



**U.S. Department of Housing and Urban
Development**

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Environmental Assessment Determinations and Compliance Findings for HUD-assisted Projects 24 CFR Part 58

Project Information

Project Name: Groveland Community Services District Water Distribution System Improvements

Responsible Entity: County of Tuolumne
2 S. Green Street
Sonora, CA 95370

Grant Recipient: County of Tuolumne

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Certifying Officer Name and Title: Tracie Riggs, County Administrative Officer

Subgrant Recipient: Groveland Community Services District

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Direct Comments to: Maureen Frank, General Services Agency Director, County of Tuolumne

Project Location:

The proposed Project will take place in the communities of Groveland and Big Oak Flat in western Tuolumne County. Those two communities are within the Groveland Community Services District (CSD or District) service area and lie generally along State Route 120, and east of State Route 49. Yosemite National Park lies approximately 23 miles southeast of the Project site. Project elevation ranges from approximately 2800 feet to approximately 3100 feet above mean sea level. The proposed Project is located in Township 1S, Range 16E, Sections 20, 21, 23, 27, 29 and 30, MDB&M. See Attachment A for Project location maps.

Description of the Proposed Project [24 CFR 50.12 & 58.32; 40 CFR 1508.25]:

Groveland Community Services District prepared an Engineering Design Report entitled “Groveland Community Services District – Water Distribution System Improvements” which outlined the various improvements needed to address the District’s failing water distribution system. It should be noted that only a portion of the Project is being presented for funding at this time (see further information below). The larger District-wide Project involves installing or replacing approximately 10,203 linear feet of 8-inch diameter water main as well as new gate valves, pressure reducing valves, and fire hydrants in the downtown Groveland water distribution system; approximately 10,306 linear feet of 8-inch diameter water main as well as new gate valves, pressure reducing valves, and fire hydrants in the Big Oak Flat water distribution system; approximately 7,212 linear feet of 8-inch water main and fire hydrants in the connection between the communities of Groveland and Big Oak Flat; and approximately 1,956 linear feet of 8-inch water main and a fire hydrant in the water distribution system that feeds White Gulch.

The environmental impacts of the entire Project were included in the Project CEQA documentation and the CA State Water Board Environmental Package. However, only certain components of the Project are being presented for funding at this time. The proposed improvements are shown in the table below and in the attached maps (Attachment A).

Water Main Improvements Proposed for Funding*

Description	Quantity	Unit
Line 1	2,504	LF
Line 2	1,607	LF
Line 3	2,323	LF
Line 4	963	LF
Line 5	3,109	LF
Line 8	7,431	LF
Line 9	2,392	LF
Line 14	611	LF
6" Hydrant with Bury	70	EA
3/4" Residential Water Service	200	EA

*see associated maps (Attachment A)

Both conventional trenching methods and pipe bursting were considered for water mains to be replaced. Conventional construction uses heavy equipment to dig the trenches and requires surface restoration of the excavated trench. Conventional construction is the selected method for the

replacement of the water mains in Groveland and Big Oak Flat. Highway and creek crossings will be constructed using the bore and jack construction method.

For a full description of the project, as well as the environmental evaluation, please refer to Attachment A which includes the following:

- Project location maps
- Project CEQA Documentation
 - Mitigated Negative Declaration (SCH#2018102031) adopted 11/13/18
 - Project Biological Study
 - Project Cultural Resources Study
 - Mitigation and Monitoring Program
 - Notice of Determination (Tuolumne County Clerk stamped)
- State Water Board Environmental Package

Statement of Purpose and Need for the Proposal [40 CFR 1508.9(b)]:

The water distribution system serving the communities of downtown Groveland and Big Oak Flat are the oldest sections of the water distribution system within GCSD's Service Area; constructed primarily between the 1940's and 1960's. The water distribution system in downtown Groveland and Big Oak Flat are operated as a standalone system with its own water treatment plant and distribution system; separate from the treatment plant and distribution system serving Pine Mountain Lake customers.

Most of the water distribution pipelines that supply water to the communities of Groveland and Big Oak Flat are 4" in diameter or smaller, made of inferior, failing materials and installed with poor construction techniques. Frequent main breaks occur in these areas, causing large amounts of water to be lost, property damage and back siphon conditions to occur. Backflow and back siphonage of contaminated water, caused by water main breaks are a significant risk to the health and safety of the community. Constant water loss is also occurring through small unidentified leaks in the distribution system due its deteriorated condition. The Groveland and Big Oak Flat system is currently in a condition where an increase in catastrophic water main failure is occurring, resulting in more frequent, longer water outages.

Serious water system deficiencies were identified in the GCSD 2001 Water Master Plan. Modeling of the water distribution system indicated that the existing infrastructure was unable to supply fire flows primarily due to the undersized pipes. Modeling results were also confirmed by Fire Hydrant Test Results and system pressure monitoring, where it was discovered that the core of the community of downtown Groveland and Big Oak Flat had zero or negative pressure during fire flow conditions in portions of the water mains. Due to the high cost of water system improvements and very low income of the community, water rate revenue was not adequate to fund the cost of improvements to meet minimal fire flow standards and domestic water needs.

Groveland and Big Oak Flat are located in a very high fire hazard zone, along the busy Hwy 120 corridor and entrance to Yosemite National Park. Many thousands of visitors pass through, stop and visit Groveland and Big Oak Flat on a daily basis. This high tourist load coupled with the inability to provide adequate water flow for firefighting is of extreme concern to the District; which also operates the fire department in the region.

GCSD needs to address this important compliance deficiency and be able to provide reliable, adequate pressure and flow for drinking, sanitation and fire suppression. Groveland and Big Oak Flat are Severely Disadvantaged Communities (SDACs) within GCSD’s service area and cannot afford the cost of the water distribution system improvements needed to correct this situation. The 2001 Water Master Plan, water leak records and state laws and regulations will be used to provide the documentation of the serious health and safety need for the project.

Existing Conditions and Trends [24 CFR 58.40(a)]:

The Groveland CSD provides water under Domestic Water Supply Permit No. 03-11-13P-008 and obtains all of its water from the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission’s Hetch Hetchy Reservoir. The water originates in Yosemite National Park as snow melt from a large watershed into the High Sierra. The District’s existing water system distributes water to the populated areas of Big Oak Flat, Groveland, and Pine Mountain Lake. The District’s water supply and distribution system includes three water treatment plants, five storage reservoirs, and approximately 70 miles of distribution piping. The District provides a treated water supply to approximately 3,500 customers.

The proposed Project site consists of developed and disturbed land cover including roads, residential development, and commercial development. The surrounding land cover is composed of cismontane woodland. Intermittent and ephemeral waterways are present within fifty feet of some work locations.

The Project will occur mainly within existing roads and District right-of-way. After the water lines, and related improvements are installed, the disturbed areas will be restored to pre-project conditions.

Funding Information

Grant Number	HUD Program	Funding Amount
	CDBG	\$3,300,000.000

Estimated Total HUD Funded Amount: \$3,300,000.000

Estimated Total Project Cost (HUD and non-HUD funds) [24 CFR 58.32(d)]: \$3,300,000.00

Compliance with 24 CFR 50.4, 58.5, and 58.6 Laws and Authorities

Record below the compliance or conformance determinations for each statute, executive order, or regulation. Provide credible, traceable, and supportive source documentation for each authority. Where applicable, complete the necessary reviews or consultations and obtain or note applicable permits of approvals. Clearly note citations, dates/names/titles of contacts, and page references. Attach additional documentation as appropriate.

Compliance Factors: Statutes, Executive Orders, and Regulations listed at 24 CFR §58.5 and §58.6	Are formal compliance steps or mitigation required?	Compliance determinations
STATUTES, EXECUTIVE ORDERS, AND REGULATIONS LISTED AT 24 CFR 50.4 & 58.6		
Airport Hazards 24 CFR Part 51 Subpart D	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The nearest public airport, Pine Mountain Lake Airport, is located approximately three miles northeast of Groveland. The proposed Project is not located within any airport safety zone and the Project will not have any effect on any airport operations.
Coastal Barrier Resources Coastal Barrier Resources Act, as amended by the Coastal Barrier Improvement Act of 1990 [16 USC 3501]	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Project is located more than 100 miles from the nearest coastal area.
Flood Insurance Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 and National Flood Insurance Reform Act of 1994 [42 USC 4001-4128 and 42 USC 5154a]	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Most of the District is in Flood Zone X (Outside the 100-year flood zone). However, small portions of the District are in Flood Zone D (as identified by FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map 06109C1225C, accessed August 2018). ¹ The proposed pipelines will be underground, while the hydrants and appurtenances will be above grade. The structures are not substantial enough to impede or redirect any flood flows.

¹ FEMA. FEMA Flood Map Service Center: Search By Address. Search Results for Tuolumne County Unincorporated Areas. <https://msc.fema.gov/portal/search?AddressQuery=groveland%20ca#searchresultsanchor>. Accessed August 2018.

		Additionally, there is no housing or habitable structures associated with the Project.
STATUTES, EXECUTIVE ORDERS, AND REGULATIONS LISTED AT 24 CFR 50.4 & 58.5		
Clean Air Clean Air Act, as amended, particularly section 176(c) & (d); 40 CFR Parts 6, 51, 93	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The pipelines will not generate emissions once constructed. The estimated annual construction emissions show that construction emissions will not exceed any established air emission thresholds. Refer to the Project CEQA document, Section 3.3 – Air Quality (starting on page 3-10).
Coastal Zone Management Coastal Zone Management Act, sections 307(c) & (d)	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Project is located more than 100 miles from the coast.
Contamination and Toxic Substances 24 CFR Part 50.3(i) & 58.5(i)(2)	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	While trenching and construction activities may involve the limited transport, storage, use or disposal of hazardous materials, such as the fueling/servicing of construction equipment onsite, the activities would be short-term or one-time in nature and would be subject to federal, state, and local health and safety regulations. Long-term operation of the proposed Project would involve little or no hazardous materials. Once operational, the pipelines will transport water and will not emit hazardous materials. The proposed Project site is not located on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. The nearest location is a closed mine site located at the corner of Cedar and Elm Streets in Tuolumne, over ten miles to the north. Refer to the Project CEQA document, Section 3.8 – Hazards / Hazardous Materials (starting on page 3-32).
Endangered Species Endangered Species Act of 1973, particularly section 7; 50 CFR Part 402	Yes No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	The Project site consists of developed and disturbed land cover including roads, residential development, and commercial development. The surrounding land cover is composed of cismontane woodland. Intermittent and ephemeral waterways are present within 50 feet of some work locations. However, significant

biological impacts have been avoided through project design, buffers, avoidance and/or construction methods.

The District's biological consultant performed a search of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) and the California Native Plant Society's Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants (CNPS) for records of special-status plants and animal species in the proposed Project area. Regional lists of special-status species were compiled using U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, CNDDDB, and CNPS database searches confined to the Groveland 7.5-minute United States Geological Survey topographic quad, which encompasses the proposed Project site, and the eight surrounding quads. Local lists of special-status species were compiled using CNDDDB records from within five miles of the proposed Project site and species for which the Project site does not provide suitable habitat were eliminated from further consideration. Field surveys were conducted in April and May of 2018. As part of the intensive effort, biologists met with project design engineers and Groveland CSD staff on site to determine the specific limits of impact, method of construction and other relevant information in order to better evaluate the potential biological impacts of the Project.

The biological survey/report determined that although no protected species were identified during surveys, there exists the potential for such species to move into project areas. The report concluded that the Project could affect one special-status species (western pond turtle) and nesting migratory birds, but effects can be reduced to a less than significant level with mitigation. Therefore, specific protection measures have been included as mitigation to ensure protected species are not significantly impacted.

Additionally, Clean Water Act Section 404 permits and 401 certifications as well as California Fish and Game Code Section 1602 notifications are being prepared for four

		<p>jurisdictional water ways – three in Big Oak Flat, where work could involve trenching across an ephemeral tributary of Rattlesnake Creek, an intermittent drainage that ultimately drains to the Tuolumne River via Priest Reservoir, or installing concrete pillars on the banks of the high-flow channel of Rattlesnake Creek – and one in Groveland, where concrete pillars could be installed on the severely eroded banks of an unnamed intermittent stream that is tributary to the Tuolumne River above Pine Mountain Lake. Groveland CSD will be required to secure these permits prior to construction activities. These permits will outline the various restrictions and requirements of construction activities as they pertain to biological resources. For example, the permits will outline the limits of ground disturbance, timing of work within streambeds, location of construction staging areas, and other information. Preconstruction surveys and adherence to regulatory permit requirements will ensure that any impacts will be less than significant.</p> <p>Refer to the Project CEQA document, Section 3.4 – Biological Resources (starting on page 3-14) and the Project Biological Resources Report attached to the CEQA document as Appendix B).</p>
<p>Explosive and Flammable Hazards</p> <p>24 CFR Part 51 Subpart C</p>	<p>Yes No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Project construction activities may involve the use and transport of hazardous materials consisting of small amounts of fuels, oils, and other chemicals (e.g., paints, adhesives, etc.) typically used during construction. The use of such materials would be considered minimal and would not require these materials to be stored in bulk form. The construction contractor will be responsible for proper storage and use of any hazardous substances. The project must adhere to applicable zoning and fire regulations regarding the use and storage of any hazardous substances. Further, there is no evidence that the site has been used for underground storage of hazardous materials.</p>

<p>Farmlands Protection</p> <p>Farmland Protection Policy Act of 1981, particularly sections 1504(b) and 1541; 7 CFR Part 658</p>	<p>Yes No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>The Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program has not mapped farmland in Tuolumne County and as such, the Project does not include conversion of designated farmland to non-farmland.</p>
<p>Floodplain Management</p> <p>Executive Order 11988, particularly section 2(a); 24 CFR Part 55</p>	<p>Yes No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Most of the District is in Flood Zone X (Outside the 100-year flood zone). However, small portions of the District are in Flood Zone D (as identified by FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map 06109C1225C, accessed August 2018).² The proposed pipelines will be underground, while the hydrants and appurtenances will be above grade. The structures are not substantial enough to impede or redirect any flood flows. Additionally, there is no housing or habitable structures associated with the Project.</p>
<p>Historic Preservation</p> <p>National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, particularly sections 106 and 110; 36 CFR Part 800</p>	<p>Yes No</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>As described in the Cultural Resources Report, the records search, background historical research, Native American outreach and a pedestrian survey revealed that no cultural resources occur on the Project site or in the Project area.</p> <p>The survey did not result in the discovery or documentation of any previously unrecorded cultural resources within the Area of Potential Effect. A majority of the proposed water pipeline routes are with asphalt paved or gravel covered road ways or along the edge State Highway 120. Two cultural resources located near the APE include the “Old Cemetery, 1849-1852, also known as Chinese Cemetery”. A sign at the cemetery also states that “Early Day Chinese Also Buried Here”. This small cemetery is surrounded by a low chain link fence and is located near the west end of the proposed new water main route at the western end of Henderson Road in the community of Big Oak Flat. UTM coordinates at the cemetery entrance are 10 741232E/4189869N (NAD 83). The other resource is the Groveland Jail. This structure is located along the northwest edge Ponderosa Lane, northwest of State Highway 120. The structure was</p>

² FEMA. FEMA Flood Map Service Center: Search By Address. Search Results for Tuolumne County Unincorporated Areas. <https://msc.fema.gov/portal/search?AddressQuery=groveland%20ca#searchresultsanchor>. Accessed August 2018.

		<p>constructed in 1895 in a neoclassic architectural style. These are not impacted by the Project.</p> <p>No other cultural resources were identified within the APE as a result of this study. Therefore, it is unlikely that the proposed action will have an effect on important archaeological, historical, or other cultural resources. No further cultural resources investigation is therefore recommended. In the unlikely event that buried archaeological deposits are encountered within the project area, the finds must be evaluated by a qualified archaeologist. Should human remains be encountered, the County Coroner must be contacted immediately; if the remains are determined to be Native American, then the Native American Heritage Commission must be contacted as well.</p> <p>In addition, protection measures have been added mitigation in the event that <u>unidentified</u> or buried cultural resources are discovered during construction.</p> <p>Refer to the Project CEQA document, Section 3.5 – Cultural Resources (starting on page 3-21) and the Cultural Resources Report attached to the CEQA document as Appendix C).</p>
<p>Noise Abatement and Control</p> <p>Noise Control Act of 1972, as amended by the Quiet Communities Act of 1978; 24 CFR Part 51 Subpart B</p>	<p>Yes No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>The nearest sensitive receptors to the proposed Project would be the residences along the existing pipeline alignment. Project construction would involve temporary, short-term noise sources including site preparation and installation of the pipeline and site cleanup work is expected to last for approximately one year. Construction-related short-term, temporary noise levels would be higher than existing ambient noise levels in the Project area, but is temporary and would not occur after construction is completed.</p> <p>Operations-related noise would be similar to existing conditions. The pipelines themselves do not emit noise, nor do the related improvements such as fire hydrants and valves.</p>

		Refer to the Project CEQA document, Section 3.12 – Noise (starting on page 3-44)
Sole Source Aquifers Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974, as amended, particularly section 1424(e); 40 CFR Part 149	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The nearest sole source aquifer is in Fresno County and would not be impacted by the Project.
Wetlands Protection Executive Order 11990, particularly sections 2 and 5	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No wetlands were found during the biological surveys. There are no protected wetlands in the proposed Project vicinity. Refer to the Project CEQA document, Section 3.4 – Biological Resources (starting on page 3-14) and the Project Biological Resources Report attached to the CEQA document as Appendix B).
Wild and Scenic Rivers Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, particularly section 7(b) and (c)	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	There are no wild or scenic rivers in the Project impact area. Refer to the Project CEQA document, Section 3.4 – Biological Resources (starting on page 3-14) and the Project Biological Resources Report attached to the CEQA document as Appendix B).
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE		
Environmental Justice Executive Order 12898	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Project is intended to serve low/moderate income populations (Groveland and Big Oak Flat are Severely Disadvantaged Communities). The project is a community-wide project and is not particular to any specific population or group.

Environmental Assessment Factors [24 CFR 58.40; Ref. 40 CFR 1508.8 &1508.27] Recorded below is the qualitative and quantitative significance of the effects of the proposal on the character, features and resources of the project area. Each factor has been evaluated and documented, as appropriate and in proportion to its relevance to the proposed action. Verifiable source documentation has been provided and described in support of each determination, as appropriate. Credible, traceable and supportive source documentation for each authority has been provided. Where applicable, the necessary reviews or consultations have been completed and applicable permits of approvals have been obtained or noted. Citations, dates/names/titles of contacts, and page references are clear. Additional documentation is attached, as appropriate. **All conditions, attenuation or mitigation measures have been clearly identified.**

Impact Codes: Use an impact code from the following list to make the determination of impact for each factor.

- (1) Minor beneficial impact
- (2) No impact anticipated
- (3) Minor Adverse Impact – May require mitigation
- (4) Significant or potentially significant impact requiring avoidance or modification which may require an Environmental Impact Statement

Environmental Assessment Factor	Impact Code	Impact Evaluation
LAND DEVELOPMENT		
Conformance with Plans / Compatible Land Use and Zoning / Scale and Urban Design	1	The project will provide water infrastructure improvements and is conformance and is compatible with all District planning documents.
Soil Suitability/ Slope/ Erosion/ Drainage/ Storm Water Runoff	2	The project will require some digging and excavation for the new water lines. However, after construction, the disturbed areas will be restored to pre-project conditions. During construction, the project will have minimal impacts on the water quality and waste discharge requirements and will be subject to local and State standards for water discharge, including a SWPPP. Implementation of adopted management practices and compliance with the provisions of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit will ensure no impacts.
Hazards and Nuisances including Site Safety and Noise	2	Project construction activities may involve the use and transport of hazardous materials. The use of such materials would be considered minimal and would not require these materials to be stored in bulk form. The construction contractor will be responsible for proper storage and use of any hazardous substances. The project must adhere to applicable zoning and fire regulations regarding the use and storage of any hazardous substances. Further, there is no evidence that the site has been used for underground storage of hazardous materials.
Energy Consumption	2	Once constructed, the project will not require any new sources of energy.

Environmental Assessment Factor	Impact Code	Impact Evaluation
SOCIOECONOMIC		
Employment and Income Patterns	2	The proposed project is in response to deteriorated sewer infrastructure. The project itself will not induce population growth and there are no new businesses associated with the

		project. Therefore, there will be no effect on employment or income patterns.
Demographic Character Changes, Displacement	2	The proposed project is in response to deteriorated water system infrastructure. The project itself will not induce population growth and there are no new homes or businesses associated with the project. The project does not have any effect on demographic character changes or displacement.

Environmental Assessment Factor	Impact Code	Impact Evaluation
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES		
Educational and Cultural Facilities	2	The project does not include any features that would affect any educational or cultural facilities. The project does not include any increase in population and/or students.
Commercial Facilities	1	The project does not include any features that would affect any commercial facilities, except in instances where the commercial facility will receive a new water line, wherein there would be a beneficial impact.
Health Care and Social Services	2	There are no health care or social service facilities that will be affected by the project.
Solid Waste Disposal / Recycling	2	Once constructed, the project will not utilize solid waste facilities or involve any recycling.
Waste Water / Sanitary Sewers	2	The project will include installation and/or replacement of water distribution lines, thereby improving the existing water infrastructure of the District. There is no component of the project that involves sewer or wastewater.
Water Supply	2	The project itself will improve the deteriorating water distribution infrastructure in the District and will not increase the amount of water being used.
Public Safety - Police, Fire and Emergency Medical	2	The project does not include any increase in population nor does it have any effect on any of these existing facilities.
Parks, Open Space and Recreation	2	There are no parkland or recreational facilities associated with the project.
Transportation and Accessibility	2	Some of the water lines will be installed within existing roadways. As a result, there may be temporary disruption resulting from detours. These disruptions will be minimized to the extent feasible and the roadways will be restored to pre-project conditions after construction.

Environmental Assessment Factor	Impact Code	Impact Evaluation
NATURAL FEATURES		
Unique Natural Features, Water Resources	3	<p>The proposed Project site consists of developed and disturbed land cover including roads, residential development, and commercial development. The surrounding land cover is composed of cismontane woodland. Intermittent and ephemeral waterways are present within some work locations.</p> <p>Clean Water Act Section 404 permits and 401 certifications as well as California Fish and Game Code Section 1602 notifications are being prepared for four jurisdictional water ways – three in Big Oak Flat, where work could involve trenching across an ephemeral tributary of Rattlesnake Creek, an intermittent drainage that ultimately drains to the Tuolumne River via Priest Reservoir, or installing concrete pillars on the banks of the high-flow channel of Rattlesnake Creek – and one in Groveland, where concrete pillars could be installed on the severely eroded banks of an unnamed intermittent stream that is tributary to the Tuolumne River above Pine Mountain Lake. Groveland CSD will be required to secure these permits prior to construction activities. These permits will outline the various restrictions and requirements of construction activities as they pertain to biological resources. For example, the permits will outline the limits of ground disturbance, timing of work within streambeds, location of construction staging areas, and other information. Preconstruction surveys and adherence to regulatory permit requirements will ensure that any impacts will be less than significant.</p> <p>There are no other unique natural features that would be impacted by the project.</p>
Vegetation, Wildlife	3	<p>The biological survey/report determined that although no protected species were identified during surveys, there exists the potential for such species to move into project areas. The report concluded that the Project could affect one special-status species (western pond turtle) and nesting migratory birds, but effects can be reduced to a less than significant level with mitigation. Therefore, specific protection measures have been included as mitigation to ensure protected species are not significantly impacted.</p>
Other Factors		N/A

Additional Studies Performed: Biological and Cultural Studies

Field Inspection (Date and completed by): Multiple field surveys have been recently conducted (2017 – 2019) for the Project. These include surveys/field inspections for engineering, surveying, biological surveys, cultural resource surveys, and other related surveys. For instance, biological field surveys were conducted in April and May of 2018. As part of the intensive effort, biologists met with project design engineers and Groveland CSD staff on site to determine the specific limits of impact, method of construction and other relevant information in order to better evaluate the potential biological impacts of the Project. Cultural surveys were conducted on June 4, 2018.

List of Sources, Agencies and Persons Consulted [40 CFR 1508.9(b)]:

Biological Resource Evaluation – *Water Distribution System Improvements* (May 2018) Colibri Ecological Consulting, LLC.

Cultural Resources Assessment – *Groveland Community Services District Water System Distribution Improvements Project, Big Oak Flat, Groveland and White Gulch, Tuolumne County California* (August 2018, updated October 2019) Sierra Valley Cultural Planning.

Engineering Design Report – *Groveland Community Services District, Water Distribution System Improvements* (May 2017), AM Consulting Engineers.

Mitigated Negative Declaration – *Groveland Community Services District Water Distribution System Improvements* (November 2018) Crawford & Bowen Planning, Inc.

List of Permits Obtained:

Clean Water Act Section 404 permits and 401 certifications as well as California Fish and Game Code Section 1602 notifications are being prepared for four jurisdictional water ways – three in Big Oak Flat, where work could involve trenching across an ephemeral tributary of Rattlesnake Creek, an intermittent drainage that ultimately drains to the Tuolumne River via Priest Reservoir, or installing concrete pillars on the banks of the high-flow channel of Rattlesnake Creek – and one in Groveland, where concrete pillars could be installed on the severely eroded banks of an unnamed intermittent stream that is tributary to the Tuolumne River above Pine Mountain Lake. Groveland CSD will be required to secure these permits prior to construction activities. These permits will outline the various restrictions and requirements of construction activities as they pertain to biological resources. For example, the permits will outline the limits of ground disturbance, timing of work within streambeds, location of construction staging areas, and other information. Preconstruction surveys and adherence to regulatory permit requirements will ensure that any impacts will be less than significant.

Public Outreach [24 CFR 50.23 & 58.43]: The Project CEQA document was published for a 30 day public review from October 10, 2018 – November 10, 2018 and a public hearing for the project

was held by the District on November 12, 2018. A Notice of Availability was published in a local newspaper as well. In addition, this EA/FONSI will be available for public review for 15 days.

Cumulative Impact Analysis [24 CFR 58.32]: The assessment of the significance of the cumulative effects of a project must be conducted in connection with the effects of past projects, other current projects, and probable future projects. Due to the nature of the project and consistency with environmental policies, incremental contributions to impacts are considered less than cumulatively considerable. The proposed project would not contribute substantially to adverse cumulative conditions, or create any substantial indirect impacts (i.e., increase in population could lead to an increase need for housing, increase in traffic, air pollutants, etc).

Alternatives [24 CFR 58.40(e); 40 CFR 1508.9]: The primary objectives of the proposed project are as follows:

- The Groveland Community Services District primary objective is to provide clean drinking water to the communities it serves.
- The Groveland Community Services District seeks to effectively distribute its' water supply and ensure sufficient water pressure is available for multiple users.
- The District seeks to operate the water distribution system with the most cost-effective methods available that meet the District's overall system performance and regulatory compliance requirements.

The following alternatives were considered:

Alternative 1 – No Project / No Action (See Section 4.2 of the Engineering Report for a full description).

Description: This alternative consists of the continuation of the existing water distribution system.

Alternative 2 – Improvements on Existing Alignment (See Section 4.3 of the Engineering Report for a full description).

Description: This alternative is similar to the proposed project, except it does all the improvements on the existing alignment.

Alternative 3 – Improvements on Altered Alignment (See Section 4.4 of the Engineering Report and Section 2 of this document for the full description).

Description: This alternative is the selected alternative (proposed project). Please refer to the second page of this Environmental Assessment for a description of the project.

No Action Alternative [24 CFR 58.40(e)]: The No Action Alternative would preclude adequate and safe water system improvements. This alternative would not meet the District's or Project's objective.

Summary of Findings and Conclusions: The analyses of environmental issues contained in this document indicate that the project is not expected to have substantial impact on the environment. Mitigation measures have been incorporated in the project to reduce all potentially significant impacts to less than significant.

Mitigation Measures and Conditions [40 CFR 1505.2(c)]

Summarize below all mitigation measures adopted by the Responsible Entity to reduce, avoid, or eliminate adverse environmental impacts and to avoid non-compliance or non-conformance with the above-listed authorities and factors. These measures/conditions must be incorporated into project contracts, development agreements, and other relevant documents. The staff responsible for implementing and monitoring mitigation measures should be clearly identified in the mitigation plan.

Mitigation Measures:

The mitigation measures below were adopted by Resolution by the Groveland Community Services District as part of the Project CEQA evaluation process.

Biology

BIO – 1 Protect northwestern pond turtle

1. To the extent practicable, construction in and adjacent to intermittent and ephemeral streams shall be scheduled to occur when streams are dry (approximately mid-July through October) to avoid the possibility of northwestern pond turtle being present at the worksite.
2. If it is not possible to schedule construction between August and October, pre-construction surveys for northwestern pond turtle shall be conducted by a qualified biologist to determine if turtles are occupying stream-adjacent worksites. pre-construction survey shall be conducted no more than 14 days prior to the initiation of construction activities. During this survey, the qualified biologist shall inspect all sections of stream within 300 feet of planned work activities, including adjacent upland areas, for turtles and nests; northwestern pond turtle nests in upland areas within several hundred feet of water in the spring, typically during the months of April and May. If a turtle or nest is found within 300 feet of the worksite, a qualified biological monitor shall remain on site during construction to ensure that no turtles or turtle nests are impacted by work activities. Any turtle found on or adjacent to the worksite shall be allowed to leave on its own.

Peter Kampa

Digitally signed by Peter
Kampa
Date: 2024.04.02 14:35:52
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Certifying Officer Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name/Title: Pete Kampa, General Manager

This original, signed document and related supporting material must be retained on file by the Responsible Entity in an Environmental Review Record (ERR) for the activity/project (ref: 24 CFR Part 58.38) and in accordance with recordkeeping requirements for the HUD program(s).

Certifying Officer Signature: Tracie M. Riggs Date: _____
Tracie M. Riggs (Jul 6, 2024 08:50 PDT)

Name/Title: Tracie Riggs, County Administrative Officer

This original, signed document and related supporting material must be retained on file by the Responsible Entity in an Environmental Review Record (ERR) for the activity/project (ref: 24 CFR Part 58.38) and in accordance with recordkeeping requirements for the HUD program(s).