral extraction activities could be affected by compliance measures such as riparian buffers, restoration projects, or areas of exclusion or stream bank stabilization projects. While possible, these management measures are unlikely to bar access completely. Therefore, the appropriate finding is less than significant.

13. NOISE

Will the Project:

13a. Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the Project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?

- **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.**
- See 13b. discussion below.

13b. Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

- **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.**
- 13a. and 13b. Increased noise levels would likely be associated with heavy equipment operation associated with construction of structural compliance measures. The implementation of structural compliance measures may result in localized increased noise levels that can largely be minimized or mitigated through timing and are not predicted to be a significant impact. For example, noise levels from activities such as road construction and/or maintenance would not exceed the existing levels and the loudest activities from other construction actions can be planned during peak daily noise.

15. PUBLIC SERVICES

15a.i. 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?

- **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.**
- Increased riparian vegetation increases the fuel loads for wildfires. While fuel loads do not cause fires, the increasing mass available can increase severity of a fire and could impact the demand on fire protection services. Allowing for the removal or thinning of upland vegetation that has high evapotranspiration rates and increases fire risks could be a mitigation measure that results in multiple benefits to the environment and results in less than significant impact levels.

18. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Will the Project:

18a. Would the Project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code § 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:

18a.i. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k) or

- **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.**
- See 18a.ii. discussion below.

18a.ii. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code § 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code § 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe?

- **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.**
- 18a.i and 18a.ii. Tribes within the Project boundary or that may have had historical presence in the area, have been sent Tribal consultation requests to identify potential Project impacts to Tribal cultural resources. It is possible that some Project-related actions could disturb Tribal cultural resources, however, mitigation measures identified in past permits such as the Rural Roads General Order would be applied. These measures include: procedures for discovery during significant ground disturbing Project activities; mitigation measures for treatment of human remains; or mitigation measures to minimize and avoid significant adverse impacts to Tribal cultural resource sites. Sites of Tribal cultural resources will be avoided as possible and the confidentiality of their location maintained to avoid significant adverse impacts.
- The above measures will identify any documented or on-site Tribal cultural resources, and if found, direct implementors to work with local Tribes to protect and preserve them. As such, the finding is that with implementation of these required measures, impacts will be less than significant with mitigation.

19. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Will the Project:

19a. Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?

- **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.**
- The Project may include effluent limitations for phosphorus and nitrogen that may result in a wastewater treatment plant's need to expand treatment system infrastructure. The impact of related construction activities would be temporary and mitigated by relevant soil erosion control BMPs.

20. WILDFIRE

Will the Project:

20b. Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose Project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?

- **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.**
- As addressed in the discussion of question 15a.i above, the increase in riparian vegetation increases fuel loads for wildfires. While fuel loads do not cause fires the increasing mass available can increase severity of a fire and could impact the demand on fire protection services. Allowing for the removal or thinning of upland vegetation that has high evapotranspiration rates and increases fire risks could be a mitigation measure that result in multiple benefits to the environment and results in less than significant impact levels.

21. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

21a. Does the Project have the potential to substantially 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, substantially 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?

- **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.**
- Reasonably foreseeable actions to comply with the Project will benefit native fish and wildlife species including rare and endangered species by restoring the erosional-depositional regime closer to its natural condition and enhancing stream-riparian habitat conditions in the Laguna watershed such that fish and wildlife species and their populations in and near waters of the state thrive. Reasonably foreseeable compliance actions, where applicable, would have to be permitted by either the North Coast Water

Board, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, NOAA Fisheries, and/or the County (which would require a CEQA determination, and as applicable, a Biological Assessment). As described earlier in the explanation of checklist responses for Biological Resources, North Coast Water Board staff conclude that, with appropriate mitigation incorporated, compliance actions would pose less than significant risks to plant or animal communities. Also, as noted by the checklist responses for Cultural Resources and in the explanation for the checklist responses for Tribal Cultural Resources, there are no significant impacts to California history or prehistory expected with appropriate mitigation efforts.

21b. <u>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.)?</u>

- **Less than Significant Impact.**

- The cumulative adverse impact of sediment erosion control and flood retention BMPs has the potential to adversely affect the volume of water that would reach the channel network, thereby impacting the capacity for streams to assimilate pollutants. These impacts are not expected to be significant and their adverse effects can be managed with a robust monitoring and reporting program and adaptive management techniques. Compliance measures are expected to result in long-term, cumulative net improvements in the pollutant assimilative capacity of riparian corridors thereby protecting against much of the water quality degradation that could result from changes in flow volumes.

21c. <u>Does the Project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?</u>

- **Less Than Significant Impact.**

- The Project would not cause any substantial adverse effects to human beings, either directly or indirectly. The Project is intended to benefit human beings through implementation of actions expected to enhance fish populations, aesthetic attributes, recreational opportunities, and contribute to a reduction in property damage in and/or nearby to stream channels in the Laguna watershed.