MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

FILE: P23-0008

PROJECT NAME Deer Valley & Ridge Road Parcel Map

NAME OF APPLICANT: Thomas Vassey

ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NO.: 102-060-063 **SECTION:** 9 **T:** 10N **R:** 9E

LOCATION: The project is located on the south side of Deer Valley Road, approximately 20 feet south of the intersection with Ridgewood, in the Rescue area, Supervisorial District 4.

☐ **GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT: FROM: TO:**

☐ **REZONING: FROM: TO:**

☒ **TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP** ☐ **SUBDIVISION:**

SUBDIVISION (NAME):

☐ **SPECIAL USE PERMIT TO ALLOW:**

☐ **OTHER:**

REASONS THE PROJECT WILL NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:

☐ **NO SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS WERE IDENTIFIED DURING THE INITIAL STUDY.**

☒ **MITIGATION HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED WHICH WOULD REDUCE POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS.**

☐ **OTHER:**

In accordance with the authority and criteria contained in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), State Guidelines, and El Dorado County Guidelines for the Implementation of CEQA, the County Environmental Agent analyzed the project and determined that the project will not have a significant impact on the environment with incorporated mitigation measures. Based on this finding, the Planning Department hereby prepares this MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION. A period of thirty (30) days from the date of filing this mitigated negative declaration will be provided to enable public review of the project specifications and this document prior to action on the project by COUNTY OF EL DORADO. A copy of the project specifications is on file at the County of El Dorado Planning Services, 2850 Fairlane Court, Placerville, CA 95667.

This Mitigated Negative Declaration was adopted by *Hearing Body on Date*

_____

Executive Secretary

Draft
Initial Study/Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration
for the

Deer Valley/Ridgewood Parcel Split Project

Prepared for:

El Dorado County
2850 Fairlane Court
Placerville, CA 95667
530/621-5355

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June 2025

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section			Page
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS			vi
1	NOTICE ON INTENT TO ADOPT A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION		1-1
	1.1	Project Description	1-1
	1.2	Location	1-1
	1.3	Mitigation Measures Included in the Project to Avoid Potentially Significant Impacts	1-1
	1.4	Review and Approval	1-1
	1.5	Proposed Findings	1-2
2	PROJECT DESCRIPTION		2-1
	2.1	Project Overview	2-1
	2.2	Project Location and Existing Setting	2-1
	2.3	Project Objectives	2-2
	2.4	Future Parcel Development and Access	2-2
	2.5	Project Approvals	2-2
3	ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST		3-1
	3.1	Aesthetics	3-5
	3.2	Agriculture and Forest Resources	3-7
	3.3	Air Quality	3-10
	3.4	Biological Resources	3-15
	3.5	Cultural Resources	3-32
	3.6	Energy	3-35
	3.7	Geology and Soils	3-37
	3.8	Greenhouse Gas Emissions	3-41
	3.9	Hazards and Hazardous Materials	3-44
	3.10	Hydrology and Water Quality	3-47
	3.11	Land Use and Planning	3-51
	3.12	Mineral Resources	3-53
	3.13	Noise	3-54
	3.14	Population and Housing	3-58
	3.15	Public Services	3-59
	3.16	Recreation	3-61
	3.17	Transportation	3-62
	3.18	Tribal Cultural Resources	3-65
	3.19	Utilities and Service Systems	3-67
	3.20	Wildfire	3-70
	3.21	Mandatory Findings of Significance	3-73
4	REFERENCES		4-1
5	REPORT PREPARERS		5-1

Appendices

Appendix A Biological Resource Reports for 3600 Deer Valley Road

Figures

Figure 2-1 Regional Location 2-3
Figure 2-2 Proposed Project 2-4
Figure 2-3 Tentative Parcel Map 2-1
Figure 3-1 El Dorado County Rare Plant Mitigation Area 3-17
Figure 3-2 Map of 2022 Rare Plant Survey Results 3-19

Tables

Table 3-1 Sources and Health Effects of Criteria Air Pollutants 3-12
Table 3-2 El Dorado County Attainment Status Designations 3-12
Table 3-3 Acoustic Term Definitions 3-54
Table 3-4 Typical Noise Levels 3-55

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

2023 Ozone Plan	Sacramento Regional 8-Hour Ozone Attainment and Reasonable Further Progress Plan
AB	Assembly Bill
ADU	accessory dwelling unit
APN	Assessor's Parcel Number
AQAP	air quality attainment plan
Basin Plan	Water Quality Control Plan for the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Basins
BMP	best management practice
CAAQS	California Ambient Air Quality Standards
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CFC	California Fire Code
CNDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
CO_2	carbon dioxide
County	County of El Dorado
CRPR	California rare plant rank
CWPP	community wildfire protection plan
dB	decibels
DOT	County Department of Transportation
DTSC	California Department of Toxic Substance Control
DWR	California Department of Water Resources
EDCAQMD	El Dorado County Air Quality Management District
EDCHMP	El Dorado County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan
EDCSO	El Dorado County Sheriff's Office
EP	Ecological Preserve
ESA	federal Endangered Species Act
GHG	greenhouse gas
LAMP	Local Agency Management Plan
LOS	level of service
MCAB	Mountain Counties Air Basin
MRZ	Mineral Resource Zones
MS4	municipal separate storm sewer system
msl	mean sea level
$MTCO_2e/yr$	metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent per year

NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAHC	Native American Heritage Center
NCIC	North Central Information Center
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation
ORMP	Oak Resources Management Plan
PG&E	Pacific Gas and Electric Company
PM_{10}	respirable particulate matter
$PM_{2.5}$	fine particles
Project Applicant	Thomas Vasey
Project	Deer Valley/Ridgewood Parcel Split
RFPD	Rescue Fire Protection District
RL	Rural Lands
RR	Rural Residential
RWQCB	regional water quality control board
SB	Senate Bill
SGMA	Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
SIP	State Implementation Plan
SMAQMD	Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District
SR	State Route
SRA	state responsibility area
SWMP	storm water management plan
SWPPP	storm water pollution prevention plan
TAC	toxic air contaminant
Technical Advisory	*Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA*
US 50	US Highway 50
USACE	US Army Corps of Engineers
USFWS	US Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	US Geological Service
VMT	vehicle miles traveled
WEAT	Worker Environmental Awareness Training
WERS	Western El Dorado Recovery Systems

1 NOTICE ON INTENT TO ADOPT A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

The attached Initial Study/Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/Proposed MND) has been prepared for the County of El Dorado (County) as the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The purpose of this IS/Proposed MND is to evaluate and disclose potential environmental effects resulting from the Deer Valley/Ridgewood Parcel Split Project. Under CEQA, the lead agency is the public agency with primary responsibility over approval of the project.

The County prepared this Proposed MND because, although the attached IS identifies potentially significant environmental effects, revisions to the project have been made or agreed to by the applicant that would avoid the effects or mitigate the effects to a point where clearly no significant effects would occur, consistent with Section 15070 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

1.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Thomas Vasey (the Project Applicant) has submitted an application to the County (the Lead Agency) for the Deer Valley/Ridgewood Parcel Split (Project). The Project would split an existing 108.66-acre parcel into four parcels ranging in size from 10 to 40 acres. Although no development is proposed at this time, as a result of the proposed parcel split, it is possible that in the future additional residences and other associated structures and facilities, consistent with County General Plan and Zoning designations, may be developed on the new parcels.

1.2 LOCATION

The Project site is located at 3600 Deer Valley Road, in the unincorporated community of Rescue, in El Dorado County, California (assessor parcel number [APN] 102-060-063).

1.3 MITIGATION MEASURES INCLUDED IN THE PROJECT TO AVOID POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS

The following mitigation measures are identified in the attached IS to reduce potentially significant impacts.

Mitigation Measure 3.4-1: Special-Status Plant Protection

Prior to future development at the Project site, the following measures shall be implemented to protect special-status plants:

- Prior to any vegetation clearing, ground disturbing, or construction activities within the Project site, a qualified botanist shall implement protocol-level botanical surveys during the blooming period for the special-status plants with potential to occur in the Project site. The survey shall be conducted during the blooming/identification period closest to the initiation of proposed vegetation clearing or ground disturbance.
- The surveys shall include all areas where habitat potentially suitable for special-status plant species would be removed or disturbed, plus a 25-foot buffer.
- Surveys shall follow methods from CDFW's *Protocols for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts on Special-Status Native Plant Populations and Natural Communities* (CDFW 2018 or most recent version). The qualified botanist shall (1) be knowledgeable about plant taxonomy; (2) be familiar with plants of the Project region, including special-status plants and sensitive natural communities; (3) have experience conducting floristic botanical field surveys as described in CDFW's protocol document; (4) be familiar with the California Manual of Vegetation (Sawyer et al. 2009 or current version, including updated natural communities data at

http://vegetation.cnps.org/); and (5) be familiar with federal and state statutes and regulations related to plants and plant collecting.

- If no special-status plants are found, the botanist shall document the findings in a report to the applicant and El Dorado County, and no additional measures are required prior to proposed activities.
- If activities last for more than one year, the botanical surveys described above shall be repeated during the blooming period in subsequent years prior to additional vegetation clearing or ground disturbing activities.
- If special-status plants are found, the botanist shall clearly mark, map, and record their locations. A no-disturbance buffer shall be established surrounding these locations, consisting of high visibility fencing with a minimum 4-foot-tall metal fence posts (such as t-posts). Fencing shall be maintained in place throughout the entirety of all ground disturbance or vegetation removal activities to ensure that the special-status plants are protected from equipment and vehicles, construction personnel, digging, trenching, placement of fill, storage of equipment or materials, and all other activities. All personnel involved in ground disturbance or vegetation removal work shall be informed of the requirement to avoid no-disturbance areas and shall be required to sign an acknowledgement that they have received these instructions and agree to adhere to all mitigation measures.
- If special-status plant species are found that cannot be avoided, appropriate mitigation shall be implemented and shall depend on the species and its protection status.
- For unavoidable impacts to Pine Hill endemics, mitigation shall include compliance with the County's Ecological Preserve Fee Program and Zoning Ordinance Section 130.71.050 (described further under question e below). The Project site is located within Mitigation Area 0, where on-site mitigation is encouraged, such as setting aside part of the property as a protected area or purchasing and protecting land in the same ecological preserve (Pine Hill Preserve) that is at least 1.5 times the developed acreage. Whatever method of compliance with Zoning Ordinance Section 130.71.050 is selected for implementation, it will meet the performance standard of no-net-loss of numbers of individuals and extent of occupied habitat for the species being mitigated for.
- For unavoidable impacts to special-status plants that are not Pine Hill Endemics and are not listed under the federal ESA or CESA, various methods may be used to minimize or compensate for impacts on these species. Depending on the biology of the species affected and the potential for transplanting and reseeding, establishing populations through seed collection or transplantation from the site that is to be affected may be implemented. Seeding or transplanting may be used to create new plant populations, or to enhance or expand existing populations. Potential mitigation sites could include suitable locations within or outside the project site. Mitigation could include, or consist of, expanding the affected population on the project site if only a portion of the population is to be removed and suitable habitat is available or can be created to expand the extent of the affected population into a new area. Habitat and individual plants lost shall be mitigated at a minimum 1:1 ratio, considering acreage as well as function and value of the new population and habitat. Monitoring, reporting, and land preservation methods will follow those established by the County in County's Ecological Preserve Fee Program and Zoning Ordinance Section 130.71.050.
- If an affected plant species, whether a Pine Hill Endemic or not, is protected under the federal ESA or CESA, coordination/consultation with USFWS and/or CDFW will be required. A site-specific mitigation strategy to compensate for loss of occupied habitat and individuals, consistent with the requirements of the federal ESA or CESA, will need to be developed and implemented. Actions to compensate for take of the federal ESA or CESA protected species may include preserving and enhancing existing populations and creation of new populations. Elements of the mitigation approach and success criteria required by USFWS or CDFW may include, but would not be limited to:
    - Identification of appropriate mitigation ratios for enhancement, expansion, and creation of target plant populations to fully compensate for direct loss of affected plant populations as well as temporal losses of functions and values.
    - Number and/or density of target plant individuals in the mitigation area.

    - A requirement that compensatory and preserved populations shall be self-producing. Populations would be considered self-producing when plants reestablish annually for a set number of years with no human intervention, such as supplemental seeding.
    - If mitigation includes dedication of conservation easements, identifying responsible parties for long-term management, conservation easement holders, long-term management requirements, and funding sources as determined appropriate by the regulatory agency(ies).
- Documentation of the completion of the mitigation strategy and coordination/consultation process with USFWS or CDFW shall be provided to El Dorado County before commencement of any project activities that could adversely affect the protected plant species. Prior to any ground-disturbing or vegetation-removal activities, a Worker Environmental Awareness Training (WEAT) shall be prepared and administered to the construction crews. The WEAT will include the following: discussion of the state and federal Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act, the Project's permits and CEQA documentation, and associated mitigation measures; consequences and penalties for violation or noncompliance with these laws and regulations; identification of special-status wildlife that may be encountered on the project site; location of any avoidance, exclusion, or buffer areas; material to watch for that may indicate the presence of subsurface cultural resources; hazardous substance spill prevention and containment measures; and the contact person in the event of the discovery of a special-status wildlife species or potential cultural resources. A handout summarizing the WEAT information shall be provided to workers to keep on-site for future reference. Upon completion of the WEAT training, workers will sign a form stating that they attended the training, understand the information presented and will comply with the regulations discussed.

Mitigation Measure 3.4-2: Coast Horned Lizard Protection

Future development at the Project site shall implement the following measures to protect coast horned lizard:

- Within 14 days prior to vegetation removal or ground disturbing activities within the Project site, a qualified biologist familiar with the life history of coast horned lizard shall conduct a focused visual survey of the work area, plus a 100-foot buffer, which shall include walking linear transects of the site.
- If coast horned lizards are not detected during the focused survey, the qualified biologist shall submit a report summarizing the results of the survey to the applicant and El Dorado County, and no additional measures are required prior to proposed activities.
- If coast horned lizards are detected, a qualified biologist with an appropriate CDFW Scientific Collecting Permit that allows handling of reptiles shall be present during ground disturbing and/or vegetation removal activities and shall inspect the project site before initiation of activities. If coast horned lizards are detected, the qualified biologist shall move individuals into nearby suitable habitat that will not be disturbed by project activities.
- Documentation of compliance with this mitigation measure shall be provided to El Dorado County before commencement of any project construction activities.

Mitigation Measure 3.4-3: Nesting Bird and Raptor Protection

Future development at the Project site shall implement the following measures to protect nesting birds and raptors:

- To minimize impacts to special-status bird species, raptors, and other native birds, potential future development activities (e.g., tree removal, vegetation clearing, ground disturbance, staging, construction of off-site improvements) shall be conducted during the nonbreeding season (approximately September 1 through January 31, as determined by a qualified biologist), when feasible. If project activities are conducted during the nonbreeding season, no further mitigation is required prior to the proposed activity.
- If development activities must commence during the avian nesting season (between February 1 and August 31), within 7 days prior to commencement of work a qualified biologist familiar with birds of California and with experience conducting nesting bird surveys shall conduct focused surveys for special-status birds, nesting raptors, and other native birds. Surveys shall be conducted in publicly accessible areas within 0.5 miles of the

development activity area for golden eagle, 0.25 miles of the development activity area for white-tailed kite, 500 feet of the development activity area for other raptor species and special-status birds, and 50 feet of the development activity area for non-raptor common native bird nests.

- If no active bird nests are found, the qualified biologist shall submit a report documenting the survey methods and results to the applicant and El Dorado County, and work may proceed. If at any time during the nesting season there is a lapse of two weeks or more with no work, a new survey for nesting birds shall be completed before work proceeds.
- If an active bird nest is found, a no-disturbance buffer shall be established around the nest site until the breeding season has ended or a qualified biologist has determined that the young have fledged or the nest is no longer active.
- The size of the no-disturbance buffer shall be determined by the biologist, based on the sensitivity of the bird species, nesting chronology of the species, disturbance characteristics (type, extent, visibility, duration, and timing), existing ambient conditions, and other factors (e.g., screening from existing structures, vegetation, or topography), as determined by the biologist. Buffers typically shall be 0.5 miles for golden eagle, 0.25 miles for white-tailed kite, 500 feet for other raptors, 100 feet for non-raptor special-status bird species, and at least 20 feet for common non-raptor bird species. The size of the buffer may be adjusted if a qualified biologist determines that such an adjustment shall be unlikely to adversely affect the nest. Any buffer reduction for a special-status bird species shall require coordination with CDFW.
- Daily monitoring of the nest by a qualified biologist during activities shall be required if the activity has potential to adversely affect the nest as determined by the qualified biologist, the buffer has been reduced, or if birds within active nests are showing behavioral signs of agitation (e.g., standing up from a brooding position, flying off the nest) during project activities, as determined by the qualified biologist.
- Documentation of compliance with this mitigation measure and any required coordination with CDFW shall be provided to El Dorado County before commencement of any project construction activities.

Mitigation Measure 3.4-4: Crotch's Bumblebee Protection

Future development at the Project site shall implement the following measures to protect Crotch's bumblebee:

- Initial ground-disturbing work (e.g., grading, vegetation removal, staging) shall take place between August 15 and March 15 (i.e., outside of the Crotch's bumble bee colony active period, or the period when bumble bees are nesting underground and flying aboveground in the greatest numbers), if feasible, to avoid impacts on nesting Crotch's bumble bees during the colony active period.
- Regardless of the feasibility of the above limited operating period, and because Crotch's bumble bees may use the project site during other life history periods (e.g., overwintering), a qualified biologist familiar with bumble bees of California and experienced using survey methods for bumble bees shall conduct a habitat assessment and focused survey for Crotch's bumble bee before the start of any ground-disturbing activities. The survey shall be performed when Crotch's bumble bee is most likely to be identified, typically from April through August (i.e., the colony active period) when floral resources and ideal weather conditions are present and shall follow the methods in *Survey Considerations for California Endangered Species Act Candidate Bumble Bee Species* (CDFW 2023). The survey shall be conducted during the colony active period closest to the start of planned ground-disturbing activities to determine whether Crotch's bumble bees are present on the project site. The survey area shall include all habitat determined to be suitable for Crotch's bumble bees as determined during the habitat assessment. Survey results shall be submitted to the applicant and El Dorado County no less than 7 days before ground-disturbing work begins.
- The applicant shall submit a survey report to CDFW within 1 month of survey completion and shall notify CDFW and El Dorado County within 24 hours if Crotch's bumble bees are detected, as described in *Survey Considerations for California Endangered Species Act Candidate Bumble Bee Species* (CDFW 2023).

- If Crotch's bumble bees are detected during the focused survey, appropriate avoidance measures shall be implemented. Avoidance measures shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
  - Protective buffers shall be implemented around active nesting colonies until these sites are no longer active. A qualified biologist, in coordination with CDFW, shall determine the appropriate buffer size to protect nesting colonies; however, the buffer shall be a minimum of 50 feet.
  - Work on the project site shall be avoided during the colony active period (April through August).
- If impacts on Crotch's bumble bee cannot be avoided, the applicant shall obtain an incidental take permit (ITP) from CDFW and shall implement all avoidance measures included in the ITP.
- Documentation of compliance with this mitigation measure and any required coordination with CDFW or acquisition of an ITP shall be provided to El Dorado County before commencement of any ground-disturbing work.

Mitigation Measure 3.4-5: Bat Protection

Future development at the Project site must implement the following measures to protect bats:

- Within 14 days before any tree removal, a qualified biologist familiar with bats and bat ecology, and experienced in conducting bat surveys, shall conduct surveys for bat roosts in suitable habitat (e.g., large trees, crevices, cavities, exfoliating bark, foliage, buildings) within 250 feet of the tree(s) to be removed.
- If no evidence of bat roosts is found, the qualified biologist shall submit a report summarizing the results of the survey to the applicant and El Dorado County, and no further study shall be required.
- If evidence of bat maternity roosts or hibernacula is observed, the species and number of bats using the roost shall be determined by a qualified biologist using noninvasive methods. Bat detectors (i.e., acoustic monitoring) or evening emergence surveys shall be used if deemed necessary to supplement survey efforts by the qualified biologist.
- A no-disturbance buffer of 250 feet shall be established by the qualified biologist around active maternity roosts or hibernacula of pallid bat or western red bat, as well as maternity roosts (i.e., considered to be a wildlife nursery) or winter hibernacula of other bat species that contain a substantial number of bats (i.e., more than a few roosting bats that would leave on their own during the day). Project activities shall not occur within this buffer until after the roosts no longer support juvenile bats or hibernating bats as determined by a qualified biologist.
- If roosts of pallid bat or western red bat are determined to be present and must be removed, the bats shall be excluded from the roosting site before the tree is removed. A program addressing compensation, exclusion methods, and roost removal procedures shall be developed in coordination with CDFW before implementation. Exclusion methods may include use of one-way doors at roost entrances (bats may leave but not reenter) or sealing roost entrances when the site can be confirmed to contain no bats. Exclusion efforts may be restricted during periods of sensitive activity (e.g., during hibernation or while females in maternity colonies are nursing young). The loss of each roost (if any) resulting from the project shall be replaced in coordination with CDFW and may require construction and installation of bat boxes suitable to the bat species and colony size excluded from the original roosting site. If determined necessary during coordination with CDFW, replacement roosts shall be implemented before bats are excluded from the original roost sites. After the replacement roosts are constructed and it is confirmed that bats are not present in the original roost site by a qualified biologist, the roost tree or building may be removed. For roost trees, a two-step tree removal process supervised by a qualified biologist shall be implemented, including removal of all branches that do not provide roosting habitat on the first day, and removal of the remaining portion of the tree on the following day. For trees used as maternity roosts or hibernacula by non-special status bat species, the trees may be removed either when a qualified biologist determines that bats are no longer present, or using the exclusion and removal method described above for pallid bat and wester red bat if bats are using the tree for a daytime roost, but it is no longer functioning as a

maternity roost or hibernacula. Coordination with CDWF and compensatory measures, such as installation of bat boxes, will not be required for non-special status bat species.

Documentation of compliance with this mitigation measure shall be provided to El Dorado County before commencement of any tree removal activities.

Mitigation Measure 3.4-6: Aquatic Resources Protection

Future development at the Project site must implement the following measures to protect aquatic resources:

- If ground disturbance is proposed within 25 feet of the bank of the seasonal stream flowing through Parcels C and D, at a minimum, any portion of the stream within 25 feet of the disturbance footprint shall be delineated and evaluated by a qualified biologist for jurisdiction as a water or wetland of the United States and/or water of the state. The delineation shall follow the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) methods current at the time.
- If the aquatic feature is determined to be jurisdictional, all applicable permits shall be obtained prior to any disturbance of the feature(s). All permit requirements shall be adhered to, including any potential compensatory mitigation that may be required.
- Authorization for dredge or fill of waters of the United States shall be secured from USACE and the regional water quality control board (RWQCB) through the permitting processes for Clean Water Act Sections 401 and 404. In association with Section 404, Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the Central Valley RWQCB shall be obtained. For impacts on waters of the state that are not also waters of the United States and are therefore not covered by the 401 Water Quality Certification, the applicant shall apply to the RWQCB for Waste Discharge Requirements. Any waters of the United States or waters of the state that are affected by the project shall be replaced on a no-net-loss basis in accordance with the applicable USACE and RWQCB permit requirements.
- Before commencing activity that may divert the natural flow or otherwise alter the bed or bank of any lake or stream on the Project site (i.e., the seasonal stream and any associated water bodies), the applicant shall notify CDFW, through issuance of a Lake and Streambed Alteration Notification (notification). If CDFW determines, based on the notification, that project activities trigger the need for a Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement, the project applicant shall obtain an agreement from CDFW before the activity commences. The applicant shall conduct activities in accordance with the agreement, including implementing reasonable measures in the agreement necessary to protect fish and wildlife resources, when working within the bed or bank of waterways or in riparian habitats associated with those waterways.

Mitigation Measure 3.4-7: Oak Resources Protection

Future development at the Project site shall implement the following measures to comply with the County's ORMP:

- Future development at the Project site shall avoid impacts to protected oak resources as much as possible.
- If avoidance is not possible, prior to future tree removal at the Project site, an Oak Resources Technical Report shall be developed by a qualified biologist that maps and quantifies unavoidable impacts to the County's three classes of protected oak resources,—oak woodlands, individual native oak trees, and heritage trees. Depending on the impact, an Oak Tree Removal Permit or Oak Woodland Removal Permit shall be obtained from the County.
- The applicant shall compensate for loss of protected oak trees and oak woodlands through any combination of in-lieu fees, conservation, and/or replanting, as required under the ORMP, to the satisfaction of the El Dorado County Community Development Department.

Mitigation Measure 3.5-1: Protection of Archaeological Resources

- The following shall be implemented during future ground-disturbing activities:
- In the event that unknown buried archaeological deposits (e.g., prehistoric stone tools, milling stones, shells, midden soils) are encountered during construction, all ground-disturbing activity within 50 feet of the resources shall be halted and a qualified professional archaeologist (36 Code of Federal Regulations 61) and appropriate

Native American tribal representative shall be notified immediately and retained to assess the significance of the find. Construction activities could continue in other areas.

- If the find is determined to be significant by the qualified archaeologist or Native American tribe (i.e., because it is determined to constitute a unique archaeological resource), the archaeologist, in consultation with the Count and the culturally affiliated Native American tribe(s) shall develop appropriate procedures to protect the integrity of the resource and ensure that no additional resources are affected. Procedures could include but would not necessarily be limited to preservation in place, subsurface testing, or contiguous block unit excavation and data recovery.

1.4 REVIEW AND APPROVAL

The purpose of the IS/Proposed MND is to present to decision-makers and the public information about the environmental consequences of implementing the project. This IS/Proposed MND will be available for a 30-day public review period from April 21, 2025 to May 21, 2025.

Supporting documentation referenced in this document is available for review at:

County of El Dorado
Planning and Building Department
2850 Fairlane Court, Building C
Placerville, California 95667

Comments should be addressed to:

Craig Osborn, Associate Planner
Planning and Building Department
2850 Fairlane Court, Building C
Placerville, California 95667

E-mail comments may be addressed to: craig.osborn@edcgov.us

If you have questions regarding the IS/Proposed MND, please call Craig Osborn at: (530) 621-5697. If you wish to send written comments (including via e-mail), they must be postmarked by May 21, 2025.

After comments are received from the public and reviewing agencies, the County may (1) adopt the MND, a mitigation monitoring and reporting program (MMRP), and approve the project; (2) undertake additional environmental studies, potentially including preparation of an Environmental Impact Report; or (3) deny the project. If the project is approved, the project proponent may proceed with the project.

1.5 PROPOSED FINDINGS

The County has reviewed and considered the proposed project and has determined that the project will not have a significant effect on the environment, with the proposed mitigation measures and based upon the substantial supporting evidence provided in the IS. The County hereby prepares and proposes to adopt a MND for this project.

2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

Thomas Vasey (the Project Applicant) has submitted an application to the County of El Dorado (County) (the Lead Agency under CEQA) for the Deer Valley/Ridgewood Parcel Split (Project). The Project would split an existing 108.66-acre parcel into four parcels ranging in size from 10 to 40 acres (Parcels A, B, C, and D).

2.2 PROJECT LOCATION AND EXISTING SETTING

The Project site is located at 3600 Deer Valley Road, in the unincorporated community of Rescue, in El Dorado County, California. The Project site is within the western edge of the Sierra Nevada foothills, 25 miles northeast of the City of Sacramento (Figure 2-1). Folsom Lake is approximately 6 miles west of the Project and the U.S Highway 50 corridor is approximately 5.5 miles south of the Project.

The Project site is comprised of a 108.66-acre parcel, Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 102-060-063, located along Deer Valley Road, southwest of Ridgewood Drive, and Northwest of Starbuck Road (Figure 2-2). The Project site is located in Section 9, Township 10N, and Range 09E, on the Shingle Springs, California 7.5-minute USGS quadrangle. Previously, in 2023, the Project site underwent a lot line adjustment (LLA 22-0017), through which APN 102-060-063 was created by combining two former smaller parcels (APN 102-060-054 and 102-060-055).

The Project site and surrounding properties are located in a rural setting predominately characterized by mixed oak-foothill pine woodlands, whiteleaf manzanita chaparral, and annual grasslands. The property is hilly, with elevations ranging from approximately 1,320 to 1,640 feet above mean sea level (msl).

Existing development on-site consists of a utility corridor that runs north/south through the eastern portion of the site, a segment of Deer Valley Road that crosses the western edge of the site, a dirt road west of the utility corridor crossing through proposed Lot A, a single house on proposed lot C, a barn and graded house pad on proposed lot D, and a pond near the western portion of the site on proposed lot D.

Adjoining properties support widely spaced rural residences, with very few structures near the parcel boundaries of the Project site. The eastern and southern boundaries are adjacent to several residential parcels, each approximately 10 acres. There are three residential properties adjoining the western boundary, ranging in size from approximately 10 to 14 acres. The northern boundaries adjoin five residential properties ranging from 0.5 to 28 acres.

2.2.1 General Plan and Zoning

The Project site is designated as Rural Residential (RR) in the County General Plan Land Use Diagram, with an Ecological Preserve (EP) overlay (El Dorado County 2004a). As described in the County's General Plan Land Use Element, the RR designation establishes areas for residential and agricultural development. These lands typically have limited infrastructure and public services. This category is appropriate for lands that are characterized by steeper topography, high fire hazards, and limited or substandard access. Clustering of residential units under allowable densities is encouraged as a means of preserving large areas in their natural state or for agricultural production. Typical uses include single-family residences, agricultural support structures, a full range of agricultural production uses, recreation, and mineral development activities.

The Project site's EP overlay designation identifies it as being within the County's ecological preserve area for special-status plant species associated with gabbro soils (Pine Hill Endemics) and therefore subject to the County's Ecological Preserve Fee Program. Given the site's location within the County's Pine Hill ecological preserve area, on-site mitigation to offset unavoidable impacts to Pine Hill Endemic plant species is encouraged. The overlay enables the

land use densities or building intensities for a discretionary project to be clustered or otherwise mitigated to protect Pine Hill Endemics.

The zoning designation for the Project is Rural Lands (RL)-10, which identifies lands that are suitable for limited residential development based on topography, access, groundwater or septic capability, and other infrastructural requirements. This zone may be applied where resource-based industries in the vicinity may impact residential uses. Commercial support activities that are compatible with the available infrastructure may be allowed within this zone to serve the surrounding rural and agricultural communities. Although agricultural uses are allowed, these lands generally do not support exclusive agricultural use, but rather supplement the agricultural use. For special setback purposes, the RL zone is not considered to be an agricultural or timber zone. Minimum lot size designators are applied to this zone based on the constraints of the site, surrounding uses, and other appropriate factors. The minimum lot size designator for the Project site is 10 acres.

2.3 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objective of the proposed project is to subdivide the subject parcel into smaller lots to provide the opportunity for additional residences.

2.4 FUTURE PARCEL DEVELOPMENT AND ACCESS

As a result of the proposed parcel split, it is possible that in the future additional residences and other associated structures and facilities may be developed on the new parcels. This would include up to three new primary residences, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), outbuildings (e.g., barns, garages, sheds), on-site wells, septic systems, landscaping, access routes, and/or other typical residential developments. The timing, extent, location, and other details related to the future development of the proposed parcels are unknown. Therefore, a complete impact analysis of future development on the proposed new parcels is not currently possible. The impact analysis presented in this Initial Study covers the splitting of the single parcel into four parcels, with a general consideration that this could lead to future development and construction on the new parcels. Future development at each parcel will be required to comply with all applicable regulations and requirements, including the County's mitigation requirements for oak resources and ecological preserves and mitigation measures identified in this IS.

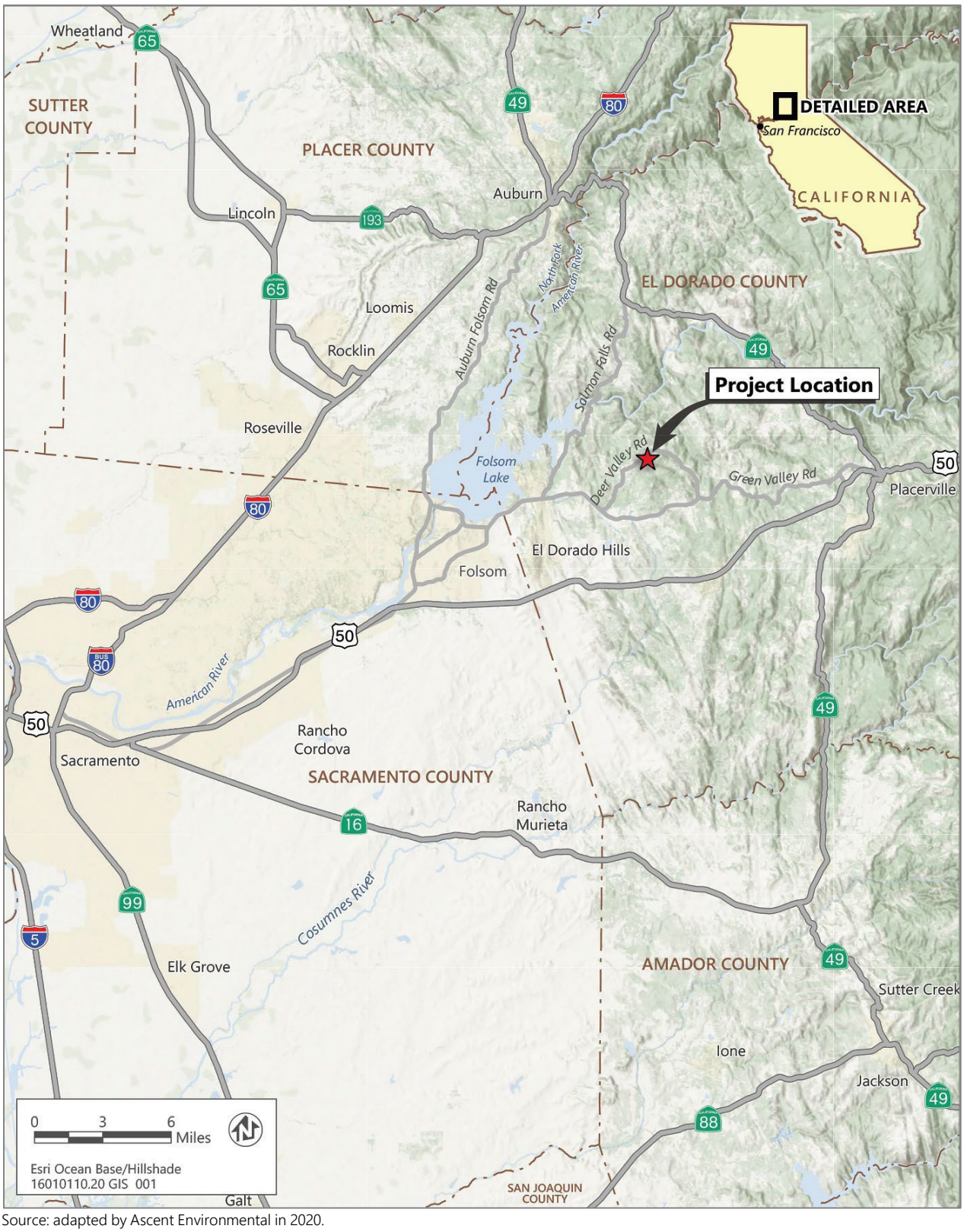
As part of the parcel split, a 50-foot-wide road and public utilities easement is proposed along Road A that extends from Deer Valley Road through proposed Parcel D, to allow access to proposed Parcel C (Figure 2-3). A fire turnaround would be constructed along Road A, in compliance with California Fire Code. Access to proposed Parcel A would include the establishment of a 50-foot-wide road easement on the existing dirt road along the proposed parcel's western boundary. If Parcel A were developed, this existing dirt road would be improved as needed to meet applicable codes and regulations (e.g., paved, fire turnaround) based on the location of development in the parcel. On the northern and eastern boundary of proposed Parcel B there are existing road and public utility easements along Ridgewood Drive that would serve this parcel.

2.5 PROJECT APPROVALS

The project would require the following approvals:

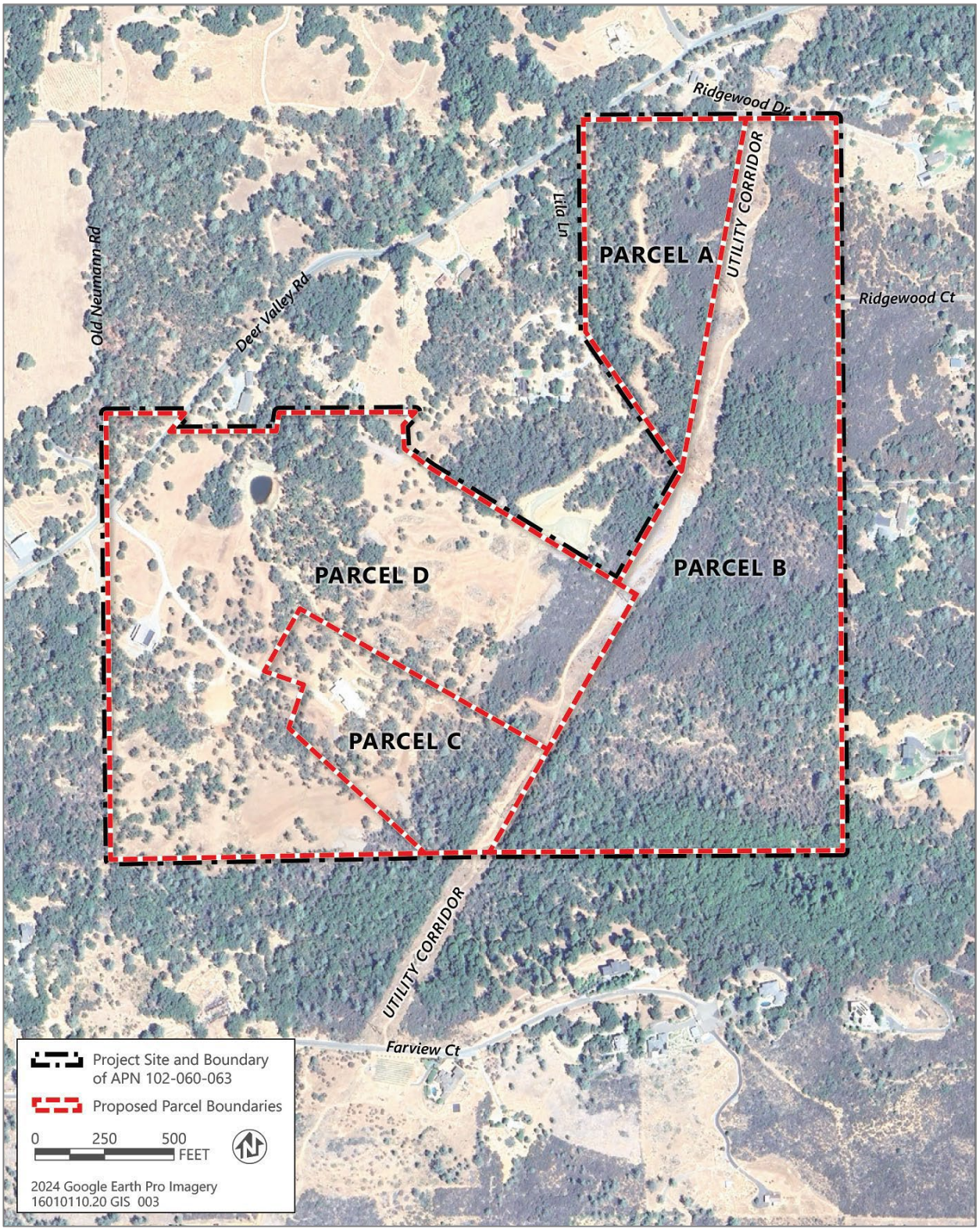
- County of El Dorado approval of the proposed tentative parcel map.
- Subsequent actions and approval would include the following:
- Recordation of final parcel map
- Approval of oak tree and oak woodland removal permit
- Grading permits
- Building permits

- El Dorado County Air Quality Management District: Project Approval
- Rescue Fire Protection District: Plan Review
- El Dorado County Environmental Management Department approval of septic system leach field areas for proposed new parcels.



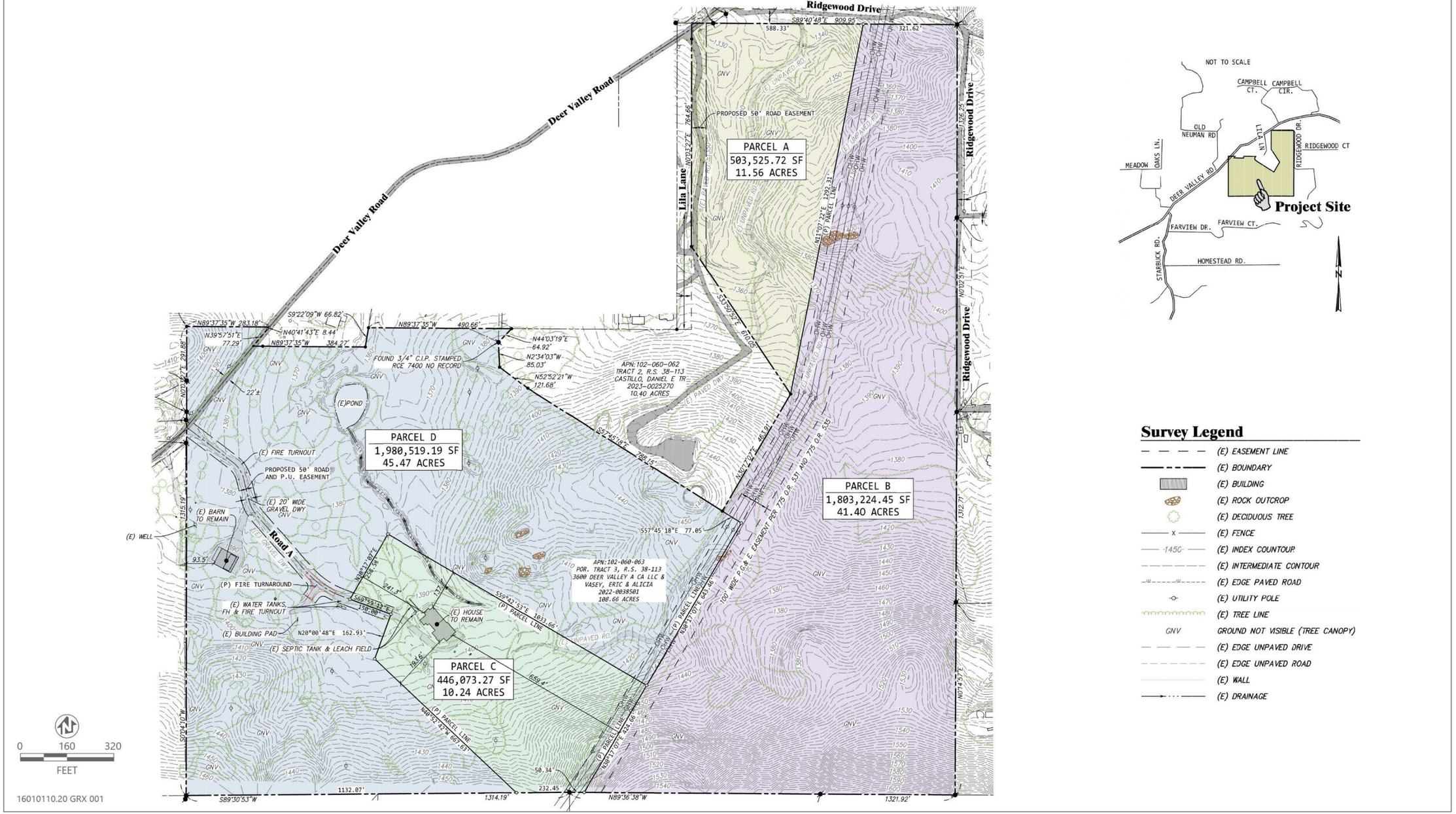
Source: adapted by Ascent Environmental in 2020.

Figure 2-1 Regional Location



Source: adapted by Ascent Environmental in 2024.

Figure 2-2 Proposed Project



Survey Legend

- (E) EASEMENT LINE
- (E) BOUNDARY
- (E) BUILDING
- (E) ROCK OUTCROP
- (E) DECIDUOUS TREE
- (E) FENCE
- (E) INDEX COUNTOUR
- (E) INTERMEDIATE CONTOUR
- (E) EDGE PAVED ROAD
- (E) UTILITY POLE
- (E) TREE LINE
- GNV — GROUND NOT VISIBLE (TREE CANOPY)
- (E) EDGE UNPAVED DRIVE
- (E) EDGE UNPAVED ROAD
- (E) WALL
- (E) DRAINAGE

Source: Image produced and provided by Lebeck Engineering, Inc. in 2024; Adapted by Ascent in 2024.

Figure 2-3 Tentative Parcel

File Contents

2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION 2-1
- 2.1 Project Overview 2-1
- 2.2 Project Location and Existing Setting 2-1
- 2.3 Project Objectives 2-2
- 2.4 Future Parcel Development and Access 2-2
- 2.5 Project Approvals 2-2

Appendices

Figures

Figure 2-1 Regional Location 2-4
Figure 2-2 Proposed Project 2-5
Figure 2-3 Tentative Parcel Map 2-7

3 ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

PROJECT INFORMATION

1.	Project Title:	Deer Valley/Ridgewood Parcel Split
2.	Lead Agency Name and Address:	County of El Dorado Planning and Building Department 2850 Fairlane Court, Building C Placerville, California 95667
3.	Contact Person and Phone Number:	Craig Osborn, Associate Planner (530) 621-5697
4.	Project Location:	3600 Deer Valley Road Rescue, California 95672 Assessor parcel number (APN) 102-060-063
5.	Project Sponsor's Name and Address:	Thomas Vasey 1290 Los Rio Drive Carmichael, CA 95608
6.	General Plan Designation:	Rural Residential (RR)
7.	Zoning:	Rural Land (RL)-10

8. Description of Project: (Describe the whole action involved, including but not limited to later phases of the project, and any secondary, support, or off-site features necessary for its implementation. Attach additional sheets if necessary.)

   Thomas Vasey (project applicant) is proposing to spit parcel APN 102-060-063, which is currently 108.66 acres, into four parcels ranging in size from 10-40 acres. See Chapter 2 of this document for additional information.

9. Surrounding Land Uses and Setting:

   The project site is in a rural area surrounded by residential uses generally on parcels of 10 acres or larger and open space.

10. Other public agencies whose approval is required: (e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement)

- El Dorado County Air Quality Management District: Project Approval
- El Dorado County Building Services
- El Dorado County Environmental Management Department
- El Dorado County Department of Transportation
- Rescue Fire Protection District

11. Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1? If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.?
Note: Conducting consultation early in the CEQA process allows tribal governments, lead agencies, and project proponents to discuss the level of environmental review, identify and address potential adverse impacts to tribal cultural resources, and reduce the potential for delay and conflict in the environmental review process. (See Public Resources Code section 21083.3.2.) Information may also be available from the California Native American Heritage Commission's Sacred Lands File per Public Resources Code section 5097.96 and the California Historical Resources Information System administered by the California Office of Historic Preservation. Please also note that Public Resources Code section 21082.3(c) contains provisions specific to confidentiality.

Yes; consultation was requested on January 22, 2025 and completed Date February 21, 2025.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages. Where checked below, the topic with a potentially significant impact will be addressed in an environmental impact report.

☐ Aesthetics	☐ Agriculture and Forest Resources	☐ Air Quality
☐ Biological Resources	☐ Cultural Resources	☐ Energy
☐ Geology / Soils	☐ Greenhouse Gas Emissions	☐ Hazards / Hazardous Materials
☐ Hydrology / Water Quality	☐ Land Use / Planning	☐ Mineral Resources
☐ Noise	☐ Population / Housing	☐ Public Services
☐ Recreation	☐ Transportation	☐ Tribal Cultural Resources
☐ Utilities / Service Systems	☐ Wildfire	☐ Mandatory Findings of Significance
	☐ None	☒ None with Mitigation Incorporated

DETERMINATION (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

☐ I find that the proposed project could not have a significant effect on the environment, and a **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.

☒ I find that although the proposed project COULD have a significant effect on the environment, there WILL NOT be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A **MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.

☐ I find that the proposed project **MAY** have a significant effect on the environment, and an **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required.

☐ I find that the proposed project **MAY** have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier **EIR** or **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier **EIR** or **NEGATIVE DECLARATION**, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Signature — Date: 5-14-25

Robert Peters — Printed Name

Deputy Director of Planning — Title

El Dorado County, Planning and Building Dept. — Agency

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

1. A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact." answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact." answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact." answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
2. All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
3. Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, Less than Significant Impact.with mitigation, or Less than Significant Impact. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
4. "Negative Declaration: Less than Significant Impact.With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less-than-Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a Less than Significant Impact.level (mitigation measures from "Earlier Analyses," as described in (5) below, may be cross-referenced).
5. Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
   a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
   b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
   c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less than Significant Impact.with Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.
6. Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
7. Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
8. This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project's environmental effects in whatever format is selected.
9. The explanation of each issue should identify:
   a) the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
   b) the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance.

3.1 AESTHETICS

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact.with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact.Impact	No Impact
I. Aesthetics.				
Except as provided in Public Resources Code section 21099 (where aesthetic impacts shall not be considered significant for qualifying residential, mixed-use residential, and employment centers), would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and 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 points.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.1.1 Environmental Setting

The Project is in a rural area, with existing development at the Project site consisting of a utility corridor that runs north/south through the eastern portion of the site, a segment of Deer Valley Road that crosses the western edge of the site, a dirt road to the west of the utility corridor crossing through proposed Lot A, a single house on proposed lot C, a barn and graded house pad on proposed lot D, and a pond near the western portion of the site on proposed lot D. Views of and views from the Project site are generally limited to immediately adjacent residential properties. The visual quality of the Project site is typical for the area, with no unusual or distinctive characteristics. The Project site and surrounding properties are dominated by oak woodland, chaparral, and annual grassland. Understory vegetation in portions of the site has recently been thinned to improve site access and to reduce fuel loads. The topography of the project site is hilly with a generally northwest facing aspect. Elevations range from approximately 1,320 to 1,640 feet above mean sea level (msl).

A list of the county's scenic views and resources is presented in Table 5.3-1 of the El Dorado County General Plan EIR (p. 5.3-3). This list includes areas along highways where viewers can see large water bodies (e.g., Lake Tahoe and Folsom Reservoir), river canyons, rolling hills, forests, or historic structures or districts that are reminiscent of El Dorado County's heritage. The project site is not among the scenic views identified in the General Plan EIR.

There are no officially designated or eligible state scenic highways in proximity to the project site. The nearest officially designated state scenic highway is a segment of US Highway 50 (US 50) near Placerville, approximately 10 miles east of the Project site (Caltrans 2024). The closest eligible state scenic highway is State Route (SR) 49, approximately 10 miles east of the Project site. The project site is not within the viewshed of State US 50 or SR 49, given the distance and topography.

Existing onsite sources of light or glare are minimal, consisting of interior and exterior building lights from a single house and a single barn. There are very few structures near the site boundaries, almost all being over 100 feet and a

majority over 600 feet from the Project site boundaries. Light sources in the vicinity of the project site are also minimal, as is typical of a rural environment, and include light from widely spaced residential buildings and lights from motor vehicles traveling on adjacent roadways. Existing sources of glare in the vicinity of the project site are minimal and include light reflected from building windows and vehicles, as well as roof-top solar panels, including those on the existing barn on Lot D.

3.1.2 Discussion

a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

No Impact.. There are no scenic vistas at the Project site. Views from, and of, the project site are limited by topography and vegetation (e.g., oak woodland). Because the project site is not part of a scenic vista, and no scenic vistas are visible from the project site, the Project would have no effect on a scenic vista.

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

No Impact.. As discussed in Section 3.1.1, the project site is not within the viewshed of an officially designated or eligible state scenic highway. The Project would have no effect to scenic resources 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? 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. The Project site is in a non-urbanized area with a Rural Lands (RL)-10 zoning designation, which identifies lands suitable for limited residential development, with a minimum lot size of 10 acres. Consistent with this designation, the parcel split would divide one large parcel into four parcels ranging in size from 10 to 40 acres. The parcel split itself would not alter the physical conditions at the site. However, potential future development at the Project site would include widely spaced residences at a density similar to that of surrounding properties and would occur in accordance with County requirements, which would ensure that the visual character and quality of new development is compatible with surrounding land use.

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

Less than Significant Impact. As discussed in Section 3.1.1, existing sources of light and glare within and surrounding the Project site are minimal, consisting of interior and exterior building lights from widely spaced residential structures, lights from motor vehicles traveling on adjacent roadways, and small amounts of glare from light reflected from windows and solar panels. The parcel split itself would not introduce new sources of light and glare. However, potential future development on the new parcels would introduce a small amount of new lighting and glare associated with new residential structures and appurtenant facilities. The Project would not create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

3.2 AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact.with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact.Impact	No Impact
II. Agriculture and Forest 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, as updated) 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; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board.				
Would the project:				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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))?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.2.1 Environmental Setting

According to the California Department of Conservation (CDC) Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, most of the Project site is classified as Other Land. There is a small area (approximately 4 acres) in the northwest part of the Project site (just north of the existing barn in the area that would become Parcel D) identified as Farmland of Local Importance, which are lands that do not qualify for the Prime, Statewide, or Unique designation, but are identified in the County General Plan as land that may be important to the local agricultural community (CDC 2020). The project site does not have current Wiliamson Act enrollment (CDC 2024a).

County lands that are suitable for timber production are typically designated Natural Resource (NR) on the General Plan Land Use map and zoned Timber Production Zone (TPZ) or Forest Resource (FR). The Project site is zoned RL-10

and does not contain forestland or timberland. California Public Resource Code (PRC) Section 12220(g) defines forest as "land that can support 10-percent native tree cover of any species, including hardwoods, under natural conditions, and that allows for management of one or more forest resources, including timber, aesthetics, fish and wildlife, biodiversity, water quality, recreation, and other public benefits." PRC Section 4526 defines *timberland* as land that "is available for, and capable of, growing a crop of trees of a commercial species used to produce lumber and other forest products, including Christmas trees." California Government Code Section 51104(g) defines a *timberland production zone* as "an area which has been zoned pursuant to Sections 51112 or 5113 and is devoted to and used for growing and harvesting timber, or for growing and harvesting timber and compatible uses; and timber as trees maintained for eventual harvest for forest project purposes (not including nursery stock)."

3.2.2 Discussion

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?

No Impact.. As discussed in Section 3.2.1, there are no lands designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, and there are no agricultural uses within the project site. Although there is currently no agricultural use at the Project site, the portion of the Project site identified as Farmland of Local Importance would remain available for potential future agricultural use following the proposed parcel split. Therefore, the project would not convert Important Farmland to non-agricultural use.

b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract?

No Impact.. As discussed in Section 3.2.1, the project site is not enrolled in a Williamson Act contract. The existing zoning would not change as a result of the proposed parcel subdivision. If development were to occur, it would be consistent with the zoning. Therefore, the project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract.

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))?

No Impact.. The project site is not zoned as forest land, timberland, or Timberland Production and does not contain forest land or timberland as defined by the Public Resources Code or Government Code. Therefore, the project would not conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production.

d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. Oak woodland areas on the Project site that support at least 10-percent native tree cover meet the PRC Section 12220(g) definition of a forest. Potential future development at the Project site could include tree removal that could convert oak woodland areas to a non-forest use. As established in Mitigation Measures 3.4-7 in Section 3.4, "Biological Resources" of this IS, any future impacts to protected oak resources at the Project site would be required to comply with the County's Oak Resources Conservation Ordinance, found in County Code Chapter 130.39, which provides the standards for implementing the County's Oak Resources Management Plan (ORMP). Through implementation of this measure, the applicant would offset and compensate for any unavoidable impacts to oaks and loss of forest land. Through implementation of this measure, the project would avoid a net loss of forest land and would compensate for any unavoidable conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure 3.4-7: Oak Resources Protection
Implement Mitigation Measure 3.4-7 in Section 3.4, "Biological Resources"

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?

No Impact.. The Project site does not contain agricultural or forest land. There is no designated Farmland or forest land in the vicinity of the project site. Project activities have no mechanism to affect Farmland or forest land distant from the project site. Therefore, the project would not result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use beyond the impact mechanisms evaluated above.

3.3 AIR QUALITY

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact.with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact.Impact	No Impact
III. Air Quality.				
Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied on to make the following determinations.				
Are significance criteria established by the applicable air district available to rely on for significance determinations?	☒ Yes		☐ No	
Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.3.1 Environmental Setting

The project is located in the Mountain Counties Air Basin (MCAB), which is comprised of the western portion of El Dorado County, the middle portion of Placer County, and the entirety of Plumas, Sierra, Nevada, Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, and Mariposa counties. Ozone, respirable particulate matter (PM_{10}), and fine particles ($PM_{2.5}$) are the criteria air pollutants of primary concern in this analysis because of their nonattainment status with respect to the applicable National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) in the El Dorado County portion of the MCAB.

The El Dorado County Air Quality Management District (EDCAQMD) is the primary agency responsible for planning to meet NAAQS and CAAQS in El Dorado County. EDCAQMD works with other local air districts in the Sacramento region to maintain the region's portion of the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for ozone. The SIP is a compilation of plans and regulations that govern how the region and State will comply with the Clean Air Act requirements to attain and maintain the NAAQS for ozone. The Sacramento Regional 8-Hour Ozone Attainment and Reasonable Further Progress Plan (2023 Ozone Plan) was prepared by the five local air districts of the Sacramento Federal Non-attainment Area, with the support of the California Air Resources Board (CARB), and is an air quality attainment plan (AQAP) applicable to development in the Project area (CARB 2023).

EDCAQMD has developed a *Guide to Air Quality Assessment: Determining Significance of Air Quality Impacts under CEQA* (EDCAQMD 2002) for use by lead agencies when preparing environmental documents. The guidance includes thresholds of significance for criteria pollutants and toxic air contaminants (TACs) and recommendations for conducting air quality analyses. The guidance also describes project screening criteria to identify projects that can be classified as Less than Significant Impact.for one or more pollutants without the need for detailed calculations or

modeling. According to EDCAQMD CEQA guidance (2002), single family housing development has a screening cut-point of 280 dwelling units (48 dwelling units if they have fireplaces/woodstoves). Emission from operation of a single family housing development that does not reach this cut-point are presumed to be less-than-significant and do not require air quality modeling. For construction exhaust emissions, impacts from projects that encompass 12 acres or less of ground that is being worked at one time are presumed to be less than significant, as long as standard construction emission conditions are in place (EDCAQMD 2002).

Potential future residential development following the currently proposed parcel split would result in up to three new residences, plus any associated Accessory Dwelling Units, and would be far below this cut-point. Therefore, detailed calculations and modeling of air quality for the Project is not required and impacts can be considered Less than Significant Impact. Furthermore, the EDCAQMD reviewed the proposed Project application and confirmed that quantitative Air Quality Impact Analysis is not required for the Project (EDC 2024a). In their review of the parcel split application, the EDCAQMD identified the following standard conditions as potentially applicable to the Project:

- Fugitive Dust: A Fugitive Dust Mitigation Plan Application with appropriate fees shall be submitted to and approved by the EDCAQMD prior to start of project construction if during the course of the project a Grading Permit is required from the Building Department. Dust control measures shall comply with the requirements of AQMD Rule 223, Fugitive Dust – General Requirements and Rule 223.1 – Construction, Bulk Material Handling, Blasting, Other Earthmoving Activities and Trackout Prevention.
- Open Burning: Burning of waste vegetation that results from "Land Development Clearing" must be permitted through the AQMD. Only dry vegetative waste materials originating from the property may be disposed of using an open outdoor fire. Burning shall adhere to AQMD Rule 300, Open Burning.
- Paving: Road construction shall adhere to AQMD Rule 224, Cutback and Emulsified Asphalt Paving Materials.
- Painting/Coating: The application of architectural coatings shall adhere to AQMD Rule 215, Architectural Coatings.
- New Point or Stationary Source: Prior to construction/installation of any qualifying new point/stationary source emissions units (e.g., emergency standby engine greater than 50 horsepower, etc.), Authority to Construct applications shall be submitted to the AQMD. Submittal of applications shall include facility diagram(s), equipment specifications and emissions estimates, and shall adhere to AQMD Rules 501, General Permit Requirements and 523, New Source Review.
- Open Burning: Burning of waste vegetation that results from "Land Development Clearing" must be permitted through the AQMD. Only dry vegetative waste materials originating from the property may be disposed of using an open outdoor fire. Burning shall adhere to AQMD Rule 300, Open Burning.
- Construction Emissions: During construction, all self-propelled diesel-fueled engines greater than 25 horsepower shall be in compliance with the CARB Regulation for In-Use Off-Road Diesel Fueled Fleets (§ 2449 et al, title 13, article 4.8, chapter 9, California Code of Regulations). The full text of the regulation can be found at CARB's website here: https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/ourwork/topics/construction-earthmoving-equipment Questions on applicability should be directed to CARB at 1.866.634.3735. CARB is responsible for enforcement of this regulation.
- Portable Equipment: All portable combustion engine equipment with a rating of 50 horsepower or greater shall be registered with CARB. A copy of the current portable equipment registration shall be with said equipment. The applicant shall provide a complete list of heavy-duty diesel-fueled equipment to be used on this project, which includes the make, model, year of equipment, and daily hours of operations of each piece of equipment.

CRITERIA AIR POLLUTANTS

Concentrations of criteria air pollutants are used to indicate the quality of the ambient air. Emission source types and health effects are summarized in Table 3-1 and El Dorado County's attainment status for the CAAQS and the NAAQS are shown in Table 3-2.

Table 3-1 Sources and Health Effects of Criteria Air Pollutants

Pollutant	Sources	Acute[1] Health Effects	Chronic[2] Health Effects
Ozone	Secondary pollutant resulting from reaction of ROG and NO_X in presence of sunlight. ROG emissions result from incomplete combustion and evaporation of chemical solvents and fuels; NO_X results from the combustion of fuels	increased respiration and pulmonary resistance; cough, pain, shortness of breath, lung inflammation	permeability of respiratory epithelia, possibility of permanent lung impairment
Carbon monoxide (CO)	Incomplete combustion of fuels; motor vehicle exhaust	headache, dizziness, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, death	permanent heart and brain damage
Nitrogen dioxide (NO_2)	combustion devices; e.g., boilers, gas turbines, and mobile and stationary reciprocating internal combustion engines	coughing, difficulty breathing, vomiting, headache, eye irritation, chemical pneumonitis or pulmonary edema; breathing abnormalities, cough, cyanosis, chest pain, rapid heartbeat, death	chronic bronchitis, decreased lung function
Sulfur dioxide (SO_2)	coal and oil combustion, steel mills, refineries, and pulp and paper mills	Irritation of upper respiratory tract, increased asthma symptoms	Insufficient evidence linking SO_2 exposure to chronic health impacts
Respirable particulate matter (PM_{10}), Fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$)	fugitive dust, soot, smoke, mobile and stationary sources, construction, fires and natural windblown dust, and formation in the atmosphere by condensation and/or transformation of SO_2 and ROG	breathing and respiratory symptoms, aggravation of existing respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, premature death	alterations to the immune system, carcinogenesis
Lead	metal processing	reproductive/ developmental effects (fetuses and children)	numerous effects including neurological, endocrine, and cardiovascular effects

Notes: NO_X = oxides of nitrogen; ROG = reactive organic gases.

[1] "Acute" refers to effects of short-term exposures to criteria air pollutants, usually at fairly high concentrations.

[2] "Chronic" refers to effects of long-term exposures to criteria air pollutants, usually at lower, ambient concentrations.

Sources: EPA 2024.

Attainment Status

As shown in Table 3-2, El Dorado County is designated as nonattainment for ozone with respect to both the NAAQS (8-hour standard) and CAAQS (1-hour Classification and 8-hour standard), nonattainment for PM_{10} with respect to the CAAQS, and nonattainment for $PM_{2.5}$ with respect to the NAAQS.

Table 3-2 El Dorado County Attainment Status Designations

Pollutant	National Ambient Air Quality Standard	California Ambient Air Quality Standard
1-hour Ozone	Nonattainment	Revoked in 2005
8-hour Ozone	Nonattainment	Serious Nonattainment
Carbon Monoxide	Unclassified	Unclassified/Attainment
Nitrogen Dioxide	Attainment	Unclassified/Attainment
Sulfur Dioxide	Attainment	Unclassified/Attainment
24-hour Respirable Particulate Matter (PM_{10})	Nonattainment	Unclassified/Attainment
Annual PM_{10}	Nonattainment	
24-hour Fine Particulate Matter ($PM_{2.5}$)	—	Nonattainment
Annual $PM_{2.5}$	Unclassified	Nonattainment

Source: CARB 2024.

NATURALLY OCCURING ASBESTOS

An asbestos map of western El Dorado County prepared by the County shows the location of individual parcels and areas in the following four categories that either contain NOA or are considered to be subject to elevated risk of containing NOA (El Dorado County 2018):

- Found Area of NOA,
- Quarter Mile Buffer for Found Area of NOA,
- More Likely to Contain Asbestos, and
- Quarter Mile Buffer for More Likely to Contain Asbestos or Fault Line.

The Project site is not located in an area that contains NOA or is at an elevated risk of containing NOA (El Dorado County 2018; CDC 2000).

3.3.2 Discussion

a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

Less than Significant Impact. Applicable air quality attainment plans (AQAPs) (e.g. CARB 2023) for the region, including the MCAB portion of El Dorado County, were developed to bring the region into attainment as required by the federal and California Clean Air Acts. According to the EDCAQMD CEQA guidance (2002), projects are considered consistent with applicable air quality plans if they satisfy the following criteria:

- The project does not require a change in the existing land use designation, such as through a general plan amendment or rezone.
- The project does not exceed the "project alone" significance criteria.
- The project implements applicable emission reduction measures.
- The project complies with all applicable district rules and regulations.

The currently proposed project would consist of a parcel split that would not require a change in existing land use or zoning for the project site, and which was included in growth projections used in the formulation of applicable AQAPs. Potential short-term construction and long-term operation associated with future residential development that may result from the parcel split would be required to implement all applicable emission reduction measures and comply with applicable EDCAQMD rules and regulations. The "Project Alone" significance criteria is based on use of an emissions model to estimate a project's long term operational emissions of reactive organic gases (ROG) and oxides of nitrogen (NOx). According to EDCAQMD guidance, the current project is below the size of projects requiring emission modeling and can be presumed to have Less than Significant Impact.impacts. Because the Project would not conflict or obstruct implementation of applicable air quality plans, impacts would be Less than Significant Impact.

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?

Less than Significant Impact. El Dorado County is currently designated as nonattainment with respect to the NAAQS and CAAQS for ozone, the NAAQS for $PM_{2.5}$, and the CAAQS for PM_{10}. The significance criteria for ozone is based on two directly emitted primary precursors of ozone, ROG and NOx. A project that emits 82 pounds per day or more of either of these pollutants would be considered to have a significant adverse impact on air quality. For the other criteria pollutants, including PM_{10}, a project is considered to have a significant impact on air quality if it will cause or contribute significantly to a violation of the applicable national or state ambient air quality standard(s). (EDCAQMD 2002)

The EDCAQMD has advised that the current project is below the size of projects requiring modeling of anticipated emissions. Future construction-related activities for new residences may occur as an indirect result of the proposed parcel split, which could result in project-generated emissions of ROG, NO_X, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$ from construction activities (e.g., site preparation, grading, building construction, paving, and architectural coating), off-road equipment, material delivery, and worker commute trips. Additionally, long-term operational emissions associated with potential future new residences at the Project site could include area sources (landscape equipment, consumer products, maintenance activities) and mobile sources (vehicle trips to the project site). Future development of the Project site (construction and operation) would be required to comply with applicable EDCAQMD conditions. Emissions resulting from future development would be negligible and would meet the County's screening criteria for projects that can be presumed to have Less than Significant Impact.construction and operational impacts without the need for detailed calculations or modeling. Emissions would not exceed applicable thresholds and would not contribute substantially to the region's nonattainment status.

c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Less than Significant Impact. Sensitive receptors are generally considered to include those land uses where exposure to pollutants could result in health-related risks to sensitive individuals, such as children or the elderly. Residential dwellings, schools, hospitals, playgrounds, and similar facilities are of primary concern because of the potential presence of individuals particularly sensitive to pollutants and the potential for increased and prolonged exposure of individuals to pollutants. The closest sensitive receptors to the Project site are existing residences on adjacent properties, most of which are at least 100 feet from Project site boundaries.

The proposed project entails the splitting of a single parcel into four smaller parcels, which would have no air quality impacts. Potential future residential development of proposed new parcels could result in the release of construction and operational pollutants. Construction-related activities could result in temporary, intermittent emissions of diesel PM from equipment exhaust, including during site preparation and grading. Future site development could also result in the operational emissions of diesel PM from the increase in vehicle trips and associated diesel PM emissions.

Given the relatively large size of proposed parcels (10-40 acres) and the distance of existing nearby residences from parcel boundaries, potential future development on proposed new parcels is not expected to occur in close proximity to sensitive receptors. Furthermore, given the limited extent of potential future development, emissions would be of negligible quantities and would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. In addition, both the CDC and El Dorado County have identified the project site as an area that does not contain NOA. Therefore, future ground disturbance would not result in the potential for NOA to be mobilized and for particles to reach nearby parcels. Impacts would be Less than Significant Impact.

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

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed parcel split would not result in the introduction of any new permanent sources of odors to the area. Potential future residential development at proposed new parcels could result in the release of construction odors. Because construction-related odors would be intermittent, temporary, and would disperse rapidly with distance from the source, construction-related odors would not result in the frequent exposure of a substantial number of individuals to objectionable odors. With respect to operation, residential uses are not land uses that typically generate excessive objectionable odors. Therefore, the proposed project would not generate objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people.

3.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact.with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact.Impact	No Impact
IV. Biological Resources.				
Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the 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?	☐	☒	☐	☐
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?	☐	☒	☐	☐
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☒	☐	☐
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.4.1 Environmental Setting

The Project site is a 108.66-acre parcel near the western edge of the Sierra Nevada Foothills with elevations ranging from approximately 1,320 to 1,640 feet above msl. The topography of the project site is characterized by gently rolling hills with a generally northwest aspect.

The Project site is in a rural area, with most properties in the region being privately owned. Existing development on-site consists of a utility corridor that runs north/south through the eastern portion of the site, a segment of Deer Valley Road that crosses the western edge of the site, a dirt access road crossing through proposed Lot A to the west of the utility corridor, a single house on proposed lot C, a barn and graded house pad on proposed lot D, and a pond near the western portion of the site on proposed lot D.

The USDA Natural Resource Conservation (NRCS) Service Web Soil Survey indicates that the project site is underlain primarily by Rescue stony sandy loams (NRCS 2024), which are gabbro soils influenced by the Pine Hill Intrusive Complex. The Project area is approximately 0.5 miles north of the Pine Hill State Ecological Reserve, which supports rare plant species and communities due to its gabbro soil formation (CNPS 2024a). The Project site is located within the County's Gabbro Soils Rare Plant Preserve, as designated by the site's Ecological Preserve (EP) land use overlay (Figure 3-1) (EDC 2024b).

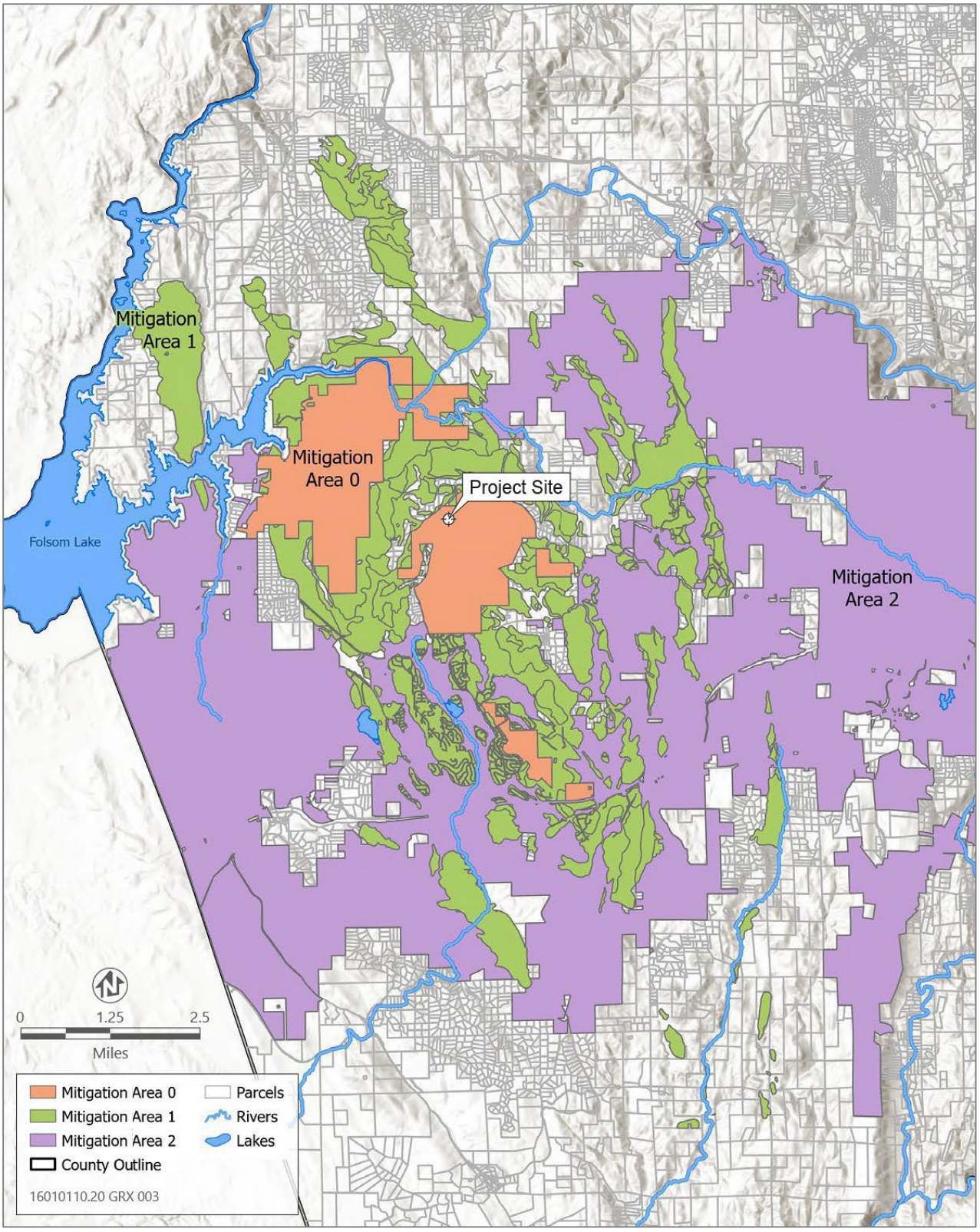
The Project site and surrounding properties are dominated by blue oak–foothill pine woodland, whiteleaf manzanita chaparral, and annual grassland. The predominant trees on the Project site are blue oak *(Quercus douglasil),* interior live oak *(Quercus wislizeni),* and foothill pine *(Pinus sabiniana).* Several native shrubs typical of chaparral habitats in the region are present, including coyote brush *(Baccharis pilularis),* poison oak *(Toxicodendron diversilobum),* whiteleaf manzanita *(Arctostaphylos viscida),* redbud *(Cercis occidentalis),* pitcher sage *(Lepechinia calycina),* California yerba santa *(Eriodictyon californicum),* orange bush monkeyflower *(Diplacus aurantiacus),* California coffee berry *(Frangula californica),* ceanothus *(Ceanothus lemmonii* and *Ceanothus cuneatus),* chamise *(Adenostoma fasciculatum),* and toyon *(Heteromeles arbutifolia).* The annual grassland and herbaceous layer of the chaparral and oak woodland on the site contain native and nonnative grasses and forbs typical of the region including non-native species such as ripgut brome *(Bromus diandrus),* soft chess *(Bromus hordeaceus),* Italian thistle *(Carduus pycnocephalus),* wild oat *(Avena fatua),* and Dogtail grass *(Cynosurus echinatus),* and native species such as California melic *(Melica californica),* deer grass *(Muhlenbergia rigens),* and purple needle grass *(Stipa pulchra).* Understory vegetation in portions of the site has recently been thinned to improve site access and to reduce fuel loads.

There is an unnamed seasonal stream that flows south to north through the Project site and that supports a constructed seasonal pond. Additional drainages flow ephemerally on site during and directly following precipitation events.

3.4.2 Discussion

Information on sensitive biological resources previously recorded near the Project site was collected through a search of the following databases and background reports:

- California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) record search within the Shingle Springs, Pilot Hill, Coloma, Garden Valley, Placerville, Fiddletown, Latrobe, Folsom SE, and Clarksville US Geological Service (USGS) 7.5-minute quadrangles (CDFW 2024a);
- California Native Plant Society, Rare Plant Inventory search of the Shingle Springs, Pilot Hill, Coloma, Garden Valley, Placerville, Fiddletown, Latrobe, Folsom SE, and Clarksville USGS 7.5-minute quadrangles (CNPS 2024b);
- US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information for Planning and Conservation project planning tool (USFWS 2024a);
- USFWS National Wetlands Inventory website (USFWS 2024b);
- USGS National Hydrography Dataset (USGS 2024a);
- CDFW Terrestrial Connectivity Data and Resources (CDFW 2024b, Spencer et al. 2010);
- NRCS Web Soil Survey (NRCS 2024);
- Site-specific Rare Plant Survey Report (FEC 2023a)(Appendix A);
- Site-specific Biological Resources Evaluation Report (FEC 2023b)(Appendix A);
- Site-specific oak resources reporting completed in 2022 for construction of house, barn, and driveway (FEC 2022) (Appendix A); and
- Conservation and Open Space Element of the El Dorado County General Plan, as amended (EDC 2004a).



Source: Image produced and provided by County of El Dorado in 1998, Ordinance 4500; Adapted by Ascent in 2024.

Figure 3-1 El Dorado County Rare Plant Mitigation Area

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 the US Fish and Wildlife Service?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. Special-status species are defined as species that are legally protected or that are otherwise considered sensitive by federal, state, or local resource agencies, which fall into one or more of the following categories:

- officially listed under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) or the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) as endangered, threatened, or rare;
- a candidate for state or federal listing as endangered, threatened, or rare;
- taxa (i.e., taxonomic category or group) that meet the criteria for listing, even if not currently included on any list, as described in Section 15380 of the State CEQA Guidelines;
- species identified by CDFW as Species of Special Concern;
- species listed as Fully Protected under the California Fish and Game Code;
- species afforded protection under local planning documents; and
- taxa considered by CDFW to be "rare, threatened, or endangered in California" and assigned a California rare plant rank (CRPR). The CDFW system includes five rarity and endangerment ranks for categorizing plant species of concern. The three relevant to the project are summarized as follows:
  - CRPR 1A - Plants presumed to be extinct in California;
  - CRPR 1B - Plants that are rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere; and
  - CRPR 2 - Plants that are rare, threatened, or endangered in California but more common elsewhere.

Special-Status Plants

The Project site is underlain by gabbro soils and therefore has the potential to support special-status plants associated with gabbro soils. The Project site is within an area designated by the County as a preferred ecological preserve for rare plants, as designated by its General Plan Ecological Preserve overlay and location within Mitigation Area 0 (EDC 2024a) (Figure 3-1).

A rare plant assessment was completed for the Project site in 2022 (FEC 2022) (Appendix A). There are 19 special-status plant species with records in the region. The project site provides potentially suitable habitat for all of the 19 regionally occurring special-status plants with the exception of Sanford's arrowhead *(Sagittaria sanfordii),* which requires perennial aquatic habitat that is not present on the site. Eight of the potentially occurring special-status plant species are in a group referred to as the Pine Hill Plants or Pine Hill Endemics and are associated with gabbro and serpentine soils. These plants are typically found within oak woodland and chaparral plant communities and some grow almost exclusively in El Dorado County (CNPS 2024b). Pine Hill Plants that do not qualify as a special-status species based on USFWS or CDFW designation are still considered special-status plants in this analysis because they are "afforded protection under local planning documents" via the County General Plan. There are CNDDB records for El Dorado County mule ears (*Wyethia reticulata*) (CRPR 1B.2) and Layne's ragwort (*Packera layneae*) (CRPR 1B.2, Federally threatened and state rare), both Pine Hill Plants, along the southern boundary of the Project site, overlapping with the existing utility corridor. There are also CNDDB records for additional Pine Hill Plants on adjacent parcels, including El Dorado bedstraw (*Galium californicum* ssp. *sierrae*), Pine Hill flannelbush (*Fremontodendron decumbens*), and Red Hills soap root (*Chlorogalum grandiflorum*) (CDFW 2024a).

Rare plant surveys conducted at the Project site in 2022 identified two populations of El Dorado mule-ears, totaling approximately 0.25 acre (Figure 3-2 and Appendix A). No other special-status species were observed at the Project site during 2022 surveys.

Source: Image produced and provided by Fremont Environmental Consulting; Adapted by Ascent in 2024.

Figure 3-2 Map of 2022 Rare Plant Survey Results

The proposed parcel split would not alter conditions on the project site and would therefore not affect special status plant species. However, potential future development at the Project site could affect special-status plant species, if present in future disturbance areas. Potential future ground disturbance and/or vegetation removal associated with construction of buildings and roads, installation of utilities, and other development could result in direct removal of special-status plants if they are present or in habitat alterations or plant damage that leads to the ultimate death of special-status plants or failure to successfully reproduce. Loss of special-status plants could substantially affect the abundance, distribution, and viability of local and regional populations of these species; thus, this impact would be significant.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure 3.4-1: Special-Status Plant Protection

Prior to future development at the Project site, the following measures shall be implemented to protect special-status plants:

- Prior to any vegetation clearing, ground disturbing, or construction activities within the Project site, a qualified botanist shall implement protocol-level botanical surveys during the blooming period for the special-status plants with potential to occur in the Project site. The survey shall be conducted during the blooming/identification period closest to the initiation of proposed vegetation clearing or ground disturbance.
- The surveys shall include all areas where habitat potentially suitable for special-status plant species would be removed or disturbed, plus a 25-foot buffer.
- Surveys shall follow methods from CDFW's *Protocols for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts on Special-Status Native Plant Populations and Natural Communities* (CDFW 2018 or most recent version). The qualified botanist shall (1) be knowledgeable about plant taxonomy; (2) be familiar with plants of the Project region, including special-status plants and sensitive natural communities; (3) have experience conducting floristic botanical field surveys as described in CDFW's protocol document; (4) be familiar with the California Manual of Vegetation (Sawyer et al. 2009 or current version, including updated natural communities data at http://vegetation.cnps.org/); and (5) be familiar with federal and state statutes and regulations related to plants and plant collecting.
- If no special-status plants are found, the botanist shall document the findings in a report to the applicant and El Dorado County, and no additional measures are required prior to proposed activities.
- If activities last for more than one year, the botanical surveys described above shall be repeated during the blooming period in subsequent years prior to additional vegetation clearing or ground disturbing activities.
- If special-status plants are found, the botanist shall clearly mark, map, and record their locations. A no-disturbance buffer shall be established surrounding these locations, consisting of high visibility fencing with a minimum 4-foot-tall metal fence posts (such as t-posts). Fencing shall be maintained in place throughout the entirety of all ground disturbance or vegetation removal activities to ensure that the special-status plants are protected from equipment and vehicles, construction personnel, digging, trenching, placement of fill, storage of equipment or materials, and all other activities. All personnel involved in ground disturbance or vegetation removal work shall be informed of the requirement to avoid no-disturbance areas and shall be required to sign an acknowledgement that they have received these instructions and agree to adhere to all mitigation measures.
- If special-status plant species are found that cannot be avoided, appropriate mitigation shall be implemented and shall depend on the species and its protection status.
- For unavoidable impacts to Pine Hill endemics, mitigation shall include compliance with the County's Ecological Preserve Fee Program and Zoning Ordinance Section 130.71.050 (described further under question e below). The Project site is located within Mitigation Area 0, where on-site mitigation is encouraged, such as setting aside part of the property as a protected area or purchasing and protecting land in the same ecological preserve (Pine Hill Preserve) that is at least 1.5 times the developed acreage. Whatever method of compliance with Zoning

Ordinance Section 130.71.050 is selected for implementation, it will meet the performance standard of no-net-loss of numbers of individuals and extent of occupied habitat for the species being mitigated for.

- For unavoidable impacts to special-status plants that are not Pine Hill Endemics and are not listed under the federal ESA or CESA, various methods may be used to minimize or compensate for impacts on these species. Depending on the biology of the species affected and the potential for transplanting and reseeding, establishing populations through seed collection or transplantation from the site that is to be affected may be implemented. Seeding or transplanting may be used to create new plant populations, or to enhance or expand existing populations. Potential mitigation sites could include suitable locations within or outside the project site. Mitigation could include, or consist of, expanding the affected population on the project site if only a portion of the population is to be removed and suitable habitat is available or can be created to expand the extent of the affected population into a new area. Habitat and individual plants lost shall be mitigated at a minimum 1:1 ratio, considering acreage as well as function and value of the new population and habitat. Monitoring, reporting, and land preservation methods will follow those established by the County in County's Ecological Preserve Fee Program and Zoning Ordinance Section 130.71.050.
- If an affected plant species, whether a Pine Hill Endemic or not, is protected under the federal ESA or CESA, coordination/consultation with USFWS and/or CDFW will be required. A site-specific mitigation strategy to compensate for loss of occupied habitat and individuals, consistent with the requirements of the federal ESA or CESA, will need to be developed and implemented. Actions to compensate for take of the federal ESA or CESA protected species may include preserving and enhancing existing populations and creation of new populations. Elements of the mitigation approach and success criteria required by USFWS or CDFW may include, but would not be limited to:
  - Identification of appropriate mitigation ratios for enhancement, expansion, and creation of target plant populations to fully compensate for direct loss of affected plant populations as well as temporal losses of functions and values.
  - Number and/or density of target plant individuals in the mitigation area.
  - A requirement that compensatory and preserved populations shall be self-producing. Populations would be considered self-producing when plants reestablish annually for a set number of years with no human intervention, such as supplemental seeding.
  - If mitigation includes dedication of conservation easements, identifying responsible parties for long-term management, conservation easement holders, long-term management requirements, and funding sources as determined appropriate by the regulatory agency(ies).
- Documentation of the completion of the mitigation strategy and coordination/consultation process with USFWS or CDFW shall be provided to El Dorado County before commencement of any project activities that could adversely affect the protected plant species. Prior to any ground-disturbing or vegetation-removal activities, a Worker Environmental Awareness Training (WEAT) shall be prepared and administered to the construction crews. The WEAT will include the following: discussion of the state and federal Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act, the Project's permits and CEQA documentation, and associated mitigation measures; consequences and penalties for violation or noncompliance with these laws and regulations; identification of special-status wildlife that may be encountered on the project site; location of any avoidance, exclusion, or buffer areas; material to watch for that may indicate the presence of subsurface cultural resources; hazardous substance spill prevention and containment measures; and the contact person in the event of the discovery of a special-status wildlife species or potential cultural resources. A handout summarizing the WEAT information shall be provided to workers to keep on-site for future reference. Upon completion of the WEAT training, workers will sign a form stating that they attended the training, understand the information presented and will comply with the regulations discussed.

Significance after Mitigation

With implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.4-1, the potential loss of special-status plant species would be avoided to the maximum extent feasible. Compensation for any impacts that cannot be avoided would be accomplished through compliance with the County's Ecological Preserve Fee Program, additional mitigation requirements identified above, and any additional USFWS and/or CDFW required mitigation, as applicable. Implementation of any of these approaches would result in no-net-loss of individuals or population functions and values for the affected species. This would reduce potential impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Special-Status Wildlife

A biological resources evaluation for special-status wildlife species was completed for the Project site in 2023 (FEC 2023b) (Appendix A). No special-status wildlife species were observed at the Project site during reconnaissance-level field surveys in 2022. According to a review of database searches, there are 22 special-status wildlife species known to occur in the Project region. Based on species' habitat requirements and currently known ranges, the following special-status wildlife species could potentially occur at the Project site:

- Coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma blainvilii*)- This species is a CDFW SCC and could potentially be present at the Project site in open areas with loose soil and scattered, low bushes for cover.
- Grasshopper sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*)- A CDFW SCC, grasshopper sparrow is a ground-nesting migratory bird that breeds in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. It could potentially use grassland areas at the Project site for nesting and foraging.
- Golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*)- This species is Fully Protected and covered under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. It could potentially nest in large trees and forage in grassland areas at the Project site.
- Loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*)- Loggerhead shrike is a CDFW SCC that prefers open areas for hunting, with perches for scanning, and shrubby areas for nesting.
- White-tailed kite (*Elanus leucurus*)- White-tailed kite is a Fully Protected species that could nest in large trees and could forage in grassland areas at the Project site.
- Crotch's bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*)- This species is a candidate for listing as endangered under CESA. Annual grassland areas represent potentially suitable habitat for nesting, typically in underground cavities, for foraging where blooming flowers are present, and for overwintering in protected areas on the ground surface or underground.
- Pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*)- Pallid bat is a CDFW SCC that uses grassland, shrubland, and woodland habitats, where it roosts in crevices, caves, mines, buildings, and tree hollows.
- Western red bat (*Lasiurus frantzii*)-This CDFW SCC roosts primarily in trees, especially near open areas for foraging.
- In addition to these species, other birds and raptors protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and California Fish and Game Code could also nest on the Project site.
- The proposed parcel split would not affect special-status wildlife species. However, potential future development at the Project site, including vegetation clearing, grading, and other ground disturbance, could affect these species, if present. Potential impacts to special-status wildlife species could include loss of habitat, direct injury to or mortality of individuals resulting from contact with construction equipment or vehicles, and reduced breeding productivity, either through direct destruction of an active nest or den, or through abandonment of an active breeding site due to human disturbance. Because of their potential to reduce population levels and contribute to a trend towards these species becoming threatened or endangered in the future, these impacts are considered significant.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure 3.4-2: Coast Horned Lizard Protection

Future development at the Project site shall implement the following measures to protect coast horned lizard:

- Within 14 days prior to vegetation removal or ground disturbing activities within the Project site, a qualified biologist familiar with the life history of coast horned lizard shall conduct a focused visual survey of the work area, plus a 100-foot buffer, which shall include walking linear transects of the site.
- If coast horned lizards are not detected during the focused survey, the qualified biologist shall submit a report summarizing the results of the survey to the applicant and El Dorado County, and no additional measures are required prior to proposed activities.
- If coast horned lizards are detected, a qualified biologist with an appropriate CDFW Scientific Collecting Permit that allows handling of reptiles shall be present during ground disturbing and/or vegetation removal activities and shall inspect the project site before initiation of activities. If coast horned lizards are detected, the qualified biologist shall move individuals into nearby suitable habitat that will not be disturbed by project activities.
- Documentation of compliance with this mitigation measure shall be provided to El Dorado County before commencement of any project construction activities.

Significance after Mitigation

- With implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.4-2, potential direct impacts to coast horned lizard individuals would be minimized as much as feasible, thereby reducing the potential impact to Less than Significant Impact.

Mitigation Measure 3.4-3: Nesting Bird and Raptor Protection

Future development at the Project site shall implement the following measures to protect nesting birds and raptors:

- To minimize impacts to special-status bird species, raptors, and other native birds, potential future development activities (e.g., tree removal, vegetation clearing, ground disturbance, staging, construction of off-site improvements) shall be conducted during the nonbreeding season (approximately September 1 through January 31, as determined by a qualified biologist), when feasible. If project activities are conducted during the nonbreeding season, no further mitigation is required prior to the proposed activity.
- If development activities must commence during the avian nesting season (between February 1 and August 31), within 7 days prior to commencement of work a qualified biologist familiar with birds of California and with experience conducting nesting bird surveys shall conduct focused surveys for special-status birds, nesting raptors, and other native birds. Surveys shall be conducted in publicly accessible areas within 0.5 miles of the development activity area for golden eagle, 0.25 miles of the development activity area for white-tailed kite, 500 feet of the development activity area for other raptor species and special-status birds, and 50 feet of the development activity area for non-raptor common native bird nests.
- If no active bird nests are found, the qualified biologist shall submit a report documenting the survey methods and results to the applicant and El Dorado County, and work may proceed. If at any time during the nesting season there is a lapse of two weeks or more with no work, a new survey for nesting birds shall be completed before work proceeds.
- If an active bird nest is found, a no-disturbance buffer shall be established around the nest site until the breeding season has ended or a qualified biologist has determined that the young have fledged or the nest is no longer active.
- The size of the no-disturbance buffer shall be determined by the biologist, based on the sensitivity of the bird species, nesting chronology of the species, disturbance characteristics (type, extent, visibility, duration, and timing), existing ambient conditions, and other factors (e.g., screening from existing structures, vegetation, or topography), as determined by the biologist. Buffers typically shall be 0.5 miles for golden eagle, 0.25 miles for white-tailed kite, 500 feet for other raptors, 100 feet for non-raptor special-status bird species, and at least 20

feet for common non-raptor bird species. The size of the buffer may be adjusted if a qualified biologist determines that such an adjustment shall be unlikely to adversely affect the nest. Any buffer reduction for a special-status bird species shall require coordination with CDFW.

- Daily monitoring of the nest by a qualified biologist during activities shall be required if the activity has potential to adversely affect the nest as determined by the qualified biologist, the buffer has been reduced, or if birds within active nests are showing behavioral signs of agitation (e.g., standing up from a brooding position, flying off the nest) during project activities, as determined by the qualified biologist.
- Documentation of compliance with this mitigation measure and any required coordination with CDFW shall be provided to El Dorado County before commencement of any project construction activities.

Significance after Mitigation

With implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.4-3, the potential loss of individuals or eggs of special-status birds and other bird species protected under the MBTA and Fish and Game Code as a result of potential future development at the Project site would be avoided. This would reduce potential impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure 3.4-4: Crotch's Bumblebee Protection

Future development at the Project site shall implement the following measures to protect Crotch's bumblebee:

- Initial ground-disturbing work (e.g., grading, vegetation removal, staging) shall take place between August 15 and March 15 (i.e., outside of the Crotch's bumble bee colony active period, or the period when bumble bees are nesting underground and flying aboveground in the greatest numbers), if feasible, to avoid impacts on nesting Crotch's bumble bees during the colony active period.
- Regardless of the feasibility of the above limited operating period, and because Crotch's bumble bees may use the project site during other life history periods (e.g., overwintering), a qualified biologist familiar with bumble bees of California and experienced using survey methods for bumble bees shall conduct a habitat assessment and focused survey for Crotch's bumble bee before the start of any ground-disturbing activities. The survey shall be performed when Crotch's bumble bee is most likely to be identified, typically from April through August (i.e., the colony active period) when floral resources and ideal weather conditions are present and shall follow the methods in *Survey Considerations for California Endangered Species Act Candidate Bumble Bee Species* (CDFW 2023). The survey shall be conducted during the colony active period closest to the start of planned ground-disturbing activities to determine whether Crotch's bumble bees are present on the project site. The survey area shall include all habitat determined to be suitable for Crotch's bumble bees as determined during the habitat assessment. Survey results shall be submitted to the applicant and El Dorado County no less than 7 days before ground-disturbing work begins.
- The applicant shall submit a survey report to CDFW within 1 month of survey completion and shall notify CDFW and El Dorado County within 24 hours if Crotch's bumble bees are detected, as described in *Survey Considerations for California Endangered Species Act Candidate Bumble Bee Species* (CDFW 2023).
- If Crotch's bumble bees are detected during the focused survey, appropriate avoidance measures shall be implemented. Avoidance measures shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
  - Protective buffers shall be implemented around active nesting colonies until these sites are no longer active. A qualified biologist, in coordination with CDFW, shall determine the appropriate buffer size to protect nesting colonies; however, the buffer shall be a minimum of 50 feet.
  - Work on the project site shall be avoided during the colony active period (April through August).
- If impacts on Crotch's bumble bee cannot be avoided, the applicant shall obtain an incidental take permit (ITP) from CDFW and shall implement all avoidance measures included in the ITP.
- Documentation of compliance with this mitigation measure and any required coordination with CDFW or acquisition of an ITP shall be provided to El Dorado County before commencement of any ground-disturbing work.

Significance after Mitigation

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.4-4 would reduce the potential impact on Crotch's bumble bee to a less-than-significant level by conducting initial ground disturbance work from August 15 to March 15, if feasible; completing focused surveys for bumble bees: and implementing measures to avoid mortality of the Crotch's bumble bees if nests or overwintering queens are detected.

Mitigation Measure 3.4-5: Bat Protection

Future development at the Project site must implement the following measures to protect bats:

- Within 14 days before any tree removal, a qualified biologist familiar with bats and bat ecology, and experienced in conducting bat surveys, shall conduct surveys for bat roosts in suitable habitat (e.g., large trees, crevices, cavities, exfoliating bark, foliage, buildings) within 250 feet of the tree(s) to be removed.
- If no evidence of bat roosts is found, the qualified biologist shall submit a report summarizing the results of the survey to the applicant and El Dorado County, and no further study shall be required.
- If evidence of bat maternity roosts or hibernacula is observed, the species and number of bats using the roost shall be determined by a qualified biologist using noninvasive methods. Bat detectors (i.e., acoustic monitoring) or evening emergence surveys shall be used if deemed necessary to supplement survey efforts by the qualified biologist.
- A no-disturbance buffer of 250 feet shall be established by the qualified biologist around active maternity roosts or hibernacula of pallid bat or western red bat, as well as maternity roosts (i.e., considered to be a wildlife nursery) or winter hibernacula of other bat species that contain a substantial number of bats (i.e., more than a few roosting bats that would leave on their own during the day). Project activities shall not occur within this buffer until after the roosts no longer support juvenile bats or hibernating bats as determined by a qualified biologist.
- If roosts of pallid bat or western red bat are determined to be present and must be removed, the bats shall be excluded from the roosting site before the tree is removed. A program addressing compensation, exclusion methods, and roost removal procedures shall be developed in coordination with CDFW before implementation. Exclusion methods may include use of one-way doors at roost entrances (bats may leave but not reenter) or sealing roost entrances when the site can be confirmed to contain no bats. Exclusion efforts may be restricted during periods of sensitive activity (e.g., during hibernation or while females in maternity colonies are nursing young). The loss of each roost (if any) resulting from the project shall be replaced in coordination with CDFW and may require construction and installation of bat boxes suitable to the bat species and colony size excluded from the original roosting site. If determined necessary during coordination with CDFW, replacement roosts shall be implemented before bats are excluded from the original roost sites. After the replacement roosts are constructed and it is confirmed that bats are not present in the original roost site by a qualified biologist, the roost tree or building may be removed. For roost trees, a two-step tree removal process supervised by a qualified biologist shall be implemented, including removal of all branches that do not provide roosting habitat on the first day, and removal of the remaining portion of the tree on the following day. For trees used as maternity roosts or hibernacula by non-special status bat species, the trees may be removed either when a qualified biologist determines that bats are no longer present, or using the exclusion and removal method described above for pallid bat and wester red bat if bats are using the tree for a daytime roost, but it is no longer functioning as a maternity roost or hibernacula. Coordination with CDWF and compensatory measures, such as installation of bat boxes, will not be required for non-special status bat species.

Documentation of compliance with this mitigation measure shall be provided to El Dorado County before commencement of any tree removal activities.

Significance after Mitigation

With implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.4-5 would reduce the potential impact on pallid bat and western red bat to Less than Significant Impact.by requiring focused surveys for bat roosts, implementation of no-disturbance

buffers around active special-status bat maternity roosts or hibernacula, or implementation of an exclusion plan approved by CDFW that would potentially include construction of replacement roosts.

b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the US Fish and Wildlife Service?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.. The USGS National Hydrography Dataset identifies a single ephemeral stream at the Project site. The location of this stream corresponds with a band of riverine and riparian habitat mapped by the USFWS National Wetland Inventory. This seasonal stream was observed during field surveys in 2022 (FEC 2022). No riparian vegetation was observed at the seasonal stream or elsewhere on the Project site during biological surveys in 2022. There is no riparian habitat within the boundaries of the Project site.

The Project site is underlain by gabbroic soils and thus represents potential habitat for the regional special-status plants associated with these soils. According to Policy 7.4.1.1 of the County General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element, it is the County's policy to provide for the permanent protection of the eight sensitive plant species known as the Pine Hill endemics and their habitat through the establishment and management of ecological preserves consistent with County Code Chapter 17.71 and the USFWS Gabbro Soil Plants for the Central Sierra Nevada Foothills Recovery Plan (USFWS 2002).

The proposed parcel split will not affect the locally designated sensitive natural community supporting Pine Hill endemics. However, potential future development at the Project site could affect individuals or populations of these species, if present in disturbance areas. As discussed under question a above, this potential impact would be reduced to Less than Significant Impact.through implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.4-1.

There are no other sensitive natural communities recorded at the Project site.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure 3.4-1: Special-Status Plant Protection
Implement Mitigation Measure 3.4-1 above.

Significance after Mitigation
Through implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.4-1, future development will avoid impacts to the Pine Hill endemics, where possible, and will compensate for impacts where avoidance isn't possible.

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?

Less than Significant Impact with Migigation Incorporated. There is a seasonal stream that flows south to north through proposed Parcel C and Parcel D and is impounded by a constructed pond on Parcel D. According to biological surveys conducted in the spring of 2022, there are additional seasonal drainages present on the property (FEC 2022).

The proposed parcel split would not affect aquatic resources. However, potential future development at the Project site could affect aquatic resources (i.e., the seasonal drainage) if ground disturbance cannot be avoided at their location. This potential impact would be reduced to Less than Significant Impact.through Mitigation Measure 3.4-6. Potential water quality effects are discussed in Section 3.10, Hydrology and Water Quality.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure 3.4-6: Aquatic Resources Protection

Future development at the Project site must implement the following measures to protect aquatic resources:

- If ground disturbance is proposed within 25 feet of the bank of the seasonal stream flowing through Parcels C and D, at a minimum, any portion of the stream within 25 feet of the disturbance footprint shall be delineated and evaluated by a qualified biologist for jurisdiction as a water or wetland of the United States and/or water of the state. The delineation shall follow the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) methods current at the time.
- If the aquatic feature is determined to be jurisdictional, all applicable permits shall be obtained prior to any disturbance of the feature(s). All permit requirements shall be adhered to, including any potential compensatory mitigation that may be required.
- Authorization for dredge or fill of waters of the United States shall be secured from USACE and the regional water quality control board (RWQCB) through the permitting processes for Clean Water Act Sections 401 and 404. In association with Section 404, Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the Central Valley RWQCB shall be obtained. For impacts on waters of the state that are not also waters of the United States and are therefore not covered by the 401 Water Quality Certification, the applicant shall apply to the RWQCB for Waste Discharge Requirements. Any waters of the United States or waters of the state that are affected by the project shall be replaced on a no-net-loss basis in accordance with the applicable USACE and RWQCB permit requirements.
- Before commencing activity that may divert the natural flow or otherwise alter the bed or bank of any lake or stream on the Project site (i.e., the seasonal stream and any associated water bodies), the applicant shall notify CDFW, through issuance of a Lake and Streambed Alteration Notification (notification). If CDFW determines, based on the notification, that project activities trigger the need for a Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement, the project applicant shall obtain an agreement from CDFW before the activity commences. The applicant shall conduct activities in accordance with the agreement, including implementing reasonable measures in the agreement necessary to protect fish and wildlife resources, when working within the bed or bank of waterways or in riparian habitats associated with those waterways.

Significance after Mitigation

With implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.4-6, aquatic resources shall be avoided and protected wherever feasible. If avoidance isn't possible, impacts would be reduced to less-than-significant by requiring permitting and compliance with permit requirements, including compensation for unavoidable impacts, as applicable, such that there is no net loss of these resources. .

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?

Less than Significant Impact. The Project site does not support habitat for native resident or migratory fish. Based on CDFW's *California Essential Habitat Connectivity* project, which includes an evaluation of areas of contiguous natural habitat blocks and linkages between these blocks in California, the Project site is not located within an Essential Connectivity Area, Natural Landscape Block (defined as relatively natural habitat blocks that support native biodiversity) or Natural Areas Small, which are designated important blocks of habitat and movement corridors for wildlife. The Project site is also not within the range of mule deer migration. However, the Project site is located within the American River, Middle Sierra Wildlife Linkage designated by CDFW. The Project site is located along the southern border of the 12,593-acre Morman Hill-South Fork American River Landscape Block in the Lower Foothills Metamorphic Belt subsection, which includes the region from Rescue northwestward around Pine Hill and Kanaka Valley. Due to its location within a designated wildlife linkage, portions of the Project site could contribute to overall wildlife habitat connectivity in the region and function as a dispersal corridor for wildlife. (CDFW 2024b; Spencer et al. 2010).

The proposed parcel split will not affect wildlife movement or migration. There could be future residential development at the Project site following the parcel split. However, potential future residential development on 10-acre or larger parcels would not substantially limit wildlife movement as the majority of the property would remain undeveloped. Common wildlife currently using the property would be expected to continue moving through undeveloped portions of the site. Fences could be constructed at the boundaries of each new parcel; however, most properties in the area are currently fenced and do not provide a substantial impediment to wildlife movement. Any wildlife moving through the area currently would have to be tolerant of rural development and low to moderate levels of human presence and domestic animals. The surrounding area contains scattered residences at a density similar to what is proposed on the property. Therefore, no significant impacts on the function of the property as a wildlife movement corridor or significant impacts to the designated wildlife linkage would occur as a result of potential future development.

The Project site has habitat that may function as a nursery site for native wildlife and bird species. As discussed above under question a), future development could have a significant effect on special-status birds and bats. However, mitigation measures, including preconstruction surveys and avoidance of active bird nests and bat roosts, will be implemented to reduce impacts to Less than Significant Impact. Implementation of these mitigation measures also would result in protection of active bat roosts considered to be nursery sites. Therefore, this impact would be Less than Significant Impact.

e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. The adopted El Dorado County General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element discusses significant natural resources in the County, including aquatic habitat, special-status species, and sensitive habitats, and establishes goals, objectives, and policies related to these topics. Relevant policies from the El Dorado County General Plan include:

- Objective 7.3.3: Wetlands - Protection of natural and man-made wetlands, vernal pools, wet meadows, and riparian areas from impacts related to development for their importance to wildlife habitat, water purification, scenic values, and unique and sensitive plant life.
  - Policy 7.3.3.1: For projects that would result in the discharge of material to or that may affect the function and value of river, stream, lake, pond, or wetland features, the application shall include a delineation of all such features. For wetlands, the delineation shall be conducted using the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Wetland Delineation Manual.
  - Policy 7.3.3.5: Rivers, streams, lakes and ponds, and wetlands shall be integrated into new development in such a way that they enhance the aesthetic and natural character of the site while disturbance to the resource is avoided or minimized and fragmentation is limited.
- Objective 7.3.4: Drainage - Protection and utilization of natural drainage patterns.
  - Policy 7.3.4.1: Natural watercourses shall be integrated into new development in such a way that they enhance the aesthetic and natural character of the site without disturbance.
  - Policy 7.3.4.2: Modification of natural stream beds and flow shall be regulated to ensure that adequate mitigation measures are utilized.
- Objective 7.4.1: Pine Hill Rare Plant Species - The County shall protect Pine Hill rare plant species and their habitats consistent with Federal and State laws.
  - Policy 7.4.1.1: The County shall continue to provide for the permanent protection of the eight sensitive plant species known as the Pine Hill endemics and their habitat through the establishment and management of ecological preserves consistent with County Code Chapter 130.71 and the USFWS *Gabbro Soil Plants for the Central Sierra Nevada Foothills Recovery Plan* (USFWS 2002).
  - Policy 7.4.1.2: Private land for Pine Hill rare plant preserve sites will be purchased only from willing sellers.

- Policy 7.4.1.3: Limit land uses within established Pine Hill rare plant preserve areas to activities deemed compatible. Such uses may include passive recreation, research and scientific study, and education. In conjunction with use as passive recreational areas, develop a rare plant educational and interpretive program.
- Policy 7.4.1.4: The Pine Hill Preserves, as approved by the County Board of Supervisors, shall be designated Ecological Preserve (-EP) overlay on the General Plan land use map.
- Policy 7.4.1.6: All development projects involving discretionary review shall be designed to avoid disturbance or fragmentation of important habitats to the extent reasonably feasible. Where avoidance is not possible, the development shall be required to fully mitigate the effects of important habitat loss and fragmentation. Mitigation shall be defined in the Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP) (see Policy 7.4.2.8 and Implementation Measure CO-M).

- Objective 7.4.2: Identify and Protect Resources - Identification and protection, where feasible, of critical fish and wildlife habitat including deer winter, summer, and fawning ranges; deer migration routes; stream and river riparian habitat; lake shore habitat; fish spawning areas; wetlands; wildlife corridors; and diverse wildlife habitat.
  - Policy 7.4.2.5: Setbacks from all rivers, streams, and lakes shall be included in the Zoning Ordinance for all ministerial and discretionary development projects.
  - Policy 7.4.4.4: For all new development projects or actions that result in impacts to oak woodlands and/or individual native oak trees, including Heritage Trees, the County shall require mitigation as outlined in the El Dorado County ORMP. The ORMP functions as the oak resources component of the County's biological resources mitigation program, identified in Policy 7.4.2.8

El Dorado County General Plan Biological Resources Policy Update and Oak Resources Management Plan

The El Dorado County Board of Supervisors adopted the Biological Resources Policy Update and ORMP in October 2017. The Biological Resources Policy Update included revisions to the General Plan objectives, policies, and implementation measures to establish a comprehensive Biological Resource Mitigation Program. The objective of this program is to conserve special-status species habitat, aquatic habitat, wetland and riparian habitat, habitat for migratory deer herds, and large expanses of native vegetation. The ORMP updated and revised the existing Oak Woodland Management Plan, and now defines mitigation requirements for impacts on oak woodlands, individual native oak trees, and heritage trees; and also outlines El Dorado County's strategy for oak resource management and conservation. The ORMP establishes an in-lieu fee payment option for impacts on oak woodlands and oak trees and identifies Priority Conservation Areas where oak woodland conservation efforts will be focused. The standards for implementing the County's ORMP are established in the County's Oak Resources Conservation Ordinance, found in County Code Chapter 130.39.

The ORMP designates three classes of protected oak resources: oak woodlands that have at least 10 percent oak canopy; heritage trees, defined as native oaks with a total trunk diameter at breast height of 36 inches or greater; and individual oak trees, defined as native oak trees with a trunk diameter at breast height of 6 inches or greater that are not located in oak woodlands. An oak woodland removal permit is required prior to removal of oak trees that are part of an oak woodland and an oak tree removal permit is required prior to removal of heritage trees and individual oak trees. Mitigation for impacts on oak woodlands is based on the total area affected ranging from 1:1 mitigation for zero to 50 percent removal to 2:1 mitigation for more than 75 percent removal. Mitigation may be completed with a combination of the following options: acquisition of an off-site conservation easement, payment of in-lieu fees, or either on- or off-site replacement planting of up to 50 percent of the required mitigation area. Mitigation for removal of heritage or individual oak trees requires on- or off-site replacement planting or payment of in-lieu fees at a 3:1 (heritage trees) or 1:1 (individual oak trees) ratio, respectively, to the number of trunk inches removed. Any oak woodland preserved on site and all mitigation planting areas must be protected in perpetuity through deed restrictions or a conservation easement.

El Dorado County Ecological Preserve Fee Program

In 1998, the County established the Ecological Fee Program, through Ordinance 4500 and Resolution 205-98, to protect eight special-status gabbro soils plant species (i.e., El Dorado bedstraw, Layne's butterweed, Pine Hill ceanothus, Pine Hill flannel bush, Stebbins' morning glory, Bisbee Peak rush rose, El Dorado mule ears, Red Hills soaproot). The County has established the following three Mitigation Areas to protect gabbro soils rare plants through on-site and off-site mitigation requirements and options.

- Mitigation Area 0 – Lands within one of the five ecological preserves that comprise Pine Hill Preserve (i.e., Salmon Falls, Martel Creek, Pine Hill, Penny Lane Ridge, Cameron Park). The Mitigation Area 0 boundaries are the same as the General Plan Ecological Preserve overlay (approximately 3,450 acres).
- Mitigation Area 1 – Lands outside of Mitigation Area 0 that contain gabbro soils rare plant habitat (approximately 36,000 acres).
- Mitigation Area 2 – Lands outside of Mitigation Areas 0 and 1, but within the service area of the El Dorado Irrigation District, excluding parcels served by wells.

The Project site is located within Mitigation Area 0 (Figure 3-1), where development is subject to the mitigation requirements described in Section 130.71.050 of the County's Zoning Ordinance, provided below.

Sec. 130.71.050 - On-Site Mitigation in Mitigation Area 0

Development within Mitigation Area 0 will continue to address mitigation for impact to rare plants on an individual basis. Within Mitigation Area 0, on-site mitigation is strongly encouraged. Developments within Mitigation Area 0 shall mitigate impacts by exercising one of the following three options:

- A. Set aside a part of the property and dedicate a perpetual conservation easement for habitat protection; or
- B. Cluster development in the least environmentally sensitive portion of the property according to the Implementation Strategy adopted by the County in March 1993 and receive in appropriate cases a density bonus in return for dedication of a perpetual conservation easement over the remainder of the property (applies to properties greater than five acres in area); or
- C. Provide an independent mitigation plan that meets CEQA requirements, such as the purpose of long-term protection of an amount of habitat in the same Ecological Preserve and as close to the development site as feasible, equal to at least one and one-half times the acreage developed.

The proposed parcel split will not affect oak resources or Pine Hill endemics. However, potential future development at the Project site could result in a loss of protected oak resources and/or Pine Hill endemics. Potential future development would avoid these potentially significant impacts and would avoid conflicting with local policies and ordinances protecting biological resources through implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.4-1, described under question a, and Mitigation Measure 3.4-7, described below, which includes compliance with the stipulations of the ORMP's in-lieu fee payment option for unavoidable impacts on oak woodlands and oak trees

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure 3.4-1: Special-Status Plant Protection

Implement Mitigation Measure 3.4-1 above.

Mitigation Measure 3.4-7: Oak Resources Protection

Future development at the Project site shall implement the following measures to comply with the County's ORMP:

- Future development at the Project site shall avoid impacts to protected oak resources as much as possible.
- If avoidance is not possible, prior to future tree removal at the Project site, an Oak Resources Technical Report shall be developed by a qualified biologist that maps and quantifies unavoidable impacts to the County's three classes of protected oak resources,—oak woodlands, individual native oak trees, and heritage trees. Depending

on the impact, an Oak Tree Removal Permit or Oak Woodland Removal Permit shall be obtained from the County.

- The applicant shall compensate for loss of protected oak trees and oak woodlands through any combination of in-lieu fees, conservation, and/or replanting, as required under the ORMP, to the satisfaction of the El Dorado County Community Development Department.

Significance after Mitigation

With implementation of Mitigation Measures 3.4-1 and 3.4-7, future development will avoid impacts to special-status plants and oak resources wherever possible. If avoidance is not possible, impacts would be mitigated according to the County's mitigation policies making project activities consistent with County policies and ordinances.

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?

No Impact.. There are no adopted Habitat Conservation Plans, Natural Community Conservation Plans, or other approved state habitat conservation plans that apply to the Project site. Compliance with County conservation requirements is described under question e.

3.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact.with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact.Impact	No Impact
V. Cultural Resources.				
Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Substantially disturb human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.5.1 Environmental Setting

A cultural resources records search was conducted in August 2023 by the North Central Information Center (NCIC) of the California Historical Resources Information System at California State University, Sacramento. The records search was conducted to determine if prehistoric or historic cultural resources had been previously recorded within the Project site, the extent to which the Project site had been previously surveyed, and the number and type of cultural resources within a 0.25-mile radius of the Project site.

The NCIC records search indicated that one prior cultural resource study report covers the entirety of the Project site. An additional eight studies have been completed within the 0.25-mile records search radius. According to the records search, one cultural resource has been previously recorded within the Project site, consisting of historic era gold quartz mine remains. Two additional cultural resources have been recorded within the 0.25-mile records search radius.

This region is known as the ethnographic-period territory of the Nisenan, also called the Southern Maidu. The Project site has been previously surveyed with negative results for indigenous-period/ethnographic-period cultural resources. Given the extent of known cultural resources and the environmental setting, there is low potential for locating indigenous period/ethnographic-period cultural resources in the Project site.

Historic map review indicates evidence of nineteenth-century mines, roads, and houses in close proximity to the Project site. Given the extent of known cultural resources and patterns of local history, there is high potential for locating historic-period cultural resources in the Project site.

3.5.2 Discussion

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

Less than Significant Impact. There is one historic resource record at the Project site, consisting of historic era gold quartz mine remains. There are no other records of historic resources. Given the mining history of the area, there is a high potential for locating historic-period cultural resources within the Project site.

The proposed parcel split would not affect cultural resources. Potential future residential development on new parcels could affect historic resources if ground disturbance were to occur at the location of the previously discovered mining remains or at the location of a previously undiscovered historic resource. However, the mining remnants at the Project site are common for the area and have not been identified as historically significant. Potential future disturbance to historic era mining remains at the Project site would not result in a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historic resource pursuant to Section 15064.5 and impacts would be Less than Significant Impact.

b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. As previously discussed, there are no records of archaeological resources at the Project site and the potential for discovery of archaeological material is estimated to be low (NCIC 2023). Nevertheless, the possibility remains that archaeological materials could be encountered during potential future ground disturbing activities. This impact would be potentially significant.

Mitigation Measure 3.5-1: Protection of Archaeological Resources
The following shall be implemented during future ground-disturbing activities:
In the event that unknown buried archaeological deposits (e.g., prehistoric stone tools, milling stones, shells, midden soils) are encountered during construction, all ground-disturbing activity within 50 feet of the resources shall be halted and a qualified professional archaeologist (36 Code of Federal Regulations 61) and appropriate Native American tribal representative shall be notified immediately and retained to assess the significance of the find. Construction activities could continue in other areas.

If the find is determined to be significant by the qualified archaeologist or Native American tribe (i.e., because it is determined to constitute a unique archaeological resource), the archaeologist, in consultation with the Count and the culturally affiliated Native American tribe(s) shall develop appropriate procedures to protect the integrity of the resource and ensure that no additional resources are affected. Procedures could include but would not necessarily be limited to preservation in place, subsurface testing, or contiguous block unit excavation and data recovery.

Significance after Mitigation
Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.5-1 would reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level by requiring cessation of work, evaluation of the significance of the find, and implementation of preservation and/or proper data recovery upon discovery of previously unknown resources.

c) Substantially disturb human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

Less than Significant Impact. Based on documentary research, no evidence suggests that any prehistoric or historic era marked or un-marked human interments are present within or in the immediate vicinity of the project site. However, the location of grave sites and Native American remains can occur outside of identified cemeteries or burial sites. Therefore, there is a possibility that unmarked, previously unknown Native American or other graves could be present within the project site and could be uncovered by project-related construction activities.

California law recognizes the need to protect Native American human burials, skeletal remains, and items associated with Native American burials from vandalism and inadvertent destruction. The procedures for the treatment of Native American human remains are contained in California Health and Safety Code Sections 7050.5 and PRC Section 5097.

These statutes require that, if human remains are discovered, potentially damaging ground-disturbing activities in the area of the remains shall be halted immediately, and the El Dorado County coroner shall be notified immediately. If the remains are determined by the coroner to be Native American, the Native American Heritage Center (NAHC) shall be notified within 24 hours, and the guidelines of NAHC shall be adhered to in the treatment and disposition of the remains. Following the coroner's findings, the NAHC-designated most likely descendants and the landowner shall determine the ultimate treatment and disposition of the remains and take appropriate steps to ensure that additional

human interments, if present, are not disturbed. The responsibilities for acting upon notification of a discovery of Native American human remains are identified in PRC Section 5097.94.

Compliance with California Health and Safety Code Sections 7050.5 and PRC Section 5097, would provide an opportunity to avoid or minimize the disturbance of human remains, and to appropriately treat any remains that are discovered.

3.6 ENERGY

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact.with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact.Impact	No Impact
VI. Energy.				
Would the project:				
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.6.1 Environmental Setting

California relies on a regional power system composed of a diverse mix of natural gas, petroleum, renewable, hydroelectric, and nuclear generation resources:

- Natural gas: Approximately 39% of California's net electricity generation is fueled by natural gas, and six out of ten California households use natural gas for home heating (EIA 2024).
- Petroleum: Petroleum products (gasoline, diesel, jet fuel), which are consumed almost exclusively by the transportation sector, account for vast majority of the energy used in California by the transportation sector, with the rest provided by ethanol, natural gas, and electricity (Bureau of Transportation Statistics 2023). For the first time since 1953, transportation's reliance on petroleum dipped below 90 percent in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. Transportation's petroleum dependence remained below 90 percent, at 89.7 percent in 2021 and 89.4 percent in 2022 (Bureau of Transportation Statistics 2023). California is the largest consumer of jet fuel and second-largest consumer of motor gasoline among the 50 states (EIA 2024).
- Electricity and renewables: In 2023, renewable resources, including hydroelectric power and small-scale solar power, supplied 54% of California's in-state electricity generation. (EIA 2024).
- Alternative fuels: Conventional gasoline and diesel may be replaced (depending on the capability of the vehicle) with many alternative transportation fuels (e.g., biodiesel, hydrogen, electricity). Use of alternative fuels is encouraged through various statewide regulations and plans (e.g., Low Carbon Fuel Standard, 2022 Scoping Plan).

Electricity and natural gas service in the County is provided by Pacific Gas and Electric Company. However, like much of the rural development in the County, natural gas service is not available at the project site and propane, delivered to on-site propane tanks, is used in place of natural gas.

3.6.2 Discussion

a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?

Less than Significant Impact. The Project will split one parcel into four smaller parcels. The proposed parcel split would not affect energy use. However, potential future development of new parcels at the Project site could result in a negligible increase in energy use compared to existing conditions from both construction and operational activities.

Potential future development at the Project site could include construction of houses, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), outbuildings (e.g., barns, garages, sheds), on-site wells, septic systems, landscaping, access routes, and/or other typical residential developments. During potential future construction, energy would be required to operate and maintain construction equipment and transport construction materials. The one-time energy expenditure required to construct the physical buildings and infrastructure associated with potential future residential development would be nonrecoverable. The energy needs for potential future construction would be temporary and would not require additional capacity or substantially increase peak or base period demands for electricity and other forms of energy. Associated energy consumption would be typical of that associated with residential development of this size in a rural setting. Non-renewable energy would not be consumed in a wasteful, inefficient, and unnecessary manner when compared to other construction activity in the region.

The potential for additional residences at the Project site could result in a negligible increase in electricity consumption in the region relative to existing conditions. However, the new facilities would be built in compliance with current Title 24 Building Energy Efficiency Standards (or the standards in effect at the time of construction), which serve to reduce wasteful, uneconomical, and unnecessary uses of energy for the State. Operation of the project would be typical of residential uses requiring electricity for lighting, climate control, kitchen facilities, and miscellaneous appliances. The net fuel consumption associated with potential additional future vehicle trips to the Project site would not be considered wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary in comparison to other similar developments in the region. State and federal regulations regarding fuel efficiency standards for vehicles in California are designed to reduce wasteful, inefficient, and unnecessary use of energy for transportation

b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

No Impact. Relevant plans that pertain to the efficient use of energy include the Energy Efficiency Action Plan, which focuses on energy efficiency and building decarbonization (CEC 2022). Potential future development at the Project site has the potential to result in a negligible increase in consumption of energy resources during construction and operation of new buildings and facilities. However, any future development would be minor and would be required to comply with all applicable requirements for construction and operational efficiency. The project would not conflict with or obstruct a State or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

3.7 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact.with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact.Impact	No Impact
VII. Geology and Soils.				
Would the project:				
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? (Refer to California Geological Survey Special Publication 42.)	☐	☐	☐	☒
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv) Landslides?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994, as updated), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.7.1 Environmental Setting

Based on mapping by California Geologic Survey, the nearest Alquist-Priolo Fault Zones are over 50 miles from the project site (CDC 2024b). According to the General Plan EIR, "no active faults have been identified in El Dorado County. One fault, part of the Rescue Lineament–Bear Mountains fault zone, is classified as a well located late-Quaternary fault (CDC 2000); therefore, it represents the only potentially active fault in the county. It is part of the Foothill Fault Suture Zone system, which was considered inactive until a Richter scale magnitude 5.7 earthquake

occurred near Oroville on August 1, 1975 (CDC 1990). All other faults located in El Dorado County are classified as pre-Quaternary (inactive)." (EDC 2003).

The project is within the boundary of a geologic formation known as the Pine Hill intrusive complex, which is one of the largest gabbroic plutons in the western Sierra Nevada metamorphic belt. Gabbro is a dark-colored, coarse-grained, intrusive igneous rock. (Springer 1980, USGS 2024b)

There are four NRCS mapped soil units in the Project site:

- Rescue sandy loam, 2 to 9 percent slopes,
- Rescue very stony sandy loam, 3 to 15 percent slopes,
- Rescue very stony sandy loam, 30 to 50 percent slopes,
- Rescue extremely stony sandy loam, 3 to 50 percent slopes, eroded.

All four soil units are derived from residuum weathered from gabbrodiorite, are well-drained, and have medium to high runoff rates (NRCS 2024). Depth to bedrock for these soil units typically range from approximately 45 to 70 inches. According to the web soil survey, depth to water table is typically more than 80 inches in the well-drained Rescue series soils (NRCS 2024). However, evaluation of the existing groundwater well developed on the Project site in 2020 indicated that at the location of the current well, the depth to groundwater is 20 feet below surface. The well is located at an elevation of 1,385 feet above msl, which is at a lower portion of the Project site, which ranges in elevation from 1,320 to 1,640 feet above msl.

The topography of the project site is hilly with a generally northwest facing aspect.

Based on the soil characteristics, topography, depth to groundwater, and distance to active faults, there is low potential for geologic hazards from landslides, steep areas, rock falls, mud flows, liquefaction, and expansive soils at the project site.

3.7.2 Discussion

a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:

i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? (Refer to California Geological Survey Special Publication 42.)

No Impact.. As discussed in Section 3.7.1, the project site is not within an Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone and is located over 50 miles east of the nearest Alquist-Priolo Fault Zones (CDC 2024b). Therefore, the project would not cause substantial adverse effects involving rupture of a known earthquake fault.

ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?

Less than Significant Impact. As described in Section 3.7.1, the project site is not within an active fault zone; however, earthquakes in the region have potential to cause seismic ground shaking of low severity at the project site. Potential future construction and building design would be subject to the County's Building Code (Title 110- Buildings and Construction), which incorporates the California Building Code and International Building Code standards. Potential future development at the Project site would involve limited excavation that would not alter seismic and fault conditions in the region and would not create new seismic events or exacerbate existing seismic hazards. Therefore, the project would not cause substantial adverse effects from strong seismic ground shaking.

iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

Less than Significant Impact. Liquefaction is the process in which water is combined with unconsolidated soils, generally from ground motion and pressure, which causes the soils to behave like a liquid (e.g., like "quicksand"). Liquefaction potential is determined from a variety of factors, including soil type, soil density, depth to the groundwater table, and the duration and intensity of ground shaking. Liquefaction is most likely to occur in deposits of water-saturated alluvium or areas of considerable artificial fill. Other types of seismic-related ground failure include ground lurching, differential settlement, and lateral spreading.

The potential for liquefaction and other seismic-related ground failure is considered low on the project site because the depth to groundwater is typically greater than 50 feet below ground surface and the distance to the nearest active fault is over 50 miles from the project site. The site is not located within a State Designated Seismic Hazard Zone for liquefaction (CDC 2024b). Therefore, the project would not cause substantial adverse effects from seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction.

iv) Landslides?

Less than Significant Impact. The project site has gently rolling hills typical of those near the base of the western central Sierra Nevada foothills. The potential for landslides to occur is considered low given the lack of steep slopes within or adjacent to the project site. Therefore, the project would not cause substantial adverse effects from landslides.

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

Less than Significant Impact. Soil erosion refers to the process by which soil or earth material is loosened or dissolved and removed from its original location. Erosion can occur by varying processes and may occur in the project site where bare soil is exposed to wind or moving water (both rainfall and surface runoff). The processes of erosion are generally a function of material type, terrain steepness, rainfall or irrigation levels, surface drainage conditions, and general land uses.

The proposed parcel split would not affect erosion. Potential future development at new parcels could include ground disturbance, such as excavation, grading, and trenching, which could increase the potential for erosion to occur. Future development will occur in compliance with the grading, erosion, and sediment control requirements outlined in Section 110.14 of the County municipal code. Potential future development would also comply with all applicable EDCAQMD fugitive dust requirements. Furthermore, if potential future development were to result in a disturbance area of more than 1 acre, it would be required to obtain coverage under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit for Discharges of Storm Water Associated with Construction Activity (Construction General Permit Order 2009-0009-DWQ). The Construction General Permit requires the development of a storm water pollution prevention plan (SWPPP), with best management practices (BMPs) for erosion and sediment control. The Construction General Permit is issued and enforced by the appropriate RWQCB. The Project site is within the jurisdiction of the Central Valley RWQCB and the project would be subject to all existing regulations associated with the protection of water quality, including erosion and sediment control.

Potential future development would comply with standard requirements for erosion control, thereby preventing substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil. Impacts would be Less than Significant Impact.

c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?

Less than Significant Impact. Refer to Sections 3.7.2(a)(iii) and (iv) above. The project site is located on the Pine Hill Intrusion, a large gabbroic pluton. The topography is hilly, with relatively gentle slopes, and soils are typically well-drained stony, sandy, loams. The potential for on- or off-site landslides, lateral spreading, liquefaction, or collapse is considered low. Potential future development at the Project site would not cause soils to become unstable.

d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994, as updated), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?

No Impact.. Expansive soils are typically associated with fine-grained clayey soils that have the potential to shrink and swell with repeated cycles of wetting and drying. The Project site does not have fine-grained clayey soils. There would be No Impact..

e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?

Less than Significant Impact. A percolation test with soil mantel and septic system design was completed at the Project site in 2023 by a Registered Environmental Health Specialist. One test was only completed at the Project site, at the location of proposed parcel C, where a septic tank and leach field were subsequently installed. The report associated with this test noted that other portions of the Project site support many locations that will meet the environmental Management Department requirements for potential additional onsite septic systems in the future. Given this professional assessment, the Project site's well-drained soils, and the low density of potential future development, the Project site is expected to be able to support potential future septic systems.

According to the County Environmental Management Department's review of the parcel split application, additional information describing the soil characteristics and septic system leach field area for each proposed parcel is required for this parcel map (EDC 2024a). The El Dorado County Local Agency Management Plan (LAMP) requires soil depth, soil percolation rate, and proposed leach field area to be submitted for proposed parcel splits. Each proposed parcel is required to have a soil percolation rate of 120 minutes per inch or less to be split into a smaller parcel. The available data indicates that each parcel will be able to meet this standard.

Impacts would be Less than Significant Impact.

f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

No Impact.. As described in Section 3.7.1, the project is underlain by a gabbroic intrusion within the western Sierra Nevada metamorphic belt. No fossil-bearing strata or paleontological sites have been previously recorded or observed within or near the project site. Because fossils typically occur in sedimentary rocks, which are not present within the Project site, potential future ground disturbance is unlikely to encounter a paleontological resource. The project would not destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature.

3.8 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact.with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact.Impact	No Impact
VIII. Greenhouse Gas Emissions.				
Would the project:				
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.8.1 Environmental Setting

Certain gases in the earth's atmosphere, classified as greenhouse gases (GHGs), play a critical role in determining the earth's surface temperature. Solar radiation enters the earth's atmosphere from space. Most solar radiation passes through GHGs; however, infrared radiation is absorbed by these gases. As a result, radiation that otherwise would have escaped back into space is instead "trapped," resulting in a warming of the atmosphere. This phenomenon, known as the greenhouse effect, is responsible for maintaining a habitable climate on earth.

Prominent GHGs contributing to the greenhouse effect are carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride. GHG emissions contributing to global climate change are attributable, in large part, to human activities associated with on-road and off-road transportation, industrial/manufacturing, electricity generation by utilities and consumption by end users, residential and commercial on-site fuel usage, and agriculture and forestry. It is "extremely likely" that more than half of the observed increase in global average surface temperature from 1951 to 2010 was caused by the anthropogenic increase in GHG concentrations and other anthropogenic factors together (IPCC 2014).

Climate change is a global problem. GHGs are global pollutants because even local GHG emissions contribute to global impacts. GHGs have long atmospheric lifetimes (one to several thousand years) and persist in the atmosphere long enough to be dispersed around the globe. Although the lifetime of any particular GHG molecule is dependent on multiple variables and cannot be determined with any certainty, it is understood that more CO_2 is emitted into the atmosphere than is sequestered by ocean uptake, vegetation, and other forms of sequestration (IPCC 2013).

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSION SOURCES AND SINKS

As discussed previously, GHG emissions are attributable in large part to human activities. CO_2 is the main byproduct of fossil fuel combustion. Methane, a highly potent GHG, primarily results from off-gassing (the release of chemicals from nonmetallic substances under ambient or greater pressure conditions) and is largely associated with agricultural practices, organic material decomposition in landfills, and the burning of forest fires. Nitrous oxide emissions are largely attributable to agricultural practices and soil management. CO_2 sinks, or reservoirs, include vegetation and the ocean, which absorb CO_2 through sequestration and dissolution (CO_2 dissolving into the water); respectively, these are the two of the most common processes for removing CO_2 from the atmosphere.

STATEWIDE GHG EMISSION TARGETS AND THE CLIMATE CHANGE SCOPING PLAN

Reducing GHG emissions in California has been the focus of the state government for approximately two decades (State of California 2018). GHG emission targets established by the state legislature include reducing statewide GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 (Assembly Bill [AB] 32 of 2006) and reducing them to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 (Senate Bill [SB] 32 of 2016). EO S-3-05 calls for statewide GHG emissions to be reduced to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. EO B-55-18 calls for California to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045 and achieve and maintain net negative GHG emissions thereafter. These targets align with the scientifically established levels needed globally to limit the rise in global temperature to no more than 2 degrees Celsius, the warming threshold at which major climate disruptions, such as super droughts and rising sea levels, are projected; these targets also pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius (UN 2015).

CARB adopted the *Final 2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality* (2022 Scoping Plan) on December 16, 2022, which traces the State's pathway to achieve its carbon neutrality and an 85 percent reduction in 1990 emissions goal by 2045. It identifies the reductions needed by each GHG emission sector (e.g., transportation [including off-road mobile source emissions], industry, electricity generation, agriculture, commercial and residential, pollutants with high global warming potential, and recycling and waste) to achieve these goals. (CARB 2022)

Unlike thresholds of significance established for criteria air pollutants in the EDCAQMD's CEQA guidance (EDCAQMD 2002), the EDCAQMD has not adopted GHG emissions thresholds for land use development projects. In the absence of County adopted thresholds, El Dorado County AQMD recommends using the adopted thresholds of other lead agencies, which are based on consistency with the goals of AB 32. Since climate change is a global problem and the location of the individual source of GHG emissions is somewhat irrelevant, it's appropriate to use thresholds established by other jurisdictions as a basis for impact significance determinations. Projects exceeding these thresholds would have a potentially significant impact and be required to mitigate those impacts to a Less than Significant Impact.level. Until the County adopts a CAP consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.5, and/or establishes GHG thresholds, the El Dorado County AQMD has recommended the use of thresholds adopted by the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD). The thresholds of significance established by SMAQMD, and used by EDCAQMD, were developed to identify emissions levels for which a project would not be expected to substantially conflict with existing California legislation adopted to reduce statewide GHG emissions needed to move towards climate stabilization. Per the SMAQMD Thresholds of Significance Table, most recently updated in 2020, if a proposed project results in emissions less than 1,100 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent per year ($MTCO_2e$/yr) during both construction and/or operation, the proposed project would result in a less-than-significant impact related to GHG emissions.

3.8.2 Discussion

a, b) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment of conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

Less than Significant Impact. As stated above, the EDCAQMD recommends the use of thresholds adopted by the SMAQMD for assessing the significance of GHG emissions from individual projects. The SMAQMD thresholds were developed to identify emissions levels for which a project would not be expected to substantially conflict with existing California legislation adopted to reduce statewide GHG emissions needed to move towards climate stabilization. Within these thresholds is the criteria that if a proposed project results in emissions less than 1,100 $MTCO_2e$/yr during both construction and operation, the proposed project would result in a less-than-significant impact related to GHG emissions. Although specific GHG emissions have not been calculated for the future development of new parcels that could occur as a result of the proposed project, it can still be confirmed that emissions from construction and operation would be below the 1,100 $MTCO_2e$/yr threshold. For comparison, in the Draft EIR for the Dorado Oaks Tentative Subdivision Map Project (which included 157 single-family residential lots and 225 multi-family lots covering approximately 48 acres, approximately 18 acres of roadway and intersection improvements, roughly 3 acres of public

parks, and installation of utility connections), first year construction GHG emissions were modelled at 1,044 $MTCO_2e$, below the threshold of 1,100 $MTCO_2e$ (Draft EIR available at Dorado Oaks Tentative Subdivision Map, Draft EIR (July 2021)). If construction at this scale would result in GHG emissions below the 1,100 $MTCO_2e$ threshold, then the relatively modest level of potential future construction activity that may indirectly result from the proposed parcel split would also generate GHG emissions below this threshold. Modelled operational impacts for the Dorado Oaks Project are 1,906 $MTCO_2e$, exceeding the 1,100 $MTCO_2e$ threshold. However, allowable development under the proposed project is an order of magnitude less than the development proposed as part of the Dorado Oaks Project. Therefore, operational GHG emissions that may result from the proposed project would be far below the 1,100 $MTCO_2e$ threshold.

Because both the construction and operational GHG emissions associated with potential future development of the new parcels would be below 1,100 $MTCO_2e$, any potential impacts related to GHG emissions would be Less than Significant Impact. Because emissions would be less than significant, the project also would not conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases.

3.9 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact.with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact.Impact	No Impact
IX. Hazards and Hazardous Materials.				
Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and/or accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.9.1 Environmental Setting

There are no hazardous materials sites at or near the Project site (DTSC 2024). There are no existing or proposed schools within 0.25 miles of the project site. The nearest school is Rescue Elementary School, located at 3880 Green Valley Road Rescue, California 95672, approximately 2 miles southeast of the project site. The Cameron Park Airport is the closest public airport, located approximately 3 miles south of the project site.

The project and surrounding vicinity are subject to the County's 2022 General Plan Safety Element Update (EDC 2004a), as well as the El Dorado County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (EDCHMP) (EDCSO 2024), which provides guidance for the County's response in emergency situations, including wildfire and emergency evacuation.

According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), the project site is in a state responsibility area (SRA) within a very high fire hazard severity zone (CAL FIRE 2024). Wildfire risks are discussed further in Section 3.20.

3.9.2 Discussion

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

Less than Significant Impact. A hazardous material is defined as any material that due to its quantity, concentration, physical or chemical characteristics, poses a significant present or potential hazard to human health or to the environment if released. Potential future development at the Project site may involve the temporary use, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials in the form of inorganic and organic chemicals, solvents, paints, oil, gasoline, cleansers. However, any future construction-related transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials would be temporary and all materials would be used, stored, and disposed of in accordance with applicable laws and regulations and manufacturers' instructions. Furthermore, any emissions from the use of such materials would be temporary in nature and localized to the Project site.

Land uses that involve the routine transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials include but are not limited to manufacturing plants, dry cleaning facilities, gas stations, agricultural properties, recycling centers, refineries, and shipyards. Potential future development at the Project site would not involve activities that involve the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. Any hazardous materials needed for ongoing maintenance and landscaping activities (e.g., solvents, paints, and pesticides) would be used and stored in small quantities typical of residential land uses. Therefore, the Project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment.

b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and/or accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?

Less than Significant Impact. Refer to Section 3.9.2(a) above. Potential future construction at the Project site could involve the temporary use, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials. This would be required to comply with federal, state, and County regulations relating to control of hazardous materials. Compliance with these regulations would reduce the likelihood of accidents and risks associated with release of hazardous materials. Potentially hazardous materials would be contained, stored, and used in accordance with manufacturers' instructions and handled in compliance with applicable standards and regulations.

Once operational, residential land use would not involve activities that often give rise to concerns regarding hazardous materials. Therefore, the project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset or accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment.

c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?

No Impact.. As discussed in Section 3.9.1, there are no existing or proposed schools within 0.25 miles of the project site. Therefore, the project would have No Impact. related to the emission or handling of hazardous materials, substances, or waste within 0.25 miles of an existing or proposed school.

d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code §65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?

No Impact.. The Project site is not located near any hazardous materials sites on the California Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC) EnviroStor or SWQCB's Geotracker database (DTSC 2024). The Project site is not located at a site that is mapped as likely to contain NOA (CDC 2000). There would be 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?

No Impact. The Cameron Park Airport is the closest public airport, located approximately 3 miles south of the project site. The Project site is not within the airport's land use plan. There would be No Impact..

f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed parcel split would not affect emergency response or evacuation. Potential future development at the Project site would occur in a manner consistent with the existing zoning for the site and planned population growth for the region. There would be no alternation of roadways that could hinder emergency response or evacuation. For each potential future point of access, an encroachment permit would be obtained from the County Department of Transportation and driveways would be constructed in accordance with County Design and Improvements Standards Manual. The Project would not impair or physically interfere with implementation of the EDCHMP.

g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires?

Less than Significant Impact. The Project site is in an area with an elevated wildfire risk. A wildland fire safe plan was developed for the Project site and approved by CAL FIRE and Rescue Fire Department representatives. The Wildland Fire Safety Plan is intended to reduce the risk of life and property loss by minimizing wildfire intensity and enabling local fire services to respond effectively through measures focused on the use of fire safe construction materials, vegetation management, and access for evacuation and emergency vehicles. With implementation of the Project site's Wildland Fire Safe Plan, the project would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires.

3.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact.with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact.Impact	No Impact
X. Hydrology and Water Quality.				
Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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:				
i) Result in substantial on- or offsite erosion or siltation;	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner 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; or	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv) Impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.10.1 Environmental Setting

According to the USGS Watershed Boundary Dataset, the project site is in the South Fork American River Subbasin and the Weber Creek Watershed (USGS 2024c). There is an unnamed seasonal stream that flows south to north through the Project site and that supports a constructed seasonal pond. North of Deer Valley Road, the unnamed seasonal stream joins Pinehem Creek, which is a tributary to Weber Creek. Weber Creek joins the South Fork American River at the upper reaches of Folsom Lake reservoir, which is located approximately 3 miles northwest of the Project site.

According to groundwater basin maps developed under the California Department of Water Resources' (DWR) Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), the Project site is located within a non-basin area, which refers to areas that are not part of a defined groundwater basin (DWR 2021).

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the project site is within an area of minimal flood hazard (FEMA 2008). The project site is not within a tsunami hazard area (CDC 2024c) and is not in proximity to an enclosed body of water that is susceptible to seiche.

3.10.2 Discussion

a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?

Less than Significant Impact. While the proposed parcel split would not affect water quality, potential future development at new parcels could include activities that could affect surface or groundwater quality, including ground disturbance, such as excavation, grading, and trenching, as well as construction of new areas of impervious surfaces.

The Project site is under the jurisdiction of the Central Valley RWQCB. The Central Valley RWQCB adopted the Water Quality Control Plan for the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Basins (Basin Plan) in 1975, with the current fifth edition approved in 2019, as amended in 2020. The purpose of the Basin Plan is to designate beneficial uses of waters within the Sacramento and San Joaquin River basins, establish water quality objectives to protect those beneficial uses, and implement a program needed to achieve those objectives. The Basin Plan establishes water quality standards for both surface and ground waters (Central Valley RWQCB 2019).

Discretionary projects must comply with the County's West Slope Development and Redevelopment Standards (EDC 2024c), the storm water management plan (SWMP) for Western El Dorado County (EDC 2004b), and the County's Grading, Erosion, and Sediment Control Ordinance (EDC 2013). Any future development with a disturbance area of more than 1 acre (43,560 sq. ft.) would also be required to obtain coverage under the NPDES General Permit for Discharges of Storm Water Associated with Construction Activity (Construction General Permit Order 2022-0057-DWQ). Through compliance with all applicable regulations and requirements, potential future development at the Project site would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality.

The unincorporated portion of El Dorado County's west slope, including the Project site, is subject to the State of California's Phase II NPDES municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) permit. As such, the County's post-construction water quality requirements follow those outlined in Section E.12 of the MS4 permit. Under the MS4 Permit, projects that create or replace less than 2,500 square feet of impervious surface are exempt from post construction requirements; small projects, including single family homes, which create or replace between 2,500 and 4,999 square feet of impervious surface, must follow a set of standard site design measures, found in Section E.12.b of the MS4 Permit (EDC 2024c). Future development at the Project site will be required to comply with applicable NPDES permit requirements, which may include treatment of stormwater prior to the water leaving the site or entering a waterbody, submittal of an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan, and/or other requirements, as applicable. Through compliance with all applicable standard County and State regulations, impacts would be Less than Significant Impact.

b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed parcel split would not affect groundwater. However, potential future development at the Project site could include new well drilling and/or introduction of new impervious surfaces. The Project is located in a non-basin area and any new future wells would be subject to applicable County permitting

requirements. Potential new impervious cover would not reach levels that could substantially affect groundwater recharge; however, development would be subject to applicable stormwater infrastructure requirements for treating stormwater runoff and allowing it to percolate back into the soil. Therefore, potential future development would avoid substantial impacts to groundwater supplies and groundwater recharge.

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:

i) Result in substantial on- or offsite erosion or siltation;

Less than Significant Impact. Potential future development that includes ground disturbance, such as excavation, grading, and trenching, could increase the potential for erosion to occur. As described under Question a, potential future development would be required to comply with all applicable regulations and requirements, including the NPDES MS4 permit; the County SWMP, the County Grading, Erosion, and Sediment Control Ordinance; and, if disturbance is greater than 1 acre, the Construction General Permit issued by the Central Valley RWQCB, which would require a SWPPP with BMPs to control erosion. With adherence to applicable rules and regulations and implementation of BMPs, potential future development would result in a Less than Significant Impact.impact related to erosion and siltation.

ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;

Less than Significant Impact. Potential future development at the Project site could include introduction of new impervious surfaces; however, this would be subject to applicable stormwater infrastructure requirements for treating stormwater runoff and allowing it to percolate back into the soil. Therefore, potential future development would not increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would result in flooding on- or off-site.

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; or

Less than Significant Impact. Potential future development at the Project site could include introduction of new impervious surfaces and ground disturbance, such as excavation, grading, and trenching. However, potential future development would be required to comply with all applicable regulations related to stormwater drainage and water quality protection. Therefore, the Project would not create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff.

iv) Impede or redirect flood flows?

No Impact.. As discussed in Section 3.10.1, the project site is within an area of minimal flood hazard (FEMA 2008). Therefore, any development on the Project site would not result in impacts related to impeding or redirecting flood flows.

d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?

No Impact.. As discussed in Section 3.10.1, the Project site is not within a flood hazard zone, a tsunami hazard area, or in proximity to an enclosed body of water that is susceptible to seiche (FEMA 2008; CDC 2024c). Therefore, the Residences Project would not risk release of pollutants due to project inundation in flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones.

e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

Less than Significant Impact. The Project site is located in a non-basin area and is not subject to a sustainable groundwater management plan. Potential future development at the Project site would be required to comply with requirements of the NPDES MS4 permit, the County SWMP, the County Grading, Erosion, and Sediment Control Ordinance, and, if disturbance is greater than 1 acre, the Construction General Permit issued by the Central Valley RWQCB. During potential future development, BMPs would be implemented during construction activities to prevent stormwater contamination, control sedimentation, and erosion, and comply with stormwater discharge requirements. Because potential future development would comply with applicable rules and regulations and implementation of BMPs, the project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the Basin Plan.

3.11 LAND USE AND PLANNING

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact.with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact.Impact	No Impact
XI. Land Use and Planning.				
Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☒	☐	☐

3.11.1 Environmental Setting

The Project site is in a rural setting in the unincorporated community of Rescue, in El Dorado County, near the western edge of the Sierra Nevada foothills. The Project site and surrounding properties are predominately characterized by mixed oak-foothill pine woodlands, whiteleaf manzanita chaparral, and annual grasslands. Adjoining properties support widely spaced rural residences, with most parcels in the region being privately owned.

The project site is designated as RR in the County General Plan Land Use Diagram, with an EP overlay (EDC 2004a). As described in the County's General Plan Land Use Element, the RR designation establishes areas for residential and agricultural development. As discussed in Section 3.4, "Biological Resources", the EP overlay identifies the site as being within one of the County's five ecological preserve areas that comprise Pine Hill Preserve. The Project site is located in Mitigation Area 0, where on-site mitigation is the encouraged mechanism for protection of gabbro soils rare plants.

The zoning designation for the Project is RL-10, which identifies lands that are suitable for limited residential development based on topography, access, groundwater or septic capability, and other infrastructural requirements. The minimum lot size designator for the Project site is 10 acres.

3.11.2 Discussion

a) Physically divide an established community?

No Impact.. As described in Section 3.11.1, the project site consists of a large rural residential parcel, which the Project proposes to split into four rural residential parcels, each ranging in size from 10 to 40 acres. The Project site is surrounded by similar rural residential parcels. The project would be compatible with surrounding land uses and would not include physical features that would restrict access to neighboring communities. Therefore, the project would not physically divide an established community.

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?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. As discussed in Section 3.11.1, the project site is designated for RR land uses and is zoned RL-10, with an EP overlay. The proposed parcel split is consistent with the objectives of these designations, including minimum parcel size requirements. The proposed parcel split would not conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation. Potential future development at the parcel could conflict with County requirements through the potential for significant impacts to gabbro rare plants and/or oak resources.

However, future development at the Project site would be required to conform to all applicable land use and zoning regulations and all applicable policies from the County's General Plan, including special requirements related to the EP overlay, as described under Mitigation Measure 3.4-1, as well as compliance with the County ORMP, as described under Mitigation Measure 3.4-7.

Additionally, the following permits or approvals may be required for future development of new parcels at the Project site:

- approval of improvement plans, indicating that the appropriate County agencies have reviewed and approved the project's connection to public utilities and roadways;
- a grading permit, according to the requirements in the County's Grading, Erosion, and Sediment Control Ordinance (County Code Section 110.14);
- pad certification, which requires that a soil engineer confirm that the site is adequately compacted to meet engineering requirements and a surveyor or engineer verify that the site is elevated above the floodplain; and
- a building permit, which requires payment of various fees (e.g., schools, roads), site plan review, and presentation of various other permits obtained from County departments relating to traffic, public services, and safety.

Because the proposed parcel split, with implementation of mitigation measures, would be consistent with existing land use and zoning designations for the project site and all applicable policies from the County's General Plan, and because any future development at the Project site would also be required to conform to applicable policies and regulations, including those related to the EP overlay, the project would not 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.

Mitigation Measure 3.4-1: Special-Status Plant Protection
Implement Mitigation Measure 3.4-1 above.

Mitigation Measure 3.4-7: Oak Resources Protection
Implement Mitigation Measure 3.4-7 above.

Significance after Mitigation
In accordance with the General Plan EP overlay, implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.4-1 will ensure that future development avoids impacts to the Pine Hill endemics, and offsets impacts where avoidance isn't possible. Through Measure 3.4-7, future development will avoid conflicting with the County's ORMP. With these measures in place, impacts would be reduced to Less than Significant Impact.levels.

3.12 MINERAL RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact.with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact.Impact	No Impact
XII. Mineral Resources.				
Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.12.1 Environmental Setting

The California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 requires the State Geologist to classify land into Mineral Resource Zones (MRZ) according to the known or inferred mineral potential of that land. Areas classified as MRZ-2 include areas where adequate information indicates that significant mineral deposits are present, or where it is judged that a high likelihood exists for their presence. The process is based solely on geology, without regard to existing land use or land ownership. The primary goal of mineral land classification is to ensure that the mineral resource potential of land is recognized by local government decision-makers and considered before land-use decisions that could preclude mining are made. Placer gold mines were once common in the Project area region, including along Weber Creek just north of the Project site. There is also evidence that an active gold mine was once on the property. However, according to the El Dorado County General Plan EIR, the project site is not within an area classified as MRZ-2 (EDC 2003).

3.12.2 Discussion

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

No Impact.. The Project site is not known to support significant mineral deposits. The Project site's land use designation is RR, which allows for mineral resource extraction if desired by existing and future residents. The proposed parcel split would not preclude future mineral resource extraction. However, because the Project site is not known to support significant mineral deposits, any future development would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource of regional value or of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a land use plan.

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?

See response in item (a) above.

3.13 NOISE

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact.with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact.Impact	No Impact
XIII.Noise.				
Would the project result in:				
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 in other applicable local, state, or federal standards?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.13.1 Environmental Setting

ACOUSTIC FUNDAMENTALS

Acoustics is the scientific study that evaluates perception, propagation, absorption, and reflection of sound waves. Sound is a mechanical form of radiant energy, transmitted by a pressure wave through a solid, liquid, or gaseous medium. Sound that is loud, disagreeable, unexpected, or unwanted is generally defined as noise. Noise is typically expressed in decibels (dB), which is a common measurement of sound energy. Definitions of acoustical terms used in this section are provided in Table 3-3.

Table 3-3 Acoustic Term Definitions

Term	Definition
Noise	Noise is generally defined as sound that is loud, disagreeable, unexpected, or unwanted.
Decibel (dB)	Sound levels are measured using the decibel scale, developed to relate to the range of human hearing. A decibel is logarithmic; it does not follow normal algebraic methods and cannot be directly summed. For example, a 65-dB source of sound, such as a truck, when joined by another 65-dB source results in a sound amplitude of 68 dB, not 130 dB (i.e., doubling the source strength increases the sound pressure by 3 dB). A sound level increase of 10 dB corresponds to 10 times the acoustical energy, and an increase of 20 dB equates to a 100-fold increase in acoustical energy.
A-weighted decibel (dBA)	The human ear is not equally sensitive to loudness at all frequencies in the audible spectrum. To better relate overall sound levels and loudness to human perception, frequency-dependent weighting networks were developed, identified as A through E. There is a strong correlation between the way humans perceive sound and A-weighted sound levels. For this reason, the A-weighted sound levels are used to predict community response to noise from the environment, including noise from transportation and stationary sources, and are expressed as A-weighted decibels. All sound levels discussed in this section are A-weighted decibels unless otherwise noted.

Term	Definition
Equivalent Noise Level (L_{eq})	The average noise level during a specified time period; that is, the equivalent steady-state noise level in a stated period of time that would contain the same acoustic energy as the time-varying noise level during the same period (i.e., average noise level).
Maximum Noise Level (L_{max})	The highest instantaneous noise level during a specified time period.

Source: Caltrans 2013.

Noise Generation and Attenuation

Noise can be generated by many sources, including mobile sources such as automobiles, trucks, and airplanes and stationary sources such as activity at construction sites, machinery, and commercial and industrial operations. As sound travels through the atmosphere from the source to the receiver, noise levels attenuate (i.e., decrease) depending on ground absorption characteristics, atmospheric conditions, and the presence of physical barriers. Sound from a localized source (i.e., a point source) propagates uniformly outward in a spherical pattern. The sound level attenuates at a rate of 6 dB for each doubling of distance from a point source. Noise from a line source, such as a road or highway, propagates outward in a cylindrical pattern, often referred to as cylindrical spreading. Sound levels attenuate at a rate of 3 dB for each doubling of distance from a line source. Noise attenuation from ground absorption and reflective wave canceling provides additional attenuation associated with geometric spreading. For acoustically absorptive sites such as soft dirt, grass, or scattered bushes and trees, additional ground-attenuation value of 1.5 dB per doubling of distance is normally assumed. When added to the attenuation rate associated with cylindrical spreading, the additional ground attenuation results in an overall drop-off rate of 4.5 dB per doubling of distance. This would hold true for point sources, resulting in an overall drop-off rate of up to 7.5 dB per doubling of distance.

Atmospheric conditions such as wind speed, wind direction, turbulence, temperature gradients, and humidity also alter the propagation of noise and affect levels at a receiver. Furthermore, the presence of a barrier (e.g., topographic feature, intervening building, and dense vegetation) between the source and the receptor can provide substantial attenuation of noise levels at the receiver. Natural (e.g., berms, hills, and dense vegetation) and human-made features (e.g., buildings and walls) may function as noise barriers.

To provide some context to noise levels described throughout this section, common sources of noise and associated noise levels are presented in Table 3-4.

Table 3-4 Typical Noise Levels

Common Outdoor Activities	Noise Level (dB)	Common Indoor Activities
	110	Rock band
Jet flyover at 1,000 feet	100	
Gas lawnmower at 3 feet	90	
Diesel truck moving at 50 mph at 50 feet	80	Food blender at 3 feet, garbage disposal at 3 feet
Noisy urban area, gas lawnmower at 100 feet	70	Vacuum cleaner at 10 feet, normal speech at 3 feet
Commercial area, heavy traffic at 300 feet	60	
Quiet urban daytime	50	Large business office, dishwasher in next room
Quiet urban nighttime	40	Theater, large conference room (background)
Quiet suburban nighttime	30	Library, bedroom at night, concert hall (background)
Quiet rural nighttime	20	Broadcast/recording studio
	10	
Threshold of human hearing	0	Threshold of human hearing

Notes: dB = A-weighted decibels; mph = miles per hour

Source: Caltrans 2013.

Effects of Noise on Humans

Exposure to excessive noise may result in physical damage to the auditory system, which may lead to gradual or traumatic hearing loss. Gradual hearing loss is caused by sustained exposure to moderately high noise levels over a period of time; traumatic hearing loss is caused by sudden exposure to extremely high noise levels over a short period. Non-auditory behavioral effects of noise on humans are primarily subjective effects such as annoyance, nuisance, and dissatisfaction, which lead to interference with activities such as communications, sleep, and learning.

EXISTING NOISE SOURCES AND LEVELS

As a rural residential area with relatively wide spacing between residences, the Project site has low levels of ambient noise, with existing noise sources consisting primarily of vehicular traffic along Deer Valley Road and other nearby roadways.

NOISE- AND VIBRATION-SENSITIVE LAND USES AND RECEPTORS

Noise- and vibration-sensitive land uses generally include those uses where noise exposure could result in health-related risks to individuals, places where a quiet setting is an essential element of the intended purpose (e.g., schools and libraries), and historic buildings that could sustain structural damage due to vibration. The project is in a sparsely populated area where land is generally undeveloped. Noise- and vibration-sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the project area include nearby residents. The closest sensitive receptors are the existing nearby residences, which are typically a minimum of 100 feet from the project site boundary.

AIRPORTS AND PRIVATE AIRSTRIPS

There is a private airstrip located approximately 0.75 miles northwest of the Project site. The nearest public airport is the Cameron Airpark, located approximately 3 miles south of the Project site.

COUNTY NOISE STANDARDS

County Municipal Code Chapter 9.16 (Noise) and Chapter 130.37 (Noise Standards) establish standards concerning acceptable noise levels for both noise-sensitive land uses and for noise-generating land uses, in compliance with General Plan Goal 6.5 (Acceptable Noise Levels). Section 6.5 of the General Plan identifies noise criteria for various stationary and transportation noise sources, including those related to construction.

3.13.2 Discussion

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 in other applicable local, state, or federal standards?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed parcel split would not affect noise levels. Potential future development at the Project site could result in temporary or permanent increases in ambient noise levels. Potential future construction could result in temporary increased noise levels from equipment use, construction activities, and increased vehicle trips to the site. Construction-related noise sources could include both mobile and stationary on-site equipment (e.g., dozers, loaders, generators). Construction noise would be short-term and temporary, and operation of heavy-duty construction equipment would be intermittent throughout the day during construction.

County code exempts certain activities, including construction, from noise standards as long as the construction occurs between the hours of 7:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. Monday through Friday, and between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. on weekends and on federally-recognized holidays.

Construction activities would occur within the timeframe identified by the County's noise ordinance when construction noise is exempt from noise standards. Thus, the project would not generate a substantial temporary increase in ambient noise levels in excess of allowable standards in the vicinity of the project.

Potential future development at the Project site could also result in increased operational noise, from both traffic and stationary sources. With potential future additional residents at the Project site, there could be an increase in average daily traffic volumes and associated increases in traffic noise levels along affected roadway segments near the site. However, given the relatively minor amount of potential future development at the site (up to three additional single-family dwellings, plus potential ADUs at the four parcels), the increase in traffic volume and associated noise would be negligible and would not result in a substantial noise increase due to new vehicle trips

The loudest operational noise from non-transportation sources is often generated by onsite mechanical equipment such as HVAC equipment. Noise levels generated from HVAC equipment vary substantially depending on unit efficiency, size, and location. Generally, HVAC equipment generates noise levels of 60 dBA at 6 meters (19.6 feet). The potential future locations of potential future HVAC equipment relative to adjacent sensitive receptors are not known at this time. However, given the low density of potential future development and the considerable spacing between residences, noise from potential new HVAC equipment at potential new residences at the Project site is expected to attenuate to below the County's noise standard before reaching the nearest sensitive receptor.

Potential noise impacts would be Less than Significant Impact.

b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed parcel split would not affect groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels. Potential future site development would not use ground vibration–intensive activities, such as pile driving or blasting, although pieces of equipment that generate lower levels of ground vibration, such as dozers and pavers, may be used during construction. However, any potential vibration would be minor and temporary, and would not result in structural damage or human annoyance.

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?

No Impact.. There is a private airstrip located approximately 0.75 miles northwest of the Project site. There is no evidence that the private airstrip generates noise levels that result in complaints from existing residences in the area. The nearest public airport is the Cameron Airpark, located approximately 3 miles south of the Project site. The Project is not located within the Cameron Park Airport Influence Area (EDC 2012). Given these circumstances, on-site residences would not be exposed to airport-related noise in excess of County standards.

3.14 POPULATION AND HOUSING

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact.with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact.Impact	No Impact
XIV. Population and Housing. Would the project:				
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)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.14.1 Environmental Setting

According to the County General Plan Housing Element 2021-2029 Update, the 2020 population of the unincorporated areas of El Dorado County was 159,722 residents, which was an increase of 7 percent from the 2010 population. Projections estimate that the population will increase an additional 8.8 percent between 2020 and 2030, with an average growth of 0.9 percent per year. In 2018 there were approximately 68,094 housing units in the unincorporated portions of the County. Of these, 56,478 units (82.9 percent) were occupied, and 11,616 units (17.1 percent) were vacant. However, 8,946 units (13.1 percent) were classified as vacant for seasonal, recreational, or occasional uses only. (EDC 2003)

3.14.2 Discussion

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)?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed parcel split would divide one large parcel into four smaller parcels. In addition to the existing residence on proposed Parcel C, potential future development could include construction of three additional single-family dwellings on proposed Parcels A, B, and D, as well as potential ADUs on all four parcels, as authorized under Section 130.40.300 of the County municipal code, which allows one attached or detached ADU per lot, plus one junior ADU per lot (junior ADUs must be within the footprint of the single-family dwelling). This potential future development would result in a minor increase in population in the area. However, this would not be unplanned growth, but rather would be consistent with "buildout" levels considered in the County General Plan. The County General Plan and associated EIR growth projections considered "buildout", which is development of land to its full potential or theoretical capacity as permitted under General Plan land use designation or zoning district. Potential future development and associated population growth that could result from the proposed parcel split is within the level of "buildout" covered in the County General Plan and is well below the maximum level of development allowable under current zoning. Therefore, the Project would not induce substantial unplanned population growth.

b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

No Impact.. The project would not displace people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

3.15 PUBLIC SERVICES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact.with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact.Impact	No Impact
XV. Public Services.				
Would the project:				
a) Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or the 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
Police protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
Schools?	☐	☐	☒	☐
Parks?	☐	☐	☒	☐
Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.15.1 Environmental Setting

The Rescue Fire Protection District (RFPD) is a volunteer fire department that provides all fire and initial emergency medical services to the Project site. The RFPD has a service area covering approximately 5,744 residents and approximately 2,116 homes with one staffed station, one volunteer station, four engines, one water tender, one utility vehicle, and one command vehicle (RFPD 2024). The staffed station, Station 83, has a service area of approximately 30 square miles and is located at 5221 Deer Valley Road, approximately 6 minutes from the Project site. The staff consists of six paid members and eleven volunteer members. RFPD has a mutual aid agreement in place with all other fire agencies in El Dorado County (RFPD 2024). CAL FIRE has wildland fire responsibility.

The El Dorado County Sheriff's Office (EDCSO) provides law enforcement services in the unincorporated portions of the County, including the Project site. EDCSO is made up of the South Lake Tahoe patrol and the West Slope patrol, operating out of Placerville, which serves the Project site. In 2023 the Sheriff's Dispatchers answered 99.71 percent of all 911 calls within 15 seconds, exceeding national standards, which recommend 90% of all 911 calls be answered within 15 seconds. (EDCSO 2023)

The project site is within the boundaries of the Rescue Union Elementary School District and the El Dorado Union High School District. The Rescue Union School District enrolls approximately 3,500 students at two middle schools and five elementary schools (RUSD 2024). The El Dorado Union High School District serves 6,561 students at four high schools and three alternative schools (EDUHSD 2024).

Nearby parks include the Pine Hill State Ecological Reserve, approximately 0.5 miles south of the Project site, and the Rescue Community Center Park, located near the intersection of Deer Valley Road and Green Valley Road approximately 2.5 miles southeast of the Project site.

3.15.2 Discussion

a) Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or the 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. Potential future development that could indirectly result from the parcel split could result in a minor increase in population in the Project site; however, this would not result in the need for new or expanded fire protection facilities. The Project site would continue to be served by the RFPD. Building permits associated with potential future residential development at the Project site would require permits from County departments relating to traffic, public services, and safety and would require payment of various fees (e.g., schools, roads). Through this process, the potential future development would contribute its proportional amount to support government facilities. The potential addition of three new residential parcels and associated population in their service area would not significantly affect the response time, service ratios, or performance of the RFPD or any other public service. The project would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered fire protection and emergency services facilities.

Police protection?

Less than Significant Impact. The Project site would continue to receive law enforcement services from the EDCSO West Slope patrol, operating out of Placerville. Potential future development following the parcel split could include up the three new single-family residences. This change would not significantly increase the demand for EDCSO services, or affect EDCSO service ratios and response times. The project would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered police protection facilities.

Schools?

Less than Significant Impact. The Rescue Union Elementary School District enrolls approximately 3,500 students and the El Dorado Union High School District serves approximately 6,561 students (EDUHSD 2024). The proposed parcel split would divide one large parcel into four smaller parcels. In addition to the existing residence on proposed Parcel C, potential future development could include construction of three additional single-family dwellings on proposed Parcels A, B, and D, as well as potential ADUs on all four parcels. While this population growth could include some student enrollment, the amount would be minor and could be accommodated by existing facilities. The Project would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered school facilities.

Parks?

Less than Significant Impact. The potential future population growth in the region that could result from the proposed parcel split is minimal and could be accommodated by existing nearby parks. The Project would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered public park facilities.

Other public facilities?

Less than Significant Impact. Given the negligible amount of population growth in the area that could indirectly result from the proposed parcel split, it would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered public facilities.

3.16 RECREATION

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact.with Mitigation Incorporated	Lessthan Significant Impact.Impact	No Impact
XVI. Recreation.				
Would the project:				
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.16.1 Environmental Setting

Section 3.15.1 includes a summary of the existing public parks and recreational facilities within 1 mile of the project site.

3.16.2 Discussion

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?

Less than Significant Impact. As discussed in Section 3.15.2(a), nearby parks include the Pine Hill State Ecological Reserve, approximately 0.5 miles south of the Project site, and the Rescue Community Center Park, located near the intersection of Deer Valley Road and Green Valley Road approximately 2.5 miles southeast of the Project site. The potential future population growth at the Project area that could result from the proposed parcel split is minimal and could be accommodated by existing nearby parks. The Project would not cause substantial physical deterioration of existing parks or recreational facilities to occur or be accelerated.

b) Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

No Impact.. The Project does not include recreational facilities and would not require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities. There would be No Impact..

3.17 TRANSPORTATION

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact.with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact.Impact	No Impact
XVII. Transportation.				
Would the project:				
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.17.1 Environmental Setting

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

Access to the Project site is provided by the surrounding roadway network, which includes U.S. 50, Deer Valley Road, Ridgewood Drive, Green Valley Road, Bass Lake Road, Cameron Park Drive, and N. Shingle Road (Exhibits 2-1 and 2-2). Deer Valley Road is classified as a minor collector roadway and it supports a Class III Bike Route, where the travel lane is shared by drivers and bicyclists. Class III routes are generally designated on roadways with low levels of motor vehicle traffic where bicycles may share the travel lane (EDCTC 2024). Green Valley Road, between Silva Valley Parkway and Der Valley Road, is classified as a Major 2-Lane Facility for 2035 and as a future 4-lane divided facility. U.S. 50 is an east-west freeway that traverses the United States from Sacramento, California to Ocean City, Maryland. In the vicinity of the Project, US 50 passes through the communities of Cameron Park and Shingle Springs.

El Dorado Transit provides public transportation for the western slope of El Dorado County. The Cameron Park/Shingle Springs route, which runs hourly on weekdays, extends up to Green Valley Road, with the closest stop approximately 2.5 miles south of the Project site. This route provides transfers to the 50 Express and Sacramento Commuter. The 50 Express bus route includes a stop at the Sacramento Regional Transit light rail station in Folsom, which provides transportation to the broader Sacramento area.

REGULATORY SETTING

Senate Bill 743

SB 743, passed in 2013, required OPR to develop new State CEQA guidelines that address traffic metrics under CEQA. As stated in the legislation, upon adoption of the new guidelines, "automobile delay, as described solely by level of service (LOS) or similar measures of vehicular capacity or traffic congestion shall not be considered a significant impact on the environment pursuant to this division, except in locations specifically identified in the guidelines, if any."

In December of 2018, OPR published the most recent version of the *Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA* (Technical Advisory) which provides guidance for vehicle miles traveled (VMT) analysis. The Office of Administrative Law approved the updated State CEQA Guidelines and lead agencies had an opt-in period until July 1, 2020 to implement the updated guidelines as they related to VMT. As of July 1, 2020, implementation of Section 15064.3 of the updated CEQA Guidelines is required statewide.

The OPR Technical Advisory states that lead agencies may screen out VMT using project size, maps, transit availability, and provision of affordable housing. Many agencies use these screening thresholds to identify when a project should be expected to cause a less-than-significant impact without conducting a detailed study. The screening criteria applicable to this project is for small projects, stating that projects that generate or attract fewer than 110 trips per day generally may be assumed to result in a less-than-significant transportation impact.

Regional Transportation Planning

El Dorado County is within the boundaries of the Sacramento Area Council of Governments, which oversees the regional transportation plan for the Sacramento region, updated every four years in collaboration with local governments. The El Dorado County Transportation Commission is the Regional Transportation Planning Agency for the west slope of El Dorado County and is responsible for coordinating the regional transportation efforts on the western slope of El Dorado County and the City of Placerville.

The County developed and adopted the El Dorado County and City of Placerville SB 743 Implementation Plan (EDCTC 2019), which shifted the evaluation of transportation impacts from LOS to VMT and describes the CEQA analysis for transportation impacts that shall be used in the County. The El Dorado County Board of Supervisors Resolution 141-2020 adopting VMT thresholds significance for transportation impacts under CEQA (EDC 2020) includes the following screening criteria to identify projects that are presumed to have Less than Significant Impact.impacts:

- Projects that generate or attract less than 100 trips per day, consistent with OPR's determination of projects that generate or attract fewer than 110 trips per day and further reduced to 100 to remain consistent with the existing threshold in General Plan Policy TC-Xe;
- Projects that are within 0.5 miles of either a major transit stop, as defined in Public Resources Code Section 21064.3, or a high quality transit corridor, as defined in Public Resources Section 21155. Consistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3(b)(l) and OPR's conclusions in its Technical Advisory; and
- 100% affordable residential development, including moderate, low, and very low categories as defined in the Regional Housing Needs Assessment, consistent with OPR's conclusions in its Technical Advisory.

3.17.2 Discussion

a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities?

Less than Significant Impact. The Project would split one large parcel into four smaller parcels, which could potentially result in future additional residential development at the Project site. Additional residences at the site could result in additional vehicle trips to and from the Project site in the future. Even with the maximum potential future development at the Project site, the Project meets the County's screening criteria as a small project that would generate or attract less than 100 trips per day. Therefore, further traffic modeling and analysis are not required and impacts are presumed to be Less than Significant Impact.

According to the County Department of Transportation's (DOT's) preliminary comments on the proposed parcel split application (EDC 2024a), the following circulation requirements apply to the Project:

- Access Road Improvements: The proposed access to each parcel should be submitted to the County DOT for review, in particular for proposed lots A and B. Easements may be required. The standard plan for each encroachment will be determined once each access point is identified. An encroachment permit should be

obtained from the DOT for each point of access, and the driveways serving each proposed parcel must be constructed consistent with the County Design and Improvements Standards Manual.

- Offer of Dedication: The Project Proponent should irrevocably offer to dedicate to the County of El Dorado a road, slope, drainage, and public utility easement 60 feet in width (full width) for Deer Valley Road. This offer will be accepted by the County.

The project and potential future development at the Project site would comply with these requirements. The Project would not conflict with the programs, plans, policies, or ordinances addressing the circulation system.

b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3(b), which pertains to vehicle miles travelled?

Less than Significant Impact. Potential future development at the Project site could result in additional trips to the Project site, both operationally at residences and temporarily during construction. This may generate new VMT, or it may redistribute existing VMT. Trip generation from the properties (four primary residences) using the ITE Trip Generation Manual, 10th Edition is less than 100 trips daily. Therefore, the Project meets the County's screening criteria as a small project that would generate or attract less than 100 trips per day. Therefore, further traffic modeling and analysis are not required and project impacts are presumed to be Less than Significant Impact. Potential VMP impacts would be Less than Significant Impact.

c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

Less than Significant Impact. As described under question a above, potential future changes related to new parcel access would require an encroachment permit from the County DOT for each point of access, and potential future driveways serving each proposed parcel would be constructed in compliance with the County Design and Improvements Standards Manual. The Project would not create dangerous intersections, would not include incompatible uses, and would not substantially increase hazards.

d) Result in inadequate emergency access?

Less than Significant Impact. Potential future driveways at new parcels would comply with County Design and Improvements Standards Manual, County Regional Fire Protection Standards (EDHFD 2024), and California Fire Code (CFC) requirements, including those that define standards for providing emergency access, including fire apparatus access. The surrounding roadways provide adequate circulation and access for emergency response and the project would not significantly modify any roads or otherwise affect emergency response times. Therefore, the project would not result in inadequate emergency access.

3.18 TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact.with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact.Impact	No Impact
XVIII. Tribal Cultural Resources.				
Has a California Native American Tribe requested consultation in accordance with Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1(b)?	☒ Yes		☐ No	
Would the project 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, 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:				
a) 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)?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) 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 Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe?	☐	☒	☐	☐

3.18.1 Environmental Setting

AB 52, signed by Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr., in September 2014, established a new class of resources under CEQA: "tribal cultural resources." AB 52, as provided in Public Resource Code Sections 21080.3.1, 21080.3.2, and 21082.3, requires that lead agencies undertaking CEQA review must, upon written request of a California Native American Tribe, begin consultation once the lead agency determines that the application for the project is complete, prior to the issuance of a NOP of an EIR or notice of intent to adopt a negative declaration or mitigated negative declaration.

The NAHC was contacted to request a Sacred Lands File search for known cultural resources within or near the project site. The results of the search returned by the NAHC on date were positive/negative for Native American cultural resources in the project vicinity. The NAHC provided contact information for tribal members and organizations affiliated with the region and recommended that they be contacted for more information on the potential for Native American cultural resources within or near the project area. The following tribes were contacted on date, for consultation under AB 52:

- United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria
- Ione Band of Miwok Indians
- Wilton Rancheria
- Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians

- Tsi Akim Maidu
- Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California
- Nashville Enterprise Miwok-Maidu-Nishinam Tribe

Replies included X. Wilton Rancheria reviewed this project and participated in a site survey on February 10, 2025, and provided comments on February 14, 2025, stating that they currently have no concerns regarding this project.

3.18.2 Discussion

Would the project 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, 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:

a,b) 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)? 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 Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 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. Although consultation under AB 52 did not result in the identification of tribal cultural resources as defined by PRC Section 21074, the NAHC Sacred Lands File search was positive. Therefore, the possibility exists that tribal cultural resources could be encountered during construction-related ground disturbing activities. This impact is potentially significant.

Mitigation Measure 3.5-1: Protection of Archaeological Resources
Implement Mitigation Measure 3.5-1 above.

Significance after Mitigation
Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.5-1 would reduce impacts to tribal cultural resources to a less-than-significant level by requiring, in the case of a discovery, appropriate treatment (including options for data recovery, mapping, capping, or avoidance) and proper care of significant tribal cultural resources.

3.19 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact.with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact.Impact	No Impact
XIX. Utilities and Service Systems.				
Would the project:				
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunication facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Have insufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may serve the project that it has inadequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand, in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Fail to comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.19.1 Environmental Setting

The project site is a rural property with utilities currently serving a single residence. Water supply is received through a permitted on-site groundwater well, which was developed on the Project site in 2020. According to the well completion report, the depth to first water is 20 feet below surface, the depth to static water level is 15 feet below surface, and the estimated yield is 65 gallons per minute.

Wastewater is managed through an on-site septic system. A percolation test with soil mantel and septic system design was completed in 2023 as part of the septic system permitting. On the test results, the Registered Environmental Health Specialist noted that although other areas of the parcel were not tested, many locations on the Project site are expected to meet the Environmental Management Department's requirements for potential future additional septic systems (Duncan 2023). Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) provides electricity and AT&T provides telecommunications services.

El Dorado Disposal Services provides solid waste collection, disposal, and recycling services in the region. Solid waste is transported to the Western El Dorado Recovery Systems (WERS) Transfer Station and Material Recovery Facility, located at 4100 Throwita Way in Placerville, which handles a maximum permitted throughput of 400 tons per day (CalRecycle 2024a). After undergoing processing, non-recyclable waste from the WERS Transfer Station and Material Recovery Facility are delivered to the Potrero Hills Landfill, located at 3675 Potrero Hills Lane, in Suisun City, which

has a maximum permitted capacity of 83.1 million cubic yards and, as of the year 2006, a remaining estimated capacity of approximately 13.9 million cubic yards, or 16.7 percent of the landfill's total capacity. The landfill receives a maximum disposal of 4,330 tons per day (CalRecycle 2024b).

Chapter 8.42- Solid Waste Management Ordinance No. 4525 describes the County's requirements related to the provision of solid waste disposal services including collection and transport. The California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (AB 939) required a diversion of a minimum of 50 percent of discarded materials away from disposal in landfills.

3.19.2 Discussion

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

Less than Significant Impact. The current project consists of the splitting of one large parcel into four smaller parcels, which would have no direct impact on utilities and service systems. Although not part of the current project, future development may occur on the newly formed lots. This could include the construction of new onsite groundwater well(s), onsite septic systems, new stormwater drainage features, and new tie-ins for electric power, telecommunication, and/or other utility and service facilities.

Any future development that occurs on new parcels, including utility and service system construction, would be required to comply with all applicable County regulations, including the ORMP and rare plant protection. While actions taken to maintain existing utility facilities are exempt from the mitigation requirements of the ORMP, actions associated with development of new utility facilities, including transmission or utility lines, are not exempt.

The potential future effects of constructing on-site utility connections and stormwater drainage are included in the analysis of other potential future ground-disturbing activities. Impacts pertaining to grading, soils, and stormwater are addressed in Section 3.7, "Geology and Soils," and 3.10, "Hydrology and Water Quality." PG&E, the utility using the utility corridor running through the project site, provided an initial review of the proposed project, which indicated that the Project does not appear to directly interfere with existing PG&E facilities or impact their easement rights.

As discussed in items b) through c) below, the capacity of on-site and off-site infrastructure for utilities including water supply, septic systems, and landfill capacity supporting the project site would be sufficient to accommodate potential future site development. Impacts pertaining to energy are discussed in Section 3.6, "Energy"- the construction of new or expanded energy production facilities would not be required.

b) Have insufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?

Less than Significant Impact. Evaluation of the existing groundwater well developed on the Project site in 2020 indicates that at the well location the depth to first water is 20 feet below surface, the depth to static water level is 15 feet below surface, and the estimated yield is 65 gallons per minute. For comparison, the statewide median indoor residential water use is 48 gallons per capita per day (DWR 2021). Potential future development of new parcels may include drilling of new wells. Any future wells would be required to obtain applicable permits from the County Environmental Management Department, including well permitting requirements for local agencies to prepare for and lessen the effects of drought conditions from Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-7 22 (DWR 2024). Furthermore, according to the DWR's SGMA classification of groundwater basins, the Project site is located in a non-basin area, meaning it is not within a defined groundwater basin.

While the project may indirectly result in additional demand for water in the future, existing water supplies are estimated to be sufficient to serve the project site, even in the event of multiple dry-year conditions.

c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may serve the project that it has inadequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand, in addition to the provider's existing commitments?

Less than Significant Impact. The project site is in a rural area where wastewater treatment is accomplished through onsite septic systems. The Project site is underlain primarily by well-drained stony sandy loams (NRCS 2024). Development of any future new septic systems at the Project site would require approval from the County Environmental Management Department and compliance with the County's Private Sewage Disposal System Ordinance (EDC 2024d). Before the proposed Parcel split can be approved by the County, information about soil depth, soil percolation rate, and the proposed leach field area for each of the proposed new parcels must be submitted to the LAMP and must demonstrate a soil percolation rate of 120 minutes per inch or less. The project site is expected to have sufficient capacity to accommodate potential additional future onsite septic systems.

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?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed parcel split would not generate solid waste. However, potential future development of new parcels could generate solid waste from construction, as well as future household solid waste including organic waste and recyclable material. Solid waste services to the project site are provided by El Dorado Disposal Services and waste generated at the site would be disposed of at the Potrero Hills Landfill. The project would not generate waste in excess of local standards or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure and would not impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals.

e) Fail to comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

Less than Significant Impact. Solid waste services to the project site are provided by El Dorado Disposal Services and waste generated at the site would be disposed of at the Potrero Hills Landfill. Potential future residential development at the Project site be provided with trash, recycling, and organics disposal services in accordance with local, state, and federal regulations. The project would, therefore, comply with regulations including the County's ordinances and AB 939. The Project would not fail to comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction regulations related to solid waste.

3.20 WILDFIRE

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact.with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact.Impact	No Impact
XX. Wildfire.				
Is the project located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as high fire hazard severity zones?				
If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:		☒ Yes		☐ No
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Require the installation 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.20.1 Environmental Setting

According to CAL FIRE, the project site is within the SRA for fire protection and is located within a designated very high fire hazard severity zone (CAL FIRE 2024). The Project is in a rural area, with most properties in the region being privately owned. The topography of the project site is characterized by gently rolling hills with a generally northwest aspect.

The project site is in an area susceptible to wildland fires. Surrounding properties support widely spaced residential structures, amongst blue oak-foothill pine woodlands, annual grasslands, and shrublands. The topography of the project site is generally relatively flat with some gentle rolling hills; there are no steep slopes within or adjacent to the project site. Nearby roads that may be used for Project site access include Deer Valley Road, Green Valley Road, Bass Lake Road, Cameron Park Drive, and North Shingle Road.

3.20.2 Discussion

a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Less than Significant Impact. The project and surrounding vicinity are subject to a number of emergency response plans, including the El Dorado County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (EDCSO 2024), which provides guidance for the County's response in emergency situations, including wildfire and emergency evacuation.

Impairment of emergency response plans or emergency evacuation plans would occur if the project would introduce an undue or extraordinary burden on emergency responders as they respond to an emergency incident. The proposed parcel split would not affect emergency response or evacuation. Potential future residential development of new parcels may occur as an indirect result of the parcel split. Any future development at the Project site would be required to conform to applicable County Development Standards and Guidelines, County Regional Fire Protection Standards, and CFC requirements, including those that define standards for providing emergency access, including fire apparatus access. The surrounding roadways provide adequate circulation and access for emergency response and the project would not significantly modify any roads or otherwise affect emergency response times. Therefore, the project would not impair or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.

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?

Less than Significant Impact. The project site is in an area susceptible to wildland fires. Potential future development at the Project site could increase the population of the site, thereby increasing the ignition risk. The Western El Dorado Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) describes wildfire risks and mitigation strategies for the portion of the County that includes the Project site (EDC 2022). Additionally, a site-specific Wildland Fire Safe Plan was developed for the Project site (Wildfire Services 2024), in accordance with the El Dorado County Fire Department Fire Protection Standard regarding Wildland Urban Interface Fire Protection Plans (EDHFD 2022). Implementation of the County CWPP and the Project site-specific Wildland Fire Safe Plan, which includes ongoing vegetation management, would reduce the likelihood of an ignition becoming an out-of-control wildfire. The project would not exacerbate wildfire risks or expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire.

c) Require the installation 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?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed parcel split would not affect infrastructure. Any future development at the Project site would avoid exacerbating fire risk during infrastructure installation through compliance with the most current building and fire codes, CFC requirements, and County Regional Fire Protection Standards, including those for access and roadways, rural water supply, and firefighting. The installation of new infrastructure would also be required to comply with all applicable County regulations to protect the environment, including the ORMP and other measures. Actions associated with development of new utility facilities, including transmission or utility lines, are not exempt from the mitigation requirements of the ORMP. Actions taken to maintain existing utility facilities, as well as action taken pursuant to an approved Fire Safe Plan, including fuel break construction, are exempt from the ORMP mitigation requirements.

d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?

No Impact.. While the proposed parcel split would have No Impact., potential future development at the Project site could result in construction and operational activities that could introduce new ignition sources that could increase wildfire hazards. The project would implement its site-specific Fire Safe Plan, which addresses potential impacts resulting from wildland fire hazards and identifies measures necessary to mitigate these hazards. Implementation of the project and the associated Fire Safe Plan would not exacerbate wildfire risk, nor would it substantially increase the likelihood that the project would expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire.

As discussed in Section 3.7.2(a)(iv), the potential for landslides to occur is negligible because the site generally has gentle hills and there are no steep slopes within or adjacent to the project site. In addition, as discussed in Section 3.10.1, the project site is within an area of minimal flood hazard (FEMA 2008). Potential future development at the Project site could change the drainage patterns of the project site by increasing impervious surfaces; however, development would be designed to comply with the County's West Slope Development and Redevelopment Standards (EDC 2024c), the SWMP for Western El Dorado County (EDC 2004b), and the County's Grading, Erosion, and Sediment Control Ordinance (EDC 2013) to prevent drainage, flooding, and erosion impacts from site runoff (see Section 3.10.2[c] for additional information). Therefore, the Project would not expose people or structures to significant risks from runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes. Impacts would be Less than Significant Impact.

3.21 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact.with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact.Impact	No Impact
XX. Mandatory Findings of Significance.				
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 an endangered, rare, or threatened species, or eliminate 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.)	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Does the project have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☒	☐	☐

3.21.1 Environmental Setting

The environmental setting for this section is presented above in the environmental settings for each of the checklist issue areas. No additional environmental setting is necessary.

3.21.2 Discussion

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 an endangered, rare, or threatened species, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. Based on evaluations and discussions contained in Sections 3.1 through 3.20 of this Initial Study, the Project is not anticipated to substantially degrade the quality of the environment. As discussed in Section 3.4, "Biological Resources," the Project would implement Mitigation Measures 3.4-1 through 3.4-7. Therefore, the Project would not 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, or substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal. In

addition, as discussed in Section 3.5, "Cultural Resources," although unlikely, ground-disturbing activities during project construction may result in the unanticipated discovery of archaeological resources; however, the County requires that specific procedures be followed in the event of unanticipated discoveries (refer to Section 3.5 for additional information) as a condition of project approval. Therefore, the project would not eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory.

b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. The Project would not result in significant cumulatively considerable impacts for the following reasons:

- The Project would not make a substantial contribution to the cumulative condition for agricultural and forest resources, biological resources, cultural and tribal cultural resources, and mineral resources due to the lack of Important Farmland and forest land and known mineral resources at the project site. Potential impacts to special-status species and archaeological resources would be reduced to Less than Significant Impact.levels through mitigation.
- Impacts related to geology, soils, hazards and hazardous materials are generally site-specific and would not substantially contribute to the cumulative condition.
- The project would be consistent with existing land use and zoning designations for the project site, the County's Municipal Code and ordinances, and the County's Design Guidelines. In addition, population growth from the Project would be consistent with the growth anticipated in the County's General Plan. Therefore, the Project would not substantially contribute to the cumulative condition for aesthetics, land use and planning, population and housing, public services, recreation, and wildfire.
- The Project could indirectly increase impervious surfaces and change drainage patterns within the watershed; however, the Project would not substantially contribute to the cumulative condition for hydrology and water quality because the proposed development would be designed to meet all applicable stormwater quality requirements.
- With respect to air quality, energy, noise, transportation, and utilities, the project would be consistent with the existing land use designation and the population assumptions for the area. GHG emissions impacts, which are inherently cumulative, would be Less than Significant Impact.

c) Does the project have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. The project's potential effects on the way residents experience the existing environment (aesthetics) and plans for future use of the area (land use and population and housing) would be Less than Significant Impact. Elements of the project that could physically affect sensitive populations, including air quality impacts and generation of noise, were also found Less than Significant Impact. GHG emissions, which are understood to result in global warming, would be less-than-significant.

File Contents

3 ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST 3-1
- 3.1 Aesthetics 3-5
- 3.2 Agriculture and Forest Resources 3-7
- 3.3 Air Quality 3-10
- 3.4 Biological Resources 3-15
- 3.5 Cultural Resources 3-32
- 3.6 Energy 3-35
- 3.7 Geology and Soils 3-37
- 3.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions 3-41
- 3.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials 3-44
- 3.10 Hydrology and Water Quality 3-47
- 3.11 Land Use and Planning 3-51
- 3.12 Mineral Resources 3-53
- 3.13 Noise 3-54
- 3.14 Population and Housing 3-58
- 3.15 Public Services 3-59
- 3.16 Recreation 3-61
- 3.17 Transportation 3-62
- 3.18 Tribal Cultural Resources 3-65
- 3.19 Utilities and Service Systems 3-67
- 3.20 Wildfire 3-70
- 3.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance 3-73

Appendices

Figures

Figure 3-1 El Dorado County Rare Plant Mitigation Area 3-17
Figure 3-2 Map of 2022 Rare Plant Survey Results 3-19

Tables

Table 3-1 Sources and Health Effects of Criteria Air Pollutants 3-12
Table 3-2 El Dorado County Attainment Status Designations 3-12
Table 3-3 Acoustic Term Definitions 3-54
Table 3-4 Typical Noise Levels 3-55

Acronyms/Abbreviations

See Table of Contents

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Mandatory Findings of Significance

No citations are used in this section.

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