
**Brimstone and Sugar Pine OHV Staging Areas
Development Project
on the Tahoe National Forest
CEQA Mitigated Negative Declaration and
Supplement to NEPA Environmental Assessment**

January 2016



**State of California
Department of Parks and Recreation
Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division**

Brimstone and Sugar Pine OHV Staging Areas
Development Project
on the Tahoe National Forest

CEQA Mitigated Negative Declaration and
Supplement to NEPA Environmental Assessment

January 2016



Prepared for:

State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR)
Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division
1725 23rd Street, Suite 200
Sacramento, CA 95816
(916) 324-4442
www.ohv.parks.ca.gov

Prepared by:

MIG | TRA Environmental Sciences, Inc.
545 Middlefield Road, Suite 200
Menlo Park, CA 94025
(650) 327-0429
www.traenviro.com

MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Project: Brimstone and Sugar Pine OHV Staging Areas Development Project on the Tahoe National Forest (TNF).

Project Sponsor: Tahoe National Forest, American River Ranger District

Lead Agency: California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR), Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division

Supporting Documents: This Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) is supported by the following NEPA documents prepared by the Tahoe National Forest, American River Ranger District:

- Environmental Assessment (EA) for OHV Staging Area Construction and Expansions Project (January 2013), and
- Decision Notice (DN) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the OHV Staging Area Construction and Expansions Project (January 2013).

Availability of Documents: The OHMVR Division is the custodian of the documents and other materials that constitute the record of the proceedings upon which the OHMVR Division's decisions are based. The contact for this material is:

Tahoe National Forest
631 Coyote Street
Nevada City, CA 95959
Contact: Joe Chavez, Trails and Recreation Specialist
Phone: (530) 478-6158

Contact: George MacDougall
CDPR, OHMVR Division
1725 23rd Street, Suite 200
Sacramento, CA 95816
(916) 324-3788
george.macdougall@parks.ca.gov

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Tahoe National Forest, American River Ranger District proposes formalizing a 3 acre informal staging area in the Brimstone Area of the TNF (Figures 1 and 2, Photo 1) and expanding by 1 acre an existing OHV staging area in the Sugar Pine Area of the TNF. Both project sites are near Foresthill, Placer County, California. The project sites and adjacent areas have been used informally for camping and OHV staging.

The Brimstone Staging Area development project is proposed to remedy problems stemming from lack of garbage and toilet facilities on the site which have caused health and safety issues. The project would create a formal 8-site staging area/campground facility (4 single-units, 2 double-units, 2 RV units), adding a total of 10 vehicle/trailer parking spaces. Also included is installation of a double-unit concrete restroom facility to address the current human waste problem in the area. The staging area facility would also provide an information kiosk and camping areas with picnic tables, fire rings, animal resistant food lockers and trash receptacles. An approximately 500 foot long connector trail would be constructed between the new staging area and Loop 4 and tie into the Sugar Pine OHV trail system. The Brimstone project also involves restoring an adjacent dispersed use area back to natural conditions.

The Sugar Pine Staging Area development project would expand the existing Sugar Pine OHV Staging Area by about 1 acre and provide for an additional 20 vehicle/trailer combinations; gravel the expanded area to minimized dust; install 2 double-unit concrete vault restrooms (1 new addition, 1 to replace the existing outdated toilet); install trash receptacles; install an information kiosk, and; construct a short (50 foot) trail to connect the expansion area to OHV Trail Loop 1. The funding for the Sugar Pine Staging Area Expansion construction contract will be derived from a Recreation Trails Program (RTP) grant, and will be applied as the required funding match for the OHV funds.

FINDINGS

The OHMVR Division, having reviewed the IS for the proposed project, finds that:

1. The TNF previously prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), which covered the project, pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA; January 2013). The analysis in the EA/FONSI covered the following issues consistent with the requirements of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA): watersheds (including hydrology, geology, and soils), fisheries, transportation, fire, wildlife, botany, cultural resources, economics, and environmental justice. The Environmental Checklist presented in the IS thereby incorporates the analysis of these issues from the EA/FONSI.
2. With the implementation of the USFS resource conservation measures and avoidance protocols included in the EA, as well as implementation of the mitigation measures listed below, no environmental effects related to the project activities would exceed stated CEQA-related significance criteria.
3. An MND will be filed as the appropriate CEQA document for the project.

MITIGATION MEASURES. The following measures, identified as management requirements in the EA, would reduce all impacts to less than significant.

Impact BIOLOGY-1: The project has the potential to introduce or spread noxious weed species into the environment. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIOLOGY-1 would reduce this potential impact to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure BIOLOGY-1: Noxious Weeds. The USFS District Noxious Weeds Coordinator shall develop a plan for any known and discovered occurrences of noxious weeds prior to implementation of the project. All equipment that operates off roads shall be cleaned before entering the project area if it has recently been used in areas infested by noxious/invasive-exotic weeds. The project areas shall be monitored for invasion of new noxious weeds at least two years after project construction. Any new infestations, no matter how small they are, shall be reported to the District Noxious Weeds Coordinator who will evaluate the need for further action.

Impact BIOLOGY-2: The project has the potential to disrupt breeding and nesting activity of the California spotted owl and northern goshawk during implementation when heavy equipment is operating. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIOLOGY-2 would reduce this potential impact to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure BIO-2: A spotted owl and/or northern goshawk limited operating period shall be implemented from February 15 to September 15 by the Wildlife Biologist if mechanized ground disturbing or thinning activities would affect known spotted owl and or northern goshawk protected activity centers.

Impact BIOLOGY-3: Although not known to occur in the project area, there is potential for state or federally listed species or sensitive/special status species to travel through the project

area during project implementation. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIOLOGY-3 would reduce this potential impact to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure BIO-3: Any incidental detection of state or federally listed and/or sensitive/special status species prior to or during project implementation shall be reported to the District Wildlife Biologist for development of recommendations regarding protection of the discovered species. This shall be done in accordance with management direction for the Tahoe National Forest.

Impact BIOLOGY-4: Brimstone project implementation could impact a known population of Sanborn's wild onion (*Allium sanbornii sanbornii*) that exists south of Old Hollow Log (Forest Service Road 10-12). Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIOLOGY-4 would reduce this potential impact to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure BIOLOGY-4: Chipped materials shall not be spread south of Old Hollow Log (Forest Service Road 10-12) in order to protect known populations of *Allium sanbornii sanbornii*.

Impact HAZARDOUS MATERIALS-1: The project has the potential to release hazardous materials (petroleum products) into the environment. Implementation of Mitigation Measure HAZARDOUS MATERIALS-1 would reduce this potential impact to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure HAZARDOUS MATERIALS-1: All temporary refueling and servicing of vehicles or heavy equipment shall be done only at approved locations which must be at least 300 feet away from water or riparian resources.

Impact HAZARDOUS MATERIALS-2: Fuel and/or chemicals have the potential to be released into the environment as a result of project implementation. Implementation of Mitigation Measure HAZARDOUS MATERIALS-2 would reduce this potential impact to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure HAZARDOUS MATERIALS-2: The USFS TNF shall prepare a fuel and chemical management plan to ensure fuel and chemicals are not introduced into the environment. This can be in the form of a spill prevention control and countermeasure program, a spill response plan, or an emergency response plan

Impact GEOLOGY AND SOILS-1: The placement of equipment and materials for the proposed restoration work on undisturbed ground could cause significant erosion. Implementation of Mitigation Measure GEOLOGY AND SOILS-1 would reduce this potential impact to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure GEOLOGY AND SOILS-1: Staging areas for proposed Brimstone restoration activities shall be located on adjacent NFS roads or on compacted surfaces to be restored.

Impact HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY-1: Construction work, if not properly timed, could cause erosion and impact water quality. Implementation of Mitigation Measure HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY-1 would reduce this potential impact to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY-1: A Forest Hydrologist shall prepare an erosion control plan that addresses among other things, protection of riparian conservation areas, work done during inclement weather conditions, off-site runoff controls, and dust control. The plan shall be in place prior to the start of project activities.

GROWTH INDUCING IMPACTS

The project is not growth inducing, rather it involves creating one formal staging area and expanding an existing staging area on land that has been used informally. The demand for camping and staging areas on busy weekends cannot be accommodated by what is currently available in the area. The project would not expand utilities to the site or create new roads or trails, it is just accommodating the existing ridership.

BASIS OF FINDING

Based on the environmental evaluation presented in the NEPA EA, FONSI, and FDM, and with the implementation of the mitigation measures listed below, the project would not cause significant adverse effects related to aesthetics, agricultural and forestry resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology/soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards/hazardous materials, hydrology/water quality, land use/planning, mineral resources, noise, population/housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, and utilities/service systems. In addition, substantial adverse effects on humans, either direct or indirect, would not occur. The project would not affect any important examples of the major periods of California prehistory or history. Nor would it 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. The project does not have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable.

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS AND CUSTODIAN OF DOCUMENTS

The record, upon which all findings and determinations related to the approval of the Project are based, includes the following:

1. The Mitigated Negative Declaration and all documents referenced in or relied upon by the Mitigated Negative Declaration.
2. All information (including written evidence and testimony) provided by OHMVR Division staff to the decision-maker(s) relating to the Mitigated Negative Declaration, the approvals, and the Project.
3. All information (including written evidence and testimony) presented to the OHMVR Division by the environmental consultant who prepared the Mitigated Negative Declaration or incorporated into reports presented to the OHMVR Division.
4. All information (including written evidence and testimony) presented to the OHMVR Division from other public agencies and members of the public related to the Project or the Mitigated Negative Declaration.
5. All applications, letters, testimony, and presentations relating to the Project.
6. All other documents composing the record pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21167.6(e).

**BRIMSTONE AND SUGAR PINE STAGING AREAS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
INITIAL STUDY/MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Regulatory Guidance	1
1.3 Lead Agency Contact Information	3
1.4 Purpose and Document Organization	3
CHAPTER 2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION	4
2.1 Project Location	4
2.2 Project Objectives	4
2.3 Project Characteristics	4
2.4 Construction Activity	5
2.5 Standard Management Requirements Incorporated into the Project	6
2.6 Required Approvals	6
2.7 Additional Details	6
CHAPTER 3 ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST AND RESPONSES	16
3.1 Aesthetics	20
Discussion:	20
3.2 Agriculture and Forest Resources	21
Discussion:	21
3.3 Air Quality	22
Discussion:	24
3.4 Biological Resources	27
Background:	27
Regulatory Setting:	28
Environmental Setting:	30
Discussion:	31
3.5 Cultural Resources	33
3.6 Geology and Soils	35
3.7 Greenhouse Gas Emissions	37
Discussion:	38
3.8 Hazards and Hazardous Material	40
Regulatory Setting:	40
Discussion:	41

3.9 Hydrology and Water Quality42

3.10 Land Use and Planning45

3.11 Mineral Resources46

3.12 Noise.....47

3.13 Population and Housing49

3.14 Public Services.....50

3.15 Recreation.....51

3.16 Transportation/Traffic.....52

3.17 Utilities and Service Systems53

3.18 Mandatory Findings of Significance.....55

CHAPTER 4 REFERENCES AND REPORT PREPARATION56

4.1 References56

4.2 Report preparation57

Appendices

- Appendix A. Environmental Assessment, OHV Staging Area Construction and Expansions Project, American River Ranger District, Tahoe National Forest (January 2013)
- Appendix B. FONSI, OHV Staging Area Construction and Expansions Project, American River Ranger District, Tahoe National Forest (January 2013)

Figures

Figure 1 - Project Location 7

Figure 2 - Brimstone Site Map 8

Figure 3 - Sugar Pine Site Plan..... 9

Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) has been prepared by the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division of the California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR). This IS/MND evaluates the potential environmental effects of the Brimstone and Sugar Pine Staging Areas Development project (the project) in the Tahoe National Forest (TNF) in Placer County, California (Figure 1). The project for the purpose of this IS/MND includes development of two staging areas in the Tahoe National Forest, American River Ranger District (ARRD). The Brimstone Staging Area would be constructed using OHMVR Division Grant Funds (already awarded, but release pending completion of CEQA review). The ARRD is required to contribute a match to the funds requested in their grant application. The ARRD's match is in the form of funding the expansion of the Sugar Pine staging area using a Recreational Trails Program grant. The two staging areas are described below.

The Brimstone development project involves formalizing a 3 acre OHV and OSV staging area in the Brimstone Area of the TNF (Figures 1 and 2) near Foresthill, Placer County, California. The project site and adjacent areas have been used informally for camping and OHV staging. The project is proposed to remedy problems stemming from lack of garbage and toilet facilities on the site which have caused health and safety issues. The staging area would be for day and overnight use. The project also involves restoring an adjacent dispersed use area back to natural conditions.

The Sugar Pine development project would expand the existing Sugar Pine OHV Staging Area by about one acre and provide for an additional 20 vehicle/trailer combinations to meet the needs of users on weekends and holidays (Figures 1 and 3).

The TNF prepared a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Environmental Assessment (EA) for the OHV Staging Area Construction and Expansions in January 2013. The TNF issued a Decision Notice (DN) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) in January 2013 for the project. The EA, Decision Notice, and FONSI are contained in Appendices A and B. The NEPA EA also addresses one additional project which is the expansion of the existing China Wall OHV/OSV Staging Area. This MND only supplements CEQA information for the new Brimstone Staging Area and the expansion of the existing Sugar Pine Staging Area.

1.2 Regulatory Guidance

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA; Public Resources Code § 21000 et seq.) and the CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR §15000 et seq.) establish the OHMVR Division as the lead agency. The lead agency is defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15367 as “the public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project.” The lead agency decides whether an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) or Negative Declaration (ND) is required for the project and is responsible for preparing the appropriate environmental review document.

According to CEQA Guidelines Section 15070, a public agency shall prepare a proposed ND or a MND when:

1. The IS shows that there is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the agency, that the project may have a significant effect on the environment, or,
2. The IS identifies potentially significant effects, but:

- Revisions in the project plans made before a proposed MND and IS are released for public review would avoid the effects or mitigate the effects to a point where clearly no significant effects would occur, and
- There is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the agency, that the project as revised may have a significant effect on the environment.

Furthermore, CEQA Guidelines Section 15221 directs that when a project has already been the subject of a NEPA document, the state or local lead agency should use the NEPA document under specified conditions. That section, which addresses a “NEPA Document Ready before CEQA Document,” specifies the conditions under which a lead agency should use the NEPA document to support a CEQA decision. Specifically, Section 15221 states:

- (a) When a project will require compliance with both CEQA and NEPA, state or local agencies should use the [Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)] or [FONSI] rather than preparing an EIR or [ND] if the following two conditions occur:
 - (1) An EIS or [FONSI] will be prepared before an EIR or [ND] would otherwise be completed for the project; and
 - (2) The EIS or [FONSI] complies with the provision of these Guidelines.
- (b) Because NEPA does not require separate discussion of mitigation measures or growth inducing impacts, these points of analysis will need to be added, supplemented, or identified before the EIS can be used as an EIR.

This IS/MND has been prepared by the OHMVR Division of CDPR in accordance with CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines. The EA for OHV Staging Area Construction and Expansions Project (January 2013), and the Decision Notice (DN) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the OHV Staging Area Construction and Expansions Project (January 2013) prepared by the TNF cover the entire Brimstone and Sugar Pine Staging Areas project. As a result, this IS/MND relies on the previously prepared EA and FONSI for the following issues, which were addressed in that document under Alternative 1:

- Recreation
- Water Quality and Soils
- Wildlife Species
- Plants
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Cultural Resources
- Public Services

The following issues that are required to be addressed under CEQA and are included in the CEQA Environmental Checklist are considered to be not significant based on the nature of the project (not urban or industrial development), the nature of the site (remotely located in a forest environment), or the purpose of the project (to accommodate existing users and improve public health and safety).

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Greenhouse Gas emissions
- Land Use/ Planning
- Mineral Resources

- Noise
- Population/Housing
- Traffic/Transportation
- Utilities/Service Systems

The IS/MND addresses wildlife and botany to the extent that the project areas have the potential to support state special-status species that were not addressed in the EA/FONSI.

1.3 Lead Agency Contact Information

The OHMVR Division is providing funding for the project and is the CEQA lead agency. The contact person for the lead agency regarding the project and questions or comments regarding this IS/MND should be submitted to:

Mr. George MacDougall
California Department of Parks and Recreation
Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division
1725 23rd Street, Suite 200, Sacramento CA 95816
(916) 324-3788
George.Macdougall@parks.ca.gov

Availability of Supporting Documents: The EA, FONSI, and FDM are attached to the IS/MND. Questions regarding these documents should be directed to:

Tahoe National Forest
American River Ranger District
22830 Foresthill Road
Foresthill, CA 95630
Contact: Kalie Crews, District NEPA Coordinator
Phone: (530) 367-2224

1.4 Purpose and Document Organization

The purpose of this document is to evaluate the potential environmental effects of the Brimstone and Sugar Pine Staging Areas Development Project.

This document is organized as follows:

- Chapter 1 – Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to the project and describes the purpose and organization of this document.

- Chapter 2 – Project Description
- Chapter 3 – Environmental Checklist and Responses

This chapter contains the Environmental Checklist that identifies the significance of potential environmental impacts (by environmental issue) and provides a brief discussion of each impact resulting from implementation of the proposed project. This chapter also contains the Mandatory Findings of Significance.

- Chapter 4 – References and Report Preparers

This chapter identifies the references and sources used in the preparation of this IS/MND and provides a list of those involved in the preparation of this document.

Chapter 2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 Project Location

The project would take place on USFS land within the American River Ranger District of the Tahoe National Forest. The proposed project is located approximately 8 miles northeast of Foresthill near Sugar Pine Reservoir. The legal locations for the 2 activity areas are T15N, R11E in a portion of section 20 (Sugar Pine), and T14N, R11E, in a portion of section 32 and T15N, R11E in a portion of section 29 (Brimstone), MDBM, in Placer County, California.

2.2 Project Objectives

The primary objective of the Brimstone project is to provide support facilities (parking areas, trash receptacles, restrooms) at a well used informal staging/camping area in order to improve the health and safety of the users and to protect forest health. The primary objective of the Sugar Pine project is to expand the parking/staging area to accommodate increased vehicle sizes, high use periods, provide for public safety, and enhance recreational experiences.

2.3 Project Characteristics

The OHMVR Division proposes to award grant funds to the Tahoe National Forest for the development of a 3 acres OHV staging area in the Brimstone Area of the TNF. The TNF would expand the Sugar Pine staging area by 1 acre using matching funds (Figures 1, 2 and 3).

Brimstone Staging Area Development

The staging area would be for day and overnight use. The project also involves restoring an adjacent dispersed use area. Specific elements of the project are:

- Construct a single lane gravel loop road. This activity would require approximately 10,000 square feet of disturbance. A portion of this loop road would utilize existing road.
- Re-designate a portion of the FS Road 10-12 (approximately 500 feet) as a staging area loop road on the Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM). (Photo 1)
- A short segment of FSR 10-12 would be obliterated. This area would be decompacted and allowed to naturally revegetate. This activity would require approximately 150 feet of ground disturbance. This segment of road would not appear on the next Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM).(Photo 1)
- Add a currently undesignated (unauthorized) section of road to the National Forest Transportation System (NFTS). This 300 foot segment would replace the segment converted into the staging area road. It would connect the FS 10-12 and the FS 24 Roads.
- Construct approximately 10 parking spurs for vehicles towing trailers. Spur dimensions would be approximately 16 feet wide by 40-60 feet long. This activity would require approximately 10,000 square feet of ground disturbance. (Photo 3)
- Reconstruct drainages (ditches and culverts) on the FSR 10-12 (Hollow Log) and FSR 24 (Brimstone) Roads. (Photo 4)
- Install approximately 6 to 8 fire rings.
- Install 1 double vault concrete toilet. This activity would require approximately 250 square feet of ground disturbance. (Photo 5)
- Install 2 bear proof garbage bins. (Photo 6)
- Install approximately 10 picnic tables.

- Construct a small segment (approximately 500 feet) of OHV trail to connect the staging area to OHV Loop 4 (11E42), and a segment of trail (approximately 20 feet) to connect the staging area to FSR 24.
- Install an information kiosk and staging area entrance sign. Installation of additional signage would be needed, such as trail crossings and other safety road signs.(Photo 7)
- Install barriers, such as wooden barrier posts or boulders, surrounding the proposed staging area to designate site boundaries and protect resources. This would require approximately 600 linear feet of disturbance. (Photo 7)
- Fall and remove approximately 25 trees ranging in 6 inches to 24 inches dbh, and remove other vegetation. These trees would be removed by one of the following methods: small timber sale, biomass, pile and burn, and/or chip and scatter. (Photo 8)
- Decompact soils adjacent to the proposed staging area development. This would require approximately 3 acres of ground disturbance. (Photo 9)
- Decompact soils on the beginning of illegal, unauthorized OHV routes spurring from the dispersed use area. This would require approximately 2 acres of ground disturbance.
- Install barriers, such as large boulders and other natural materials along the perimeter of the dispersed site to prevent reoccurring off-route motorized use and allow for natural revegetation. This activity would require approximately 700 linear feet of disturbance. These boulders would supplement existing boulders and other barriers.(Photo 10)

Sugar Pine Staging Area Expansion

- Construct aggregate parking area expansion for approximately 20 vehicles towing trailers. This activity would require approximately 1 acre of disturbance. (Photo 2)
- Install vehicle barriers to protect vegetation and prevent expansion. These barriers would be wooden pole fence combined with natural materials. This activity would require 600 linear feet of disturbance. (Photo 7)
- Install one double vault toilet. This activity would require approximately 250 square feet of ground disturbance. (Photo 5)
- Install two bear-proof garbage bins. (Photo 6)
- Construct a connector trail to Loop 1 (11E39). Approximately 50 feet of new OHV trail would be constructed and added to the National Forest Transportation System (NFTS). This route would be added to the next Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM).
- Install one new information kiosk. Other additional signage may be needed for safety and to designate site boundaries.
- Fall and remove approximately 30 trees (diameters range from 6 inches to 24 inches dbh) and other vegetation. These trees would be removed by one of the following methods: small timber sale, biomass, pile and burn, and/or chip and scatter (Photo 8).

2.4 Construction Activity

Sugar Pine OHV Staging Area activities would occur during the dry season which typically occurs during May through October.

Brimstone OHV Staging Area activities would occur during the limited operating season with construction beginning September 16 and continuing through the end of the dry season (typically October).

The projects which includes earthwork, campground loop access roads, access spurs, parking area development and precast concrete vault toilet installation, will utilize standard construction equipment for projects of this type including excavators, backhoes, grader, vibratory rollers, dump trucks and water trucks. The toilet installation will potentially utilize a small crane.

Operation of heavy equipment will be limited to the hours between 7:00 am and 5:00 pm Monday through Friday during the 75 day construction period.

2.5 Standard Management Requirements Incorporated into the Project

The USFS incorporated standard management requirements and mitigation measures into the project design to reduce and avoid potential impacts on watershed resources (soils and hydrology), vegetation, wildlife, and scenic resources. Additionally, all project related activities would follow applicable Standards and Guideline from the Tahoe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1990), as amended by the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment Record of Decision (2004). The management requirements designed to prevent adverse effects are listed in Table 1 of the EA (Appendix A).

2.6 Required Approvals

The proposed project occurs on national forest land and has been approved by the USFS in a Decision Memo (USFS TNF 2013) (Appendix B). No other permits or approvals are required for this project.

2.7 Additional Details

Additional details of the project can be found in the EA under Chapter 2, Alternatives, Alternative 1, Proposed Action, page 8. The management requirements for the project begin on page 10 of the EA. A description of the environment is interspersed in Chapter 3, Environmental Consequences.

Figure 1, Project Location

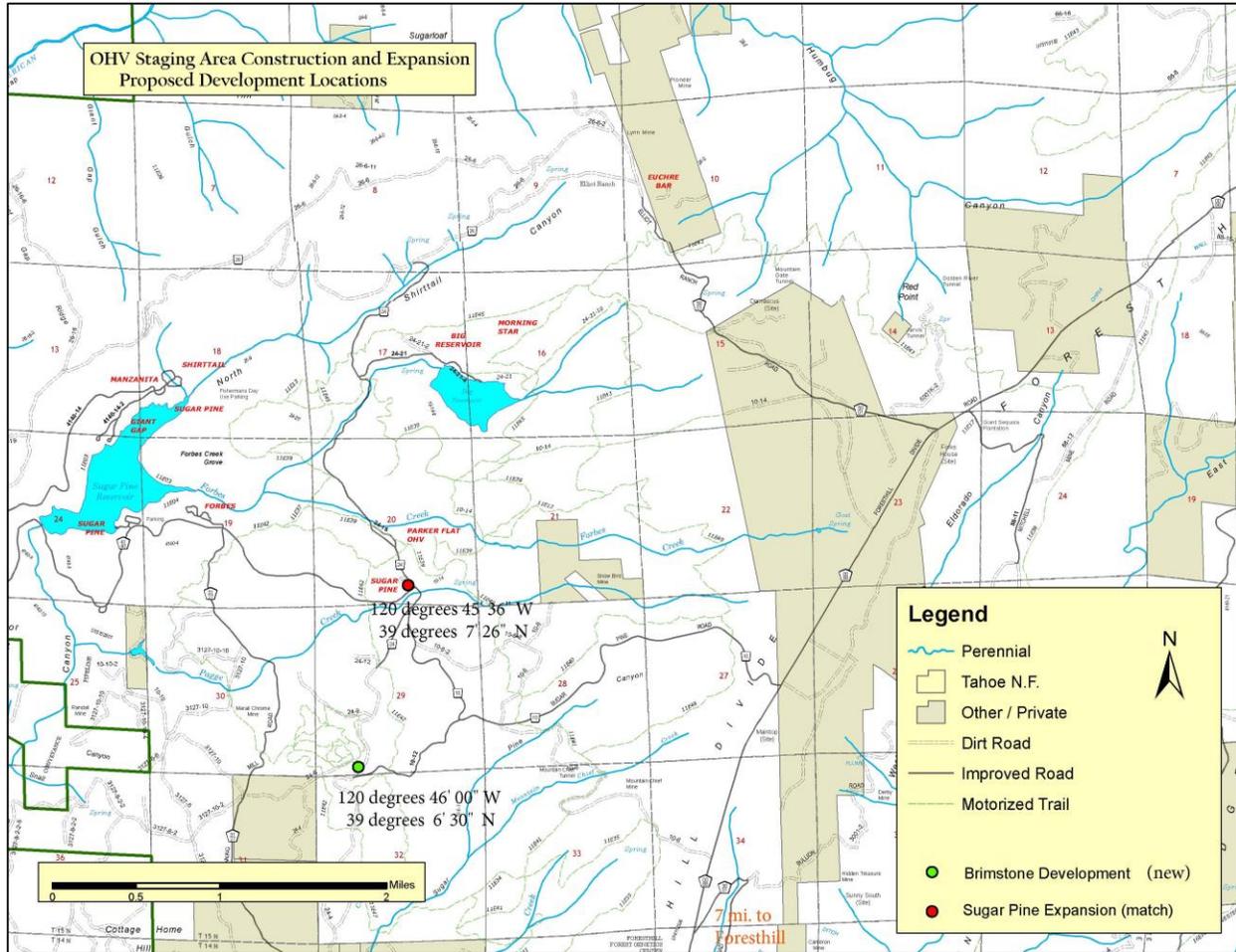




Photo 1, Brimstone Staging Area Site



Photo 2, Sugar Pine Turnaround Area



Photo 3, Brimstone: 24 Road on left, Old Hollow Log (10-12 Road) on right



Photo 4, Road 24 at Brimstone going to Sugar Pine OHV Staging Area



Photo 5, Sugar Pine, Existing Double Vault Toilet



Photo 6, Sugar Pine, Existing Bear Proof Garbage Bins



Photo 7, Typical Sign and Fencing



Photo 8, Typical Vegetation to be Removed



Photo 9, Area for Soil Decompaction and Restoration (existing dispersed OHV site)



Photo 10, Boulder Barriers (Typical)



Photo 11, Existing Sanitation Problem at Brimstone Dispersed Site



Photo 12, Existing Garbage Disposal Problem at Dispersed Site

Chapter 3 ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST AND RESPONSES

PROJECT INFORMATION

1. **Project Title:** Brimstone and Sugar Pine OHV Staging Areas Development Project
2. **Lead Agency Name & Address:** C DPR, OHMVR Division
1725 23rd Street, Suite 200
Sacramento, CA 95816
3. **Contact Person & Phone Number:** George MacDougall, OHMVR Division, Grants Administrator, George.Macdougall@parks.ca.gov, (916) 324-3788
4. **Project Location:** American River Ranger District, Tahoe National Forest, Placer County, Near Foresthill, CA
5. **Project Sponsor Name & Address:** Chris Fischer, District Ranger, American River Ranger District, Tahoe National Forest, 22830 Foresthill Road, Foresthill, CA 95630
6. **General Plan Designation:** As a national forest, the property is owned by the federal government and therefore general plan designations assigned by the local land use authority do not apply.
7. **Zoning:** As a national forest, the property is owned by the federal government and therefore zoning designations assigned by the local land use authority do not apply.
8. **Description of Project:** See Chapter 2 Project Description
9. **Surrounding Land Uses & Setting:** The project would take place in a national forest which comprises forested vegetation with a system of access and recreational roadways throughout the forest.
10. **Approval Required from Other Public Agencies:** none

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" if mitigation measures are not implemented as indicated by the checklist on the following pages. Note measures contained in this chapter can avoid or minimize all impacts to less than significant levels.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural and Forestry Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Geology/Soils |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazards & Hazardous Materials | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hydrology/Water Quality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use/Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Population/Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation/Traffic | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Service Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> None | | |

RELATIONSHIP TO NEPA EA PREPARED IN OCTOBER 2010 and Revised in January 2011

This IS/MND has been prepared by the OHMVR Division of CDPR in accordance with CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines. The EA for OHV Staging Area Construction and Expansions Project (January 2013), and the Decision Notice (DN) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the OHV Staging Area Construction and Expansions Project (January 2013) prepared by the TNF cover the entire Brimstone and Sugar Pine Staging Areas project. As a result, this IS/MND relies on the previously prepared EA and FONSI for the following issues, which were addressed in that document under Alternative 1:

- Recreation
- Water Quality and Soils
- Wildlife Species
- Plants
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Cultural Resources
- Public Services

The following issues that are required to be addressed under CEQA and are included in the CEQA Environmental Checklist are considered to be not significant based on the nature of the project (not urban or industrial development), the nature of the site (remotely located in a forest environment), or the purpose of the project (to accommodate existing users and improve public health and safety).

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Greenhouse Gas emissions
- Land Use/ Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population/Housing

- Traffic/Transportation
- Utilities/Service Systems

The IS/MND addresses wildlife and botany to the extent that the project areas have the potential to support state special-status species that were not addressed in the EA/FONSI.

DETERMINATION:

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 original scope of the proposed project could have had a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect because revisions/mitigations to the project have been made by or agreed to by the applicant. 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 or its functional equivalent will be prepared.

I find that the proposed project may have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated impact" on the environment. However, at least one impact has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document, pursuant to applicable legal standards, and has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis, as described in the report's attachments. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the impacts not sufficiently addressed in previous documents.

I find that, although the proposed project could have had a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects have been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, pursuant to applicable standards, and have been avoided or mitigated, pursuant to an earlier EIR, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, all impacts have been avoided or mitigated to a less-than-significant level and no further action is required.

 Maria Mowrey, Acting Chief, Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division

 Date

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

1. A brief explanation is required for all answers, except "No Impact," that are adequately supported by the information sources cited. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact does not apply to the project being evaluated (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on general or project-specific factors (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
2. All answers must consider the whole of the project-related effects, both direct and indirect, including off-site, cumulative, construction, and operational impacts.
3. Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, the checklist answers must indicate whether that impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate when there is sufficient evidence that a substantial or potentially substantial adverse change may occur in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project that cannot be mitigated below a level of significance. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is required.
4. A "Mitigated Negative Declaration" (Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated) applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures, prior to declaration of project approval, has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level.
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 (including a General Plan) or Negative Declaration (CEQA Guidelines § 15063(c)(3)(D)). References to an earlier analysis should:
 - a) Identify the earlier analysis and state where it is available for review.
 - b) Indicate which effects from the Environmental Checklist were adequately analyzed in the earlier document, pursuant to applicable legal standards, and whether these effects were adequately addressed by mitigation measures included in that analysis.
 - c) Describe the mitigation measures in this document that were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and indicate to what extent they address site-specific conditions for this project.
6. Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate references to information sources for potential impacts into the checklist or appendix (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances, biological assessments). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should include an indication of the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
7. A source list should be appended to this document. Sources used or individuals contacted should be listed in the source list and cited in the discussion.
8. Explanation(s) of each issue should identify:
 - a) the criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate the significance of the impact addressed by each question **and**
 - b) the mitigation measures, if any, prescribed to reduce the impact below the level of significance.

3.1 AESTHETICS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion:

a) and b) Scenic Vista and Highway. The vegetation of the TNF is consistent with that of the lower montane forest habitat zone. It is dominated by montane hardwood, montane hardwood-conifer, Douglas fir, and ponderosa pine trees. Habitat in the immediate project area consists of intact forest habitat, disturbed roadbeds, and disturbed land associated with unofficial camping and staging areas. Photos 1 through 12 in the project description show the visual characteristics of the two staging area sites and vicinity.

There are no scenic vistas in the project vicinity. The 2 staging areas contain trees that will be removed, however, none are within view of a state scenic highway. No project related work would result in damage to scenic resources, rock outcroppings, or historic buildings.

Formalizing the Brimstone staging/camping area is being proposed to address health and safety issues related to users staging and camping in an area that has no formal camping facilities including fire rings, tables, garbage facilities or restrooms. This has resulted in unsightly ground littered with garbage and other debris. Formalizing the Brimstone staging/camping area will remove the “trashed” characteristic of the area, greatly improving its visual character.

c) Visual Character. The Sugar Pine staging area expansion would result in a 1 acre vegetated area being cleared and graveled for additional parking/staging. The area being cleared is next to an existing graveled parking lot currently being used for parking/staging. As a result there would be little change to the existing character of the site or its surroundings.

d) New Light. The project would not create a new source of substantial light or glare affecting day or nighttime views in the area as no exterior lighting, reflective surfaces, or nighttime construction is proposed.

3.2 AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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 (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

*In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. 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 (CARB).

Discussion:

a-b) Convert Farmland, Williamson Act. The project is located on USFS land in mountainous areas of the TNF. There is no farmland within or near the project area. Neither of the staging area sites nor the surrounding lands contain any farmland, any lands under Williamson Act contracts, or any Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, as defined by the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program.

c-e) Loss of Forest Land. Although the project area is in a forested area, no commercial timberland would be affected by the work. The project would not cause the rezoning of forest or timberland. There would be no conversion of forest land to a non-forest use due to implementation of the project. No commercial trees (timber resources) would be removed as a result of the project.

3.3 AIR QUALITY

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting:

Air quality is a function of pollutant emissions and topographic and meteorological influences. The physical features and atmospheric conditions of a landscape interact to affect the movement and dispersion of pollutants and determine its air quality. Federal, state, and local governments control air quality through the implementation of laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards.

The project area is located near Foresthill in the vicinity of Sugar Pine Reservoir on the American River Ranger District in Placer County. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) divides the state into air basins that share similar meteorological and topographical features. Placer County is located in the Mountain Counties Air Basin (MCAB).

Mountain Counties Air Basin (MCAB). The proposed project is located in Placer County within the MCAB, where topography and climate vary dramatically. Covering an area of roughly 11,000 square miles, the MCAB lies along the northern Sierra Nevada mountain range close to or contiguous with the Nevada border. Elevations range from a few hundred feet at the Sacramento County boundary to more than 10,000 feet above sea level at the Sierra Crest.

The foothills, mountain peaks, and valleys of the Sierra Nevada range influence local differences in rainfall, temperature, and wind patterns. In general, high elevation areas in close proximity to the Sierra Nevada crest have cooler temperatures and receive much more precipitation than lower elevation foothill areas. During the summer, strong eastward flowing winds transport pollutants from the San Francisco Bay Area Air Basin and Sacramento, and San Joaquin Valley Air Basins into the MCAB (CARB 2004). CARB officially recognizes the MCAB as an area impacted by ozone transport from upwind air basins (17 CCR §70500).

Placer County Air Pollution Control District (APCD). The Placer County APCD is a special district created by state law to enforce local, state and federal air pollution regulations. Currently, the Placer County AQMD has 8 regulations containing over 200 rules designated to control and limit emissions from sources of air pollutants and administer state and federal air pollution control requirements (CARB 2013). Attainment status within the western portion of the MCAB under the jurisdiction of the Placer County APCD is either unclassified or in-attainment of all state and federal ambient air quality standards except national and state ozone, and federal PM10 standards (CARB 2014).

Regulatory Setting:

The federal and state governments have established ambient air quality standards for “criteria” pollutants considered harmful to the environment and public health. National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) have been established for carbon monoxide (CO), lead (Pb), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), ozone (O₃), fine particulate matter (particles 2.5 microns in diameter and smaller, or PM_{2.5}), inhalable coarse particulate matter (particles between 2.5 and 10 microns in diameter, or PM₁₀), and sulfur dioxide (SO₂). California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) are more stringent than the national standards for the pollutants listed above and include the following additional pollutants: hydrogen sulfide (H₂S), sulfates (SO_x), and vinyl chloride. In addition to these criteria pollutants, the federal and state governments have classified certain pollutants as hazardous air pollutants (HAPs) or toxic air contaminants (TACs), such as asbestos.

Attainment Plans. Under the federal Clean Air Act (CAA), the Placer County APCD has adopted a variety of plan to achieve, demonstrate, or maintain attainment status for nonattainment pollutants. Placer County APCD is in nonattainment for the federal 8-hour ozone standard and the State 1-hour ozone standard. The first Ozone State Implementation Plan (SIP) was prepared in 1994 and adopted in 1996. Since then, updates have been adopted in 1998, 2001, 2005, 2010, and 2013 assessing the progress and trends of emission inventories for ozone precursor pollutants within the Placer County APCD (PCAPCD 2013).

The ozone exceedences experienced within the project area are different due to difference in meteorology and the economic activity patterns around the particular station within the Placer County APCD jurisdiction from year to year. Although not all patterns show a steady decline from 1990 to 2011, they do show a trend downward in general.

Mobile Sources. Emission inventories indicate the majority of ROG and NO_x emissions in Placer County are from mobile sources. Between 1990 and 2010 emission inventory trends in Placer County show that over ROG and NO_x emissions experienced a 37 and 21 percent decrease, respectively. From 2010 to 2020, overall Placer County ROG emissions are expected to continue decreasing another 1 percent, as well as NO_x emissions decreasing another 33 percent (PCAPCD 2013).

Vehicle Emissions. In addition to ambient air quality standards, the federal and state governments have established exhaust emission standards for on and off-road vehicles, such as cars, trucks, recreational vehicles, and heavy-duty diesel construction equipment, as well as the fuels these vehicles use.

Naturally Occurring Asbestos (NOA). The Statewide *Asbestos Airborne Toxic Control Measure for Surfacing Applications*, codified in the California Code of Regulations (CCR, Title 17, §93105), contains requirements for projects located in areas mapped as having, or observed to have, ultramafic rock or serpentine.

Fugitive Dust Control. As provided by California Health and Safety Code (§41701; 1991), a person shall not discharge into the atmosphere from any single source of emissions whatsoever, any air contaminants for a period or periods aggregating more than three minutes

in any one hour that is: (a) as dark or darker in shade as designated as No. 2 on the Ringlemen Chart, as published by the United States Bureau of Mines; or (b) of such opacity as to obscure an observer's view to a degree equal to or greater than does smoke described in subsection a above. Furthermore, the California Vehicle Code (§23114 (e)(4)) requires no vehicle shall transport any aggregate material upon a highway unless the material is covered, unless subject to an exception.

The Placer County APCD List of Current Rules states Rule 228 – Fugitive Dust, an extensive list of definitions and policies enforced with the purpose of reducing the amount of particulate matter entrained in the ambient air, or discharged into the ambient air, as a result of anthropogenic fugitive dust sources by requiring actions to prevent, reduce, or mitigate fugitive dust emissions. Section 401 – Minimum Dust Control Requirements lists dust mitigation measures that are to be initiated at the start and maintained throughout the duration of the construction or grading activity, including any construction or grading for road construction or maintenance.

Federal Clean Air Act (CAA) Conformity. Adopted by Congress as part of the CAA Amendments in 1990 and implemented in 1993 by the U.S. EPA, Transportation and General Conformity regulations establish criteria and procedures for providing coherence between federal activities and the SIP. Conformity between state and federal plans helps ensure that actions taken by the federal government do not undermine regional or state efforts to achieve and maintain the NAAQS.

Discussion:

a) Air Quality Plans. The Placer County APCD is responsible for maintaining air quality and regulating emissions of criteria pollutants and TACs within the project vicinity. The Placer County APCD carries out its responsibility by preparing, adopting, and implementing plans, regulations, and rules that are designed to achieve attainment of state and national air quality standards. The proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the regional and federal ozone or particulate matter attainment plans, as described in the previous section, including planning for OHV emissions in the county. The project would not increase urban growth, introduce new stationary sources of air pollutants, or result in new land uses within the Placer County APCD. Therefore, the project does not conflict with or obstruct an applicable air quality plan.

b) Air Quality Standards and Violations. The Tahoe National Forest (TNF) American River Ranger District proposes to delineate a 3 acre informal Brimstone OHV staging area and expand an existing Sugar Pine OHV staging area by one acre. Both project sites are located in the TNF near Foresthill in Placer County. The project is aimed to accommodate the current area use and remedy existing problems due to lack of sufficient staging area facilities. Ridership and visitors within the project area are not expected to increase due to OHV staging area improvements.

Potential temporary project emissions from construction would include a maximum of 20 working days at each staging area. Construction equipment would require the use of one excavator, one dozer, and one dump truck up to eight hours per day. Construction would occur during the dry season, after snowmelt, and could potentially result in fugitive dust emissions from increased travel or construction. Additional emissions would be managed by using a water truck up to two hours per day, if necessary, and would not exceed air quality standards due to the nominal size of the project improvements, small portion of land affected, and short duration of project construction.

c) Non-Attainment Criteria Pollutants. The proposed construction would meet the Forest Service standards and guidelines for construction. Implementation of applicable BMPs and

project specific management requirements would minimize the emission of criteria pollutants. Below are the Rule 228, Fugitive Dust BMPs that the Forest would incorporate into the project dust control plan (PCAPCD 2003).

Minimum Dust Control Requirements: The following dust BMPs are to be initiated at the start and maintained throughout the duration of the construction or grading activity, including any construction or grading for road construction or maintenance.

1. Unpaved areas subject to vehicle traffic must be stabilized by being kept wet, treated with chemical dust suppressant, or covered. When naturally-occurring asbestos, ultramafic rock, or serpentine is to be disturbed, the cover material shall contain less than 0.25 percent asbestos as determined using the bulk sampling method for asbestos in Section 502.
2. The speed of any vehicles and equipment traveling across unpaved areas must be no more than 15 miles per hour unless the road surface and surrounding area is sufficiently stabilized to prevent vehicles and equipment traveling more than 15 miles per hour from emitting dust exceeding Ringelmann 2¹ or visible emissions from crossing the project boundary line.
3. Storage piles and disturbed areas not subject to vehicular traffic must be stabilized by being kept wet, treated with a chemical dust suppressant, or covered when material is not being added to or removed from the pile.
4. Prior to any ground disturbance, including grading, excavating, and land clearing, sufficient water must be applied to the area to be disturbed to prevent emitting dust exceeding Ringelmann 2 and to minimize visible emissions from crossing the boundary line.
5. Construction vehicles leaving the site shall be cleaned to prevent dust, silt, mud and dirt, from being released or tracked off-site.
6. No trucks are allowed to transport excavated material off-site unless the trucks are maintained such that no spillage can occur from holes or other openings in the carbo compartments, and loads are either: covered with tarps; or wetted and loaded such that the material does not touch the front, back, or sides of the cargo compartment at any point less than six inches from the top and that no point of the load extends above the top of the cargo compartment.

Staging area construction would be completed using minimal construction equipment. The short duration and low equipment use of the activity would not result in emissions of criteria pollutants that would have a significant impact on the environment.

d) Sensitive Receptors. A sensitive receptor is generally defined as a location where human populations, especially children, seniors, and sick persons, are situated where there are

¹ The **Ringelmann scale** is a scale for measuring the apparent density of Smoke. It was developed by Maximilien Ringelmann of La Station d'Essais de Machines in Paris in 1888. It has a 5 levels of density inferred from a grid of black lines on a white surface which, if viewed from a distance, merge into known shades of grey. In use, the observer views the plume at the point of greatest opacity and determines the corresponding Ringelmann Number. A Ringelmann 0, 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are equivalent to an opacity of 0, 20, 40, 60, 80 and 100 (Ringelmann Scale on Wikipedia 2015).

residences, hospitals, and schools. There are no sensitive receptors located at or near the project site. The project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.

e) Odors. The only odor associated with project construction is diesel used by heavy equipment. The diesel odor will be localized, intermittent, and short-term. The odors associated with fuel combustion would not affect a substantial number of people. The project is in a remote location absent of sensitive receptors and populated areas. The project, therefore, would not expose sensitive receptors to potential odors associated with the fuel combustion of construction equipment.

3.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Background:

As discussed in Chapter 2 (Project Description), the TNF has already prepared a NEPA document in the form of an EA with a FONSI for the OHV Staging Area Construction and Expansions Project. This EA and its supporting documentation only analyzed federal special-status species, although some of the federal species addressed in the EA are also State special status species. The CEQA Guidelines allow a lead agency to use a NEPA document to support a CEQA decision; therefore, this IS/MND only analyzes state special-status species that were not addressed in the EA. The discussion of the effects of the project on federal and federal/state species begins on page 15 (wildlife), and 34 (plants) of the EA. The entire EA is contained in Appendix A.

Regulatory Setting:

The OHV Staging Area Construction and Expansions Project EA addresses federal laws and regulations governing the project. The following state statutes would also be applicable and are considered by this IS.

California Endangered Species Act

The California Endangered Species Act (CESA), administered by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), protects wildlife and plants listed as “threatened” or “endangered” by the California Fish and Game Commission, as well as species identified as candidates for listing. CESA restricts all persons from taking listed species except under certain circumstances. The state definition of take is similar to the federal definition, except that CESA does not prohibit indirect harm to listed species by way of habitat modification. Under CESA, an action must have a direct, demonstrable detrimental effect on individuals of the species.

CDFW maintains lists of animal species of special concern (CSSC) that serve as “watch lists.” A CSSC is not subject to the take prohibitions of CESA. The CSSC are species that are declining at a rate that could result in listing under the federal ESA or CESA and/or have historically occurred in low numbers, and known threats to their persistence currently exist. This designation is intended to result in special consideration for these animals and is intended to focus attention on the species to help avert the need for costly listing under federal and state endangered species laws. This designation also is intended to stimulate collection of additional information on the biology, distribution, and status of poorly known at-risk species, and focus research and management attention on them (Comrack et al. 2008).

State agencies should not approve projects as proposed which would jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered or threatened species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of habitat essential to the continued existence of those species, if there are reasonable and prudent alternatives available consistent with conserving the species or its habitat which would prevent jeopardy (Fish and Game Code § 2053). Under Sections 2080.1 or 2081(b) of the California Fish and Game Code, CDFW may permit incidental take of species listed under CESA, except for species that are designated as fully protected.

California Fish and Game Code

The California Fish and Game Code protects a variety of species, separate from the protection afforded under CESA. The following specific statutes afford some limits on take of named species: Section 3503 (nests or eggs), 3503.5 (raptors and their nests and eggs), 3505 (egrets, osprey, and other specified birds), 3508 (game birds), 3511 (fully protected birds), 4700 (fully protected mammals), 4800 et seq. (mountain lions), 5050 (fully protected reptiles and amphibians), and 5515 (fully protected fish).

Section 3503 simply states, “it is unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird, except as otherwise provided by this code or any regulation made pursuant thereto.” The exceptions generally apply to species that are causing economic hardship to an industry. Section 3503.5 states that it is “unlawful to take, possess, or destroy any birds in the order Falconiformes or Strigiformes (birds of prey) or to take, possess, or destroy the nest or eggs of any such bird except as otherwise provided by this code or any regulation adopted.” Section 3505 prohibits taking, selling, or purchasing egrets, osprey, and other named species or any part of such birds.

Fully protected species may not be taken or possessed except for scientific research. Various Fish and Game Code sections identify fully protected species.

California Native Plant Protection Act

The California Native Plant Protection Act (CNPPA) of 1977 preserves, protects, and enhances endangered and rare plants in California by specifically prohibiting the importation, take, possession, or sale of any native plant designated by the California Fish and Game Commission as rare or endangered, except under specific circumstances identified in the Act. Various activities are exempt from the CNPPA, although take as a result of these activities may require other authorization from CDFW under the California Fish and Game Code.

Regulated Waters

Impacts to stream channels (bed and bank) are specifically addressed by the CDFG Code §§1600 *et seq.* and may fall under the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act §404 and §401 permit process and the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. Permit provisions of the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act are enforced by the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB).

Clean Water Act, Section 401: Any applicant for a Federal permit to impact wetlands under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, including Nationwide permits (NWP) where pre-construction notification is required, must also provide to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) a certification from the State of California. The “401 Certification” is provided by the State Water Resources Control Board through the local RWQCB.

The RWQCB recommends the application be made at the same time that any applications are provided to other agencies, such as the USACE or the USFWS. Application is not final until completion of environmental review under CEQA. The application to the RWQCB is similar to the pre-construction notification that is required by the USACE (see discussion of Section 404, below). It must include a description of the type of wetland habitat that is being impacted, a description of how the impact is proposed to be minimized and proposed mitigation measures with goals, schedules, and performance standards. Mitigation must include a replacement ratio of 2:1, or twice as many acres of wetlands provided as are removed. The RWQCB looks for mitigation that is on site and in-kind, with functions and values as good as or better than the wetland that is being removed.

Clean Water Act, Section 404: As part of its mandate under the Clean Water Act, the EPA regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into “Waters of the US” under Section 404 of the Act. “Waters of the U.S.” include territorial seas, tidal waters, and non-tidal waters in addition to wetlands and drainages that support wetland vegetation, exhibit ponding or scouring, show obvious signs of channeling, or have discernible banks and high water marks. The EPA also regulates excavation and changes in drainage. The discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the US is prohibited under the Clean Water Act except when it is in compliance with Section 404 of the Act. Enforcement authority for Section 404 was given to the US Army Corps of Engineers, which it accomplishes under its regulatory branch.

Fish and Game Code Section 1602

Specifically, Section 1602 requires an entity to notify CDFW of any proposed activity that may substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow of, or substantially change or use any material from the bed, channel, or bank of, any river, stream, or lake, or deposit or dispose of debris, waste, or other material containing pavement where it may pass into any stream, river, or lake. CDFW uses the USFWS definition of wetlands when regulating these activities.

CDFW and CEQA

As a trustee agency, CDFW comments on the biological impacts of development projects reviewed under CEQA. CEQA gives CDFW jurisdiction to comment on the protection of habitats deemed necessary for any species to survive in self-sustaining numbers, but does not

allow CDFW to govern land use. It stipulates that the state lead agency shall consult with, and obtain written findings from, CDFW in preparing an EIR on a project, as to the impact of the project on the continued existence of any endangered or threatened species (Public Resources Code § 21104.2).

Environmental Setting:

Effects of the project on federally listed endangered and threatened animal species have been analyzed in the OHV Staging Area Construction and Expansions Project Biological Assessment for Plants and Animals, and summarized in the project EA (Appendix A).

The EA did not address species that are solely California special status species. A July 2015 search of the California Natural Diversity Database found two animal species and three plant species that are considered special status species by the State of California. These three species were not addressed in the TNF EA. They are addressed below.

Shirrtail Creek Stonefly (*Megaleuctra sierra*). This insect species is associated with creeks and wetlands in the project area. The stonefly was considered for listing by the US Fish and Wildlife Service in 1994 but listing was rejected because no persuasive data on biological vulnerability and threat was available to support proposed rules (USFS 1994). Since the project area does not support appropriate habitat for the Shirrtail Creek Stonefly, the project would have no impact on this species.

Sierra Nevada mountain beaver (*Aplodontia rufa californica*). This beaver, which is a California Species of Special Concern, is found throughout the Cascade, Klamath, and Sierra Nevada Ranges. Distribution often is scattered; populations local and uncommon in the Sierra Nevada and other interior areas. Mountain beavers occur in dense riparian-deciduous and open, brushy stages of most forest types. Typical habitat in the Sierra Nevada is montane riparian; in the Coast Ranges, most populations occur below 900 m (2700 ft) (CDFW 2015). Since the project area does not support appropriate habitat for the Sierra Nevada mountain beaver, the project would have no impact on this species.

Brandegees' Clarkia (*Clarkia biloba* spp. *Brandegeae*). This annual herb inhabits chaparral, cismontane woodland, and lower mountain coniferous forest in Butte, Eldorado, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, Sierra and Yuba Counties. It occurs at an elevation range between 75 and 915 meters and blooms from May to July. It is a California Native Plant Society List 4 Plant (limited distribution (watch list)). It was recently downgraded in status as it was found to be more common than originally thought. Populations are threatened by weed control measures, non-native plants, road maintenance, fire suppression, and development. There is an occurrence within one mile of the project site. It is unlikely that the project would have an impact on this species due to the existing disturbance of the project area (CNPS 2013).

Sierra Blue Grass (*Poa sierra*). This native grass inhabits lower mountain coniferous forest in Butte, Madera, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, and Shasta Counties. It occurs at an elevation range between 365 and 1500 meters and blooms from April to June. It is a California Native Plant Society List 1B Plant (not very endangered in California). There is an occurrence over two miles of the project site. It is unlikely that the project would have an impact on this species due to the existing disturbance of the project area (CNPS 2013).

Van Zook's Morning-glory (*Calystegia vanzukkiae*). As with the Stebbin's morning-glory which was assessed in the USFS EA, the Van Zook's morning-glory occurs on gabbro, and serpentine soils in chaparral, cismontane woodland, and lower mountain coniferous forests. Notes in the July CNDDDB search states the occurrence observed in 2014 near Sugar Pine Reservoir (#7 and #8) comprises "tens of thousands of plants; full extent of the population was not explored; population may be much larger than observed in this area." It is a California Native Plant Society List 1B.3 Plant (not very endangered in California). Suitable habitat for this

species exists in the project area at Brimstone and Sugar Pine given the elevation (3,600 feet) and gabbro soils. However, given the status of this species by CNPS (not very endangered) and the large number of individuals found in nearby populations, the loss of the suitable habitat for this species is not considered to be significant.

Discussion:

a) Special Status Species. The project has the potential to disrupt breeding and nesting activity of the California spotted owl and northern goshawk during project implementation when heavy equipment is operating. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIOLOGY-1 would reduce this potential impact to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure BIO-1: A spotted owl and/or northern goshawk limited operating period shall be implemented from February 15 to September 15 by the Wildlife Biologist if mechanized ground disturbing or thinning activities would affect known spotted owl and/or northern goshawk protected activity centers.

Impact BIOLOGY: Although not known to occur on the project site, there is potential for state or federally listed species or sensitive/special status species to travel through the project area during project implementation. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIOLOGY-2 would reduce this potential impact to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure BIO-2: Any incidental detection of state or federally listed and/or sensitive/special status species prior to or during project implementation shall be reported to the District Wildlife Biologist for development of recommendations regarding protection of the discovered species. This shall be done in accordance with management direction for the Tahoe National Forest.

Impact BIOLOGY: Project implementation could impact a known population of Sanborn's wild onion (*Allium sanbornii sanbornii*) that exists south of Old Hollow Log (Forest Service Road 10-12). Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIOLOGY-3 would reduce this potential impact to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure BIOLOGY-3: Chipped materials shall not be spread south of Old Hollow Log (Forest Service Road 10-12) in order to protect known populations of *Allium sanbornii sanbornii*.

b) and c) Riparian Habitat and Wetlands. There is no riparian habitat or other sensitive natural communities on or near the project site. There are no federally protected wetlands or other waters or wetlands on or near the project site.

d) Wildlife Movement. Habitat corridors facilitate wildlife migration and movement within landscapes and are essential to the viability and persistence of many wildlife populations. Wildlife movement includes migration (i.e., usually one-way per season), inter-population movement (i.e., long-term genetic flow), and small travel pathways (i.e., daily movement corridors within an animal's territory). While small travel pathways usually facilitate movement for daily home range activities, such as foraging or escape from predators, they also provide connection between outlying populations and the main corridor, permitting an increase in gene flow among populations. These linkages among habitats can extend for miles and occur on a large scale throughout California.

Project activities could impact wildlife in adjacent areas by temporarily altering movement patterns, or causing animals to temporarily avoid those areas. Mobile species including birds and larger mammals are expected to disperse into adjacent areas during project activities. Although local wildlife movement may be impacted near project routes, the affected areas are confined to work sites within large tracts of mostly undeveloped USFS land providing

established native vegetation and habitat for a range of common and special-status native wildlife species. Therefore, disruption to wildlife movement is considered less than significant.

e and f) Local Protection Policies and Conservation Plans. The project has the potential to introduce or spread noxious weed species into the environment. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIOLOGY-4 would reduce this potential impact to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure BIOLOGY-4: Noxious Weeds. The USFS District Noxious Weeds Coordinator shall develop a plan for any known and discovered occurrences of noxious weeds prior to project implementation. All equipment that operates off roads shall be cleaned before entering the project area if it has recently been used in areas infested by noxious/invasive-exotic weeds. The project area shall be monitored for invasion of new noxious weeds at least two years after project construction. Any new infestations, no matter how small they are, shall be reported to the District Noxious Weeds Coordinator who will evaluate the need for further action.

The project does not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources. There would be no impact, directly or indirectly, on local policies or ordinances by the implementation of this project.

The project area is not covered under a Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan. Therefore, there would be no impact, either directly or indirectly, on a Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan.

3.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Background:

Please see page 68 in the attached EA (Appendix A) for a discussion of project effects on cultural resources. The following is excerpted from the EA.

“A record search, field survey, resource inventory, and heritage resource report have been completed for the proposed OHV Staging Area Expansion and Construction Site (R2012051700062) under provisions of the programmatic agreement with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the California State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. No archaeological sites have been identified in the project area. If any new heritage resources were discovered during project implementation, operations would cease in the area of new discovery until adequate protection measures were agreed upon with SHPO.” Copies of the report have been filed at the American River Ranger District Office in Foresthill, CA.

Discussion:

a and b) Historical and Archaeological Resources. Please see page 68 in the attached EA (Appendix A) for a discussion of project effects on cultural resources.

c) Paleontological Resources. The project sites do not support geological components that have potential to support unique paleontological resources or unique geologic features. As a result there is low likelihood for in situ paleontological resources to be disturbed by project activities.

d) Human Remains. If human remains are inadvertently discovered, the Tahoe National Forest will follow the procedures as outlined in California Health and Safety Code section 7050.5. All project activities at the find site must come to a complete stop and no further excavation or disturbance of the area or vicinity will occur. The county coroner will be contacted immediately, and if the coroner determines or has reason to believe that the remains are Native American, the coroner will contact the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) within 24 hours of making this determination. Whenever the NAHC receives notification of a discovery of Native American human remains from a county coroner the NAHC will follow the procedures as outlined in Public Resources Code section 5097.98.

The CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR §15064.5(e)) reference the appropriate state law (PRC §5097.98) that applies when human remains are accidentally discovered. This language states:

In the event that human remains are accidentally discovered, the project must come to a complete stop and no further excavation or disturbance of the area or vicinity will occur. The county coroner is to be called immediately to determine that the remains are of Native American ancestry. If the coroner confirms that the remains are Native American, within 24 hours of the discovery the coroner is to contact the [NAHC]. The NAHC will identify the person(s) believed to be the Most Likely Descendent (MLD), and the MLD will decide, along with the property owner, to appropriate treatment or disposal of the human remains and associated grave goods as provided in PRC §5097.98. If the NAHC cannot identify the MLD, the MLD fails to make a recommendation, or the property owner rejects the MLD's recommendations, the property owner can rebury the remains and associated burial goods in an area not subject to ground disturbance (14 CCR §15064.5).

Existing state Public Resources Code and Health and Safety Code will ensure that the NAHC will be notified upon discovery of Native American human remains and that proper treatment measures will be implemented. Therefore, with these protective state laws in place, the project impact on human remains is less than significant.

Associate State Archaeologist for the OHMVR Division, Sarah Wallace, has reviewed the EA, Historic Resources Report, and PA as part of the state's CEQA review process for this project and concurs with the findings that project impacts on cultural resources are less than significant due to implementation of USFS management requirements. No further mitigation is warranted.

3.6 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iv) Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Background:

Please see page 45 in the attached EA (Appendix A) for a discussion of project effects on geology and soils. The following is excerpted from the EA.

The Brimstone OHV Staging Area project involves the construction of 12 parking spurs for vehicles towing trailers, a picnic area with 12 picnic tables and one double vault toilet, and a single lane gravel loop road. This activity would require approximately 1 acre of ground disturbing activity which includes the removal of trees and shrubs. New construction does have potential direct effects. The direct and indirect effects of constructing parking areas, picnic areas, and roads would be the removal of the topsoil layer and paving the parking area and compaction of the road surface. This could increase and redistribute the surface drainage and has the potential to increase erosion. The proposed new parking area, picnic area, and road

construction would meet the Forest standards and guidelines for trail construction. Implementation of applicable BMPs and project specific management requirements should not lead to the indirect effect of accelerated soil erosion. This would be a minimal impact due to its minor extent (approximately 0.5 acre).

The restoration phase of the Brimstone OHV Stage Area project involves the tillage of compacted soils adjacent to the proposed staging area development and obliteration of illegal, unauthorized OHV routes from the dispersed use areas. The total compacted area restored would be approximately 5 acres. The direct effect of the soil tillage would be a short term potential increase in erosion and sediment delivery to streams downhill of the project area. Slash created from the removal of approximately 25 trees in the parking and picnic areas would be used to supplement effective ground cover in the tillage area to reduce the erosion potential. Needle cast from the existing trees would also help to achieve the fifty (50) percent effective ground cover goal.

The Sugar Pine OHV Staging Area project involves the construction of an aggregate parking area for 20 trailer pulling vehicles, adjacent to existing parking, one double vault toilet, and a connector trail to OHV Loop 1. This activity would require approximately one acre of ground disturbing activity which includes the removal of trees and shrubs. New construction does have potential direct effects. The direct and indirect effects of constructing parking areas and trails would be the removal of the topsoil layer and paving the parking area and compaction of the trail surface. This could increase and redistribute the surface drainage and has the potential to increase erosion downhill of the parking area and trail. The proposed new parking area and trail construction would meet the Forest standards and guidelines for trail construction. Implementation of applicable BMPs and project specific management requirements should not lead to the indirect effect of accelerated soil erosion.

Discussion:

- a) Seismicity. Please see page 45 in the attached EA for a discussion of project effects on soils.
- b) and c) Soil Erosion and Stability. Please see page 45 in the attached EA for a discussion of project effects on soils. The placement of equipment and materials for the proposed restoration work on undisturbed ground could cause significant erosion. Implementation of Mitigation Measure GEOLOGY AND SOILS-1 would reduce this potential impact to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure GEOLOGY AND SOILS-1: Staging areas for proposed restoration activities shall be located on adjacent NFS roads or on compacted surfaces to be restored.

- d and e) Expansive Soils and Septic. The project does not propose building construction on expansive soils or use of soils for septic purposes.

3.7 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions or greenhouse gases?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting:

Gases that trap heat in the atmosphere and affect regulation of the earth's temperature are known as "greenhouse" gases (GHG). Many chemical compounds found in the earth's atmosphere exhibit the GHG property. GHG allow sunlight to enter the atmosphere freely. When sunlight strikes the earth's surface, some of it is reflected back towards space as infrared radiation (heat). GHG absorb this infrared radiation and trap the heat in the earth's atmosphere. The six common GHG are described below.

Carbon Dioxide (CO₂). CO₂ is released to the atmosphere when fossil fuels (oil, gasoline, diesel, natural gas, and coal), solid waste, and wood or wood products are burned.

Methane (CH₄). CH₄ is emitted during the production and transport of coal, natural gas, and oil. Methane emissions also result from the decomposition of organic waste in municipal solid waste landfills and the raising of livestock.

Nitrous oxide (N₂O). N₂O is emitted during agricultural and industrial activities, as well as during combustion of solid waste and fossil fuels.

Sulfur hexafluoride (SF₆). SF₆ is commonly used as an electrical insulator in high voltage electrical transmission and distribution equipment such as circuit breakers, substations, and transmission switchgear. Releases of SF₆ occur during maintenance and servicing as well as from leaks of electrical equipment.

Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) and perfluorocarbons (PFCs). HFCs and PFCs are generated in a variety of industrial processes. Although the amount of these gases emitted into the atmosphere is small in terms of their absolute mass, they are potent agents of climate change due to their high global warming potential.

Regulatory Setting:

The 1997 United Nations' Kyoto Protocol international treaty set targets for reductions in emissions of four specific greenhouse gases – CO₂, CH₄, N₂O, and SF₆ – and two groups of gases – HFCs and PFCs. These GHG are the primary GHG emitted into the atmosphere by human activities. Water vapor is also a common GHG that regulates the earth's temperature; however, the amount of water vapor in the atmosphere can change substantially from day to day, whereas other GHG emissions remain in the atmosphere for longer periods of time. Black carbon consists of particles emitted during combustion; although a particle and not a gas, black carbon also acts to trap heat in the earth's atmosphere.

GHG can remain in the atmosphere long after they are emitted. The potential for a particular greenhouse gas to absorb and trap heat in the atmosphere is considered its global warming potential (GWP). The reference gas for measuring GWP is CO₂, which has a GWP of one. By comparison, CH₄ has a GWP of 25, which means that one molecule of CH₄ has 25 times the effect on global warming as one molecule of CO₂. Multiplying the estimated emissions for non-CO₂ GHG by their GWP determines their carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e), which enables a project's combined global warming potential to be expressed in terms of mass CO₂ emissions.

In 2006, the California State Legislature adopted the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, Assembly Bill (AB) 32, which required CARB to: 1) determine 1990 statewide GHG emissions, 2) approve a 2020 statewide GHG limit that is equal to the 1990 emissions level, 3) adopt a mandatory GHG reporting rule for significant GHG emission sources, 4) adopt a Scoping Plan to achieve the 2020 statewide GHG emissions limit, and 5) adopt regulations to achieve the maximum technologically feasible and cost-effective reductions.

In 2009, California's first Climate Change Scoping Plan projected 2020 statewide GHG emission of 596 million MTCO₂e under a "business as usual" (BAU) scenario absent further regulation (CARB 2009). In order to reduce the predicted emissions levels, the Scoping Plan identified mandatory rules and regulations, as well as voluntary measures that would reduce 2008 current emissions by at least 169 million MTCO₂e to 1990 levels by 2020 (CARB 2009). In 2011, CARB released a supplement to the 2008 Scoping Plan Functional Equivalent Document (FED) that included an updated 2020 BAU statewide GHG emissions level projection of 507 million MTCO₂e (CARB 2011). In 2014, CARB adopted its First Update to the Climate Change Scoping Plan including a revised target 2020 GHG emissions level of 431 million MTCO₂e (CARB 2014).

Discussion:

Global climate change is the result of GHG emissions worldwide; individual projects do not generate enough GHG emissions to influence global climate change. Thus, the analysis of GHG emissions is by nature a cumulative analysis focused on whether an individual project's contribution to global climate change is cumulatively considerable.

Would the proposed project:

a) Greenhouse Gas Emissions. The project proposes to delineate a 3 acre informal Brimstone OHV staging area and expand an existing Sugar Pine OHV staging area by 1 acre, including constructing a single lane gravel loop road, and the installation of a double-unit concrete restroom,, an information kiosk, two trash receptacles, and approximately 10 picnic tables. Other Brimstone Area projects include redesignation of current FS Roads, ditch reconstruction, tree removal, decompaction of soils and installation of barriers.

GHG emissions would be produced from construction equipment and subsequent fuel combustion. The Placer County APCD has not currently established a Threshold of Significance for construction or operational related GHG emissions (PCAPCD 2012); however, as a reference, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District sets a construction-related screening size for city parks of 67 acres and an operational screening size of 600 acres (BAAQMD 2010). Projects less than these sizes are presumed to have a less than significant impact and do not require preparation of an air quality assessment. This screening size is roughly ten times the estimated size for the proposed project. Thus, the minimal areas and the short duration of project construction render a magnitude of GHG emissions that are considered a less than significant impact.

b) Plans, Policies and Regulations. The project would not conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions. Construction vehicle

and equipment GHG emissions are identified and planned for in the CARB's GHG emissions inventory and Scoping Plan, which contains measures designed to achieve the state's GHG reduction goals outlined in AB32. Moreover, the project would not contain any stationary sources that are subject to state or federal GHG permitting or reporting regulations

3.8 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIAL

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Regulatory Setting:

A material is considered hazardous if it appears on a list of hazardous materials prepared by a federal, state, or local agency, or if it has characteristics defined as hazardous by such an agency. Chemical and physical properties such as toxicity, ignitability, corrosivity, and reactivity, cause a substance to be considered hazardous. These properties are defined in the California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 22, Sections 66261.20-66261.24. A “hazardous waste” is any

hazardous material that is discarded, abandoned, or to be recycled. The criteria that render a material hazardous also make a waste hazardous (California Health and Safety Code § 25117). According to this definition, fuels, motor oil, and lubricants in use at a typical construction site and airborne lead built up along roadways could be considered hazardous.

Discussion:

a – d) Hazardous Materials. The two project sites do not contain any hazardous materials nor are any hazardous materials planned to be brought to the project sites with the exception of fuel required to power the heavy equipment, including diesel fuel and gasoline. These materials would be contained within the vehicle fuel tanks, and no refilling of the fuels would be conducted on site. Therefore, these fuels would not cause an impact either through transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials or by posing a risk of release of hazardous materials into the environment. Furthermore, the following measures, identified as management requirements in the EA, would reduce impacts related to hazardous materials transport and use to less than significant.

Impact HAZARDOUS MATERIALS: The project has the potential to release hazardous materials (petroleum products) into the environment. Implementation of Mitigation Measure HAZARDOUS MATERIALS-1 would reduce this potential impact to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure HAZARDOUS MATERIALS-1: All temporary refueling and servicing of vehicles or heavy equipment shall be done only at approved locations which must be at least 300 feet away from water or riparian resources.

Impact HAZARDOUS MATERIALS: Fuel and/or chemicals have the potential to be released into the environment as a result of project implementation. Implementation of Mitigation Measure HAZARDOUS MATERIALS-2 would reduce this potential impact to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure HAZARDOUS MATERIALS-2: The USFS TNF shall prepare a fuel and chemical management plan to ensure fuel and chemicals are not introduced into the environment. This can be in the form of a spill prevention control and countermeasure program, a spill response plan, or an emergency response plan.

The two project sites do not contain any hazardous materials nor are any aspects of project implementation expected to emit hazardous emissions or wastes, other than the burning of fuel needed to power the equipment used to formalize the camping/staging area and conduct site restoration. There are no schools within one-quarter mile of the project area.

Neither project site is on the list of hazardous materials sites pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. The project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment.

e and f) Airports. The project sites are not located within an area that has an airport land use plan. The nearest airport is the Nevada County Airport more than 50 miles away. There are no private airstrips near the project area. The nearest airport is the Nevada County Airport more than 50 miles away.

g) Emergency Plans. Formalization of the Brimstone Staging Area and expansion of the Sugar Pine Staging Area would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.

h) Wildland Fires. The project sites are both located in a remote locations and do not involve the construction of structures that would be susceptible to wildfires.

3.9 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Background:

Please see page 45 in the attached EA (Appendix A) for a discussion of project effects on hydrology and water quality (under "Watersheds"). The following is excerpted from the EA.

The information provided in this section is summarized from the Hydrology Report prepared for the OHV Staging Area Expansion and Construction Project (September 2012), which is hereby incorporated by reference. The complete Hydrology Report is available in the OHV Staging Area Expansion and Construction Project file.

The direct and indirect effects of constructing parking areas, picnic areas, and roads would be the removal of the topsoil layer and paving the parking area and compaction of the road surface. This could increase and redistribute the surface drainage and has the potential to increase erosion and sediment delivery to streams downhill of the parking area and road. New road cuts have the potential to affect hydrologic function by disrupting and increasing the surface drainage and by interrupting the subsurface water flow. The proposed new parking areas, picnic area, and road construction would meet the Forest standards and guidelines for trail construction. Implementation of applicable BMPs and project specific management requirements should not lead to the indirect effect of accelerated soil erosion.

There would be no new road construction across any perennial or intermittent stream channels. The OHV Staging Area project does not propose "ground disturbing activities" within Riparian Conservation Areas. A Riparian Conservation Objective (RCO) analysis has been prepared for this proposal in accordance with direction in the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment Record of Decision (ROD) (2004). Findings from the RCO analysis, is incorporated by reference and included in the project record.

The State and Regional Water Quality Control Boards entered into an agreement with the U.S. Forest Service which requires the agency to control non-point source discharges by implementing control actions certified by the State Board as Best Management Practices (BMPs). BMPs are designed to protect water quality including sediment, turbidity, and water temperature. All project activities would meet all applicable BMPs.

Discussion:

- a) Water Quality Violations. The project would not create discharges or new sources of runoff. The project would not cause the violation of any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements.
- b) Groundwater Supplies. The project would not increase water use, create a demand on groundwater supply, or otherwise interfere with groundwater volumes or recharge rates. Groundwater supplies would be unaffected by the project. No impervious surfaces would be added to the project routes.
- c) Erosion and Siltation. Please see page 45 in the attached EA for a discussion of project effects on hydrology and water quality (under "Watersheds").
- d) Flooding. The project will be designed to promote natural runoff of the newly created surfaces so as to avoid on-site flooding. Therefore, flooding is not an issue.
- e) Stormwater Drainage Systems. All project activities would occur on non-urbanized lands that lack engineered stormwater drainages systems. As a result, none would be affected.
- f) Water Quality. The decommissioning Construction work, if not properly timed, could cause erosion and impact water quality. Implementation of Mitigation Measure HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY-1 would reduce this potential impact to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY-1: A Forest Hydrologist shall prepare an erosion control plan that addresses among other things, protection of riparian conservation areas, work done during inclement weather conditions, off site runoff controls, and dust control. The plan shall be in place prior to the start of project activities.

g - j) Flood Hazards. The project would not place housing or other structures in a 100-year flood zone. Except for toilets, no structures are proposed. Both sites are not located in an area subject to 100-year flooding. There are no levees or dams in the project vicinity that could cause on-site flooding.

j) Seiche, Tsunami, and Mudflow. The likelihood of a seiche, tsunami, or mudflow affecting the sites is remote due to the site topography and extreme distance from any large bodies of water.

3.10 LAND USE AND PLANNING

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion:

a) Established Community. The project has no components that would divide an established community. All decommissioning activities would take place on national forest land.

b) Land Use Plans and Policies. None of the proposed work would change the nature of any land use within the area. The project does not conflict with land use policy.

c) Habitat Plans. The project area is not located in an area covered by a habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan.

3.11 MINERAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion:

No important mineral resources would be removed from the project area, nor would availability of any mineral resources be affected by work at the project site.

3.12 NOISE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project result in:				
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion:

a) Violation of Noise Standards. Noise levels would increase during construction work to formalize the Brimstone staging area, expand the Sugar Pine staging area and to restore previously disturbed land due the use of heavy equipment. However, noise from heavy equipment would be limited to the hours between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday for a period of approximately 65 days. Furthermore, there are no sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the project site that would be affected by heavy equipment noise.

b) Groundborne Vibration and Noise. Localized ground vibrations may occur during implementation of the project due the use of heavy equipment. However, ground vibrations from heavy equipment would be limited to the hours between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and for a period of approximately 65 days. Furthermore, there are no sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the project site that would be affected by heavy equipment noise.

c and d) Permanent and Temporary Noise Increase. The project involves formalizing an informal staging/camping area at Brimstone and expanding the staging area at Sugar Pine. Upon project completion, ambient noise would be similar to that of the pre-project conditions. None of the project activities would create a substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels (refer to responses to a. and c. above).

e) Airport Noise. The nearest airport to the project area is the Nevada County Airport, located more than 50 miles from the nearest project site. Both project sites are not located within the 60 dBA CNEL zone of the airport and do not involve a change in recreational or other human use of the area, and implementation of the project would not affect or result in exposure to excessive noise levels from an airport. Both project sites are not within the vicinity of a private airstrip.

3.13 POPULATION AND HOUSING

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion:

a) Population Growth. The project would not induce population growth as project activities only involve the formalization of a user created staging/camping area and expansion of another staging area. The completed project does not provide services that support population growth.

b-c) Existing Housing and People. The project would not displace any existing houses. There are no people living in the immediate vicinity of either project sites. Therefore, there would be no displacement of people requiring the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

3.14 PUBLIC SERVICES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
i) Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ii) Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iii) Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iv) Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
v) Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion:

- i) The project would not increase the need for fire protection services or create an adverse impact on fire protection services.
- ii) The project would not increase the need for police protection services or create an adverse impact on police protection services.
- iii) The project would not affect the number of students served by local schools, nor bring in new residents requiring the construction of additional schools.
- iv) The project would not result in an increased number of residents or visitors in the area using community parks. The project is not expected to increase visitor use within the national forest.
- v) No other public facilities would be affected by the project.

3.15 RECREATION

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Background:

Please see page 15 in the attached EA (Appendix A) for a discussion of project effects on recreation. The following is excerpted from the EA.

Indirect effects of the OHV Staging Area Expansion and Construction project include benefits to the public recreation users. The new facilities would better accommodate for the existing use. The expanded and new parking areas would provide safer parking and trail access. The new vault toilet, fire rings and garbage bins at the Brimstone location would provide users with the facilities currently lacking. These improvements are expected to improve sanitation conditions. This would be a health and safety benefit, as well as aesthetic benefit to people using the site. Both overnight and day users would benefit from these improvements. Provision of facilities, particularly restrooms, can often have a positive effect on recreational experiences. The informational boards would improve public information and may lead to improvements in public behavior and/or perceptions.

Other benefits of the proposed project include designating boundaries of the staging areas by enclosing them with boulders. This would help prevent the ongoing expansion, unauthorized connector trails, and associated resource damage that is currently occurring, particularly at Brimstone and Sugar Pine locations.

Discussion:

a) Existing Neighborhood and Parks. The project would not increase visitor use at the national forest such that new recreational facilities would be needed, nor would the project cause motorized recreationists to intensify uses on other facilities. No neighborhood or regional parks are located in the vicinity of specific work sites.

b) Recreational Facilities. The project would not include nor would it facilitate any new recreational facilities or activities. The project would not cause an expansion of OHV use within the national forest. It is simply formalizing a user created staging/camping area. During construction of the new staging area and expansion of the existing staging area, there may be some closures and/or inconvenience to users. The existing staging area and dispersed recreation site may be closed for periods of up to a few weeks while construction occurs. Whenever possible the implementation would be scheduled for midweek or during non-prime OHV riding times to minimize conflicts with the recreating public.

3.16 TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths and mass transit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion:

The project involves formalizing an existing informal staging/camping area at Brimstone and expanding the staging area at Sugar Pine in the Tahoe National Forest. The project is consistent with the Forest’s Motor Vehicle Use Map would not affect any traffic/transportation plans in affect in the area, including Tahoe National Forest Transportation System Roads.

As part of the project, parking areas will be formalized and access roads will be designated and improved. This work would not affect existing traffic patterns or emergency access routes.

3.17 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion:

a) Wastewater Treatment. No project activities involve or affect wastewater treatment. The project would not require construction of new or expanded water or wastewater treatment facilities. The project has no wastewater disposal needs. The project employees would have access to portable toilets.

b-c) Storm Water Facilities. The project does not involve construction of new or expansion of existing storm water facilities.

d) Water Supplies. No new water supplies or entitlements would be needed to complete the project because there would be no change of existing water use associated with the project.

e) Wastewater Capacity. The project does not involve construction of expanded facilities that would increase wastewater quantities.

f) Landfill. The formalized staging/camping area at Brimstone and the expanded staging area at Sugar Pine will provide trash receptacles that will be serviced by the USFS and disposed of at an authorized USFS disposal site.

g) Solid Waste Disposal. The project would not violate any statutes and regulations related to solid waste disposal.

3.18 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means the incremental effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probably future projects as defined in Section 15130.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion:

a) Degraded Environment. The project includes mitigation measures to reduced impacts on biological resources to less than significant levels. The project would not affect cultural resources including any examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory.

b) Cumulative Impacts. The potential for negative direct, indirect, or cumulative effects from the project will be minimized with the implementation of identified mitigation measures. The project is expected to lead to positive direct, indirect, and cumulative effects by providing sustainable recreation facilities and increasing user experiences for motorized recreation in the Sugar Pine OHV area with minimal impact to resources. The cumulative effects from the project's implementation are improved public health and safety, and enhanced recreational experiences and facility improvements.

c) Effects on Human Beings. The project includes mitigation measures to reduce impacts related to hazardous material releases into the environment, and to minimize erosion and water quality impacts so that all impacts are less than significant.

Chapter 4 REFERENCES AND REPORT PREPARATION

4.1 REFERENCES

- Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD). 2010. California Environmental Air Quality Act Air Quality Guidelines. May 2010. Accessed August 17, 2015.
<http://www.baaqmd.gov/~media/Files/Planning%20and%20Research/CEQA/Draft_BAAQMD_CEQA_Guidelines_May_2010_Final.ashx>
- California Air Resources Board (CARB). 2014. *First Update to the Climate Change Scoping Plan*. Sacramento, CA. May 2014.
- California Air Resources Board (CARB). 2014. *Area Designation Maps / State and National*. Updated August 22, 2014. Accessed August 3, 2015.
<<http://www.arb.ca.gov/desig/adm/adm.htm>>
- California Air Resources Board (CARB). 2013b. *Placer County APCD List of Current Rules*. Updated October 21, 2013. Accessed August 3, 2015.
<<http://www.arb.ca.gov/drdb/pla/cur.htm>>
- California Air Resources Board (CARB). 2011a. *Final Supplement to the AB 32 Scoping Plan Functional Equivalent Document*. Released August 19, 2011. Sacramento, CA. Approved August 24, 2011.
<<http://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/scopingplan/fed.htm>>
- California Air Resources Board (CARB). 2009. *Climate Change Scoping Plan – A Framework for Change*. Endorsed by ARB December 2008. Sacramento, CA. May 11, 2009. Accessed October 17, 2014.
<<http://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/scopingplan/document/scopingplandocument.htm>>
- California Native Plant Society (CNPS). 2013. *Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants* (online edition, v7-13nov). California Native Plant Society. Sacramento, CA. Accessed on Mon, Dec. 2, 2013 from <http://www.cnps.org/inventory>
- Placer County Air Pollution Control District (PCAPCD). 2013. *2012 Triennial Progress Report*. October 2013. Accessed August 3, 2015.
<<http://www.placer.ca.gov/~media/apc/documents/Planning/TriennialReport/2012%20Triennial%20Report.pdf>>
- Placer County Air Pollution Control District (APCD). 2012. *California Environmental Quality Act Handbook Chapters: Analyzing Greenhouse Gas Emissions*. October 2012. Accessed August 17, 2015.
<<http://www.placer.ca.gov/~media/apc/documents/Planning/CEQAHandbook/Final/PCAPCDCEQAHandbook5.pdf>>
- Placer County Air Pollution Control District (PCAPCD). 2003. *Rule 228 Fugitive Dust*. Adopted June 19, 1979. Amended October 19, 1993; April 10, 2003. Accessed August 3, 2015.
<<http://www.arb.ca.gov/DRDB/PLA/CURHTML/R228.pdf>>
- U. S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife, November 15, 1994, 50 CFR Part 17, *Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Animal Candidate, Review for Listing as Endangered or Threatened Species*, includes Shirltail Creek Stonefly, From: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-1994-11-15/html/94-28029.htm>, [Federal Register Volume 59, Number 219 (Tuesday, November 15, 1994)], From the Federal Register Online via the Government Printing Office [www.gpo.gov], [FR Doc No: 94-28029]

U. S. Forest Service, Tahoe National Forest, January 2013, Environmental Assessment (EA) for OHV Staging Area Construction and Expansions Project

U. S. Forest Service, Tahoe National Forest, January 2013, Decision Notice (DN) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the OHV Staging Area Construction and Expansions Project

4.2 REPORT PREPARATION

MIG | TRA Environmental Sciences, Inc.
545 Middlefield Road, Suite 200
Menlo Park, CA 94025
650 327-0429
www.traenviro.com

Senior Project Manager: Victoria Harris
Associate Environmental Analyst: Becca Dannels
Associate Biologist: Sara Jones
Quality Control: Kate Werner
Graphics: Sandy Ho