



# County of Santa Cruz

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## Department of Community Development and Infrastructure

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## CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) INITIAL STUDY/ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

**Date:** April 17, 2026

**Application  
Number:** 231473

**Project Name:** Camp Chesebrough Master  
Plan Amendment

**Staff Planner:** Randall Adams

### I. OVERVIEW AND ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

**APPLICANT:** Ramiro Torres, Architect **APN(s):** 088-051-37

Scouting America, Silicon

**OWNER:** Valley Monterey Bay Council **SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT:** 5  
– Michael Wilson CFO

**PROJECT LOCATION/SETTING:** Santa Cruz County is bounded on the north by San Mateo County, on the south by Monterey and San Benito counties, on the east by Santa Clara County, and on the south and west by the Monterey Bay and the Pacific Ocean.

The approximately 444-acre property is located in the Santa Cruz Mountains at 26005 Big Basin Way in unincorporated Santa Cruz County (APN 088-051-37) (Refer to Figure 1, Location Map). This makes up the entire *Chesebrough Scout Reservation 10-Year Development Master Plan* (master plan) boundary area. However, only approximately 113 acres of the property is proposed for development.

The site contains a creek called Oil Creek, named for natural seepages of oil in the vicinity. The project site and surrounding area largely consists of Douglas fir, redwood, tanoak, and Pacific madrone woodland. The existing camp includes 26 campsites, a training center with a large meeting room for 135 people, commercial kitchen, restrooms, volleyball court, archery and BB gun ranges.

#### SUMMARY PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The project involves an amendment to the approved master plan at an existing organized camp to allow for the construction of a multiple-use building for training purposes, a shower and restroom building, cabins for short term camping, covered teaching pavilions, a climbing and rappelling tower, a replacement water tank, and a recycling and trash. Details under Section II. Background Information. Figure 2, Project Site Plan, illustrates the site plan for the project.

**ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:** *All of the following potential environmental impacts are evaluated in this Initial Study. Categories that are marked have been analyzed in greater detail based on project specific information.*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics and Visual Resources               | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture and Forestry Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Population and Housing               |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources               | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services                      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy  | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Geology and Soils                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tribal Cultural Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities and Service Systems        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hazards and Hazardous Materials               | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildfire                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology/Water Supply/Water Quality          | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use and Planning                         |   |

**DISCRETIONARY APPROVAL(S) BEING CONSIDERED:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> General Plan Amendment        | <input type="checkbox"/> Coastal Development Permit              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land Division                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grading Permit               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rezoning                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Riparian Exception                      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Development Permit | <input type="checkbox"/> LAFCO Annexation                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sewer Connection Permit       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: Master Plan Amendment |

**OTHER PUBLIC AGENCIES WHOSE APPROVAL IS REQUIRED (e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement):**

<u>Permit Type/Action</u>	<u>Agency</u>
n/a	n/a

**CONSULTATION WITH NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES:** *Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1? If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.?*

The County initiated contact with the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) and then contacted the NAHC provided list of affiliated tribes to solicit requests for tribal consultation. The tribal consultation occurred in November 2025 resulting in recommended mitigations to protect sensitive tribal cultural resources that may be present on the project site. Additional information regarding the tribal consultation and resulting recommendations can be found under Section R (Tribal Cultural Resources) below.

## 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 proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a “potentially significant impact” or “potentially significant unless mitigated” impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Mark J Connolly  
Mark Connolly, Deputy Environmental Coordinator

5/15/2026  
Date

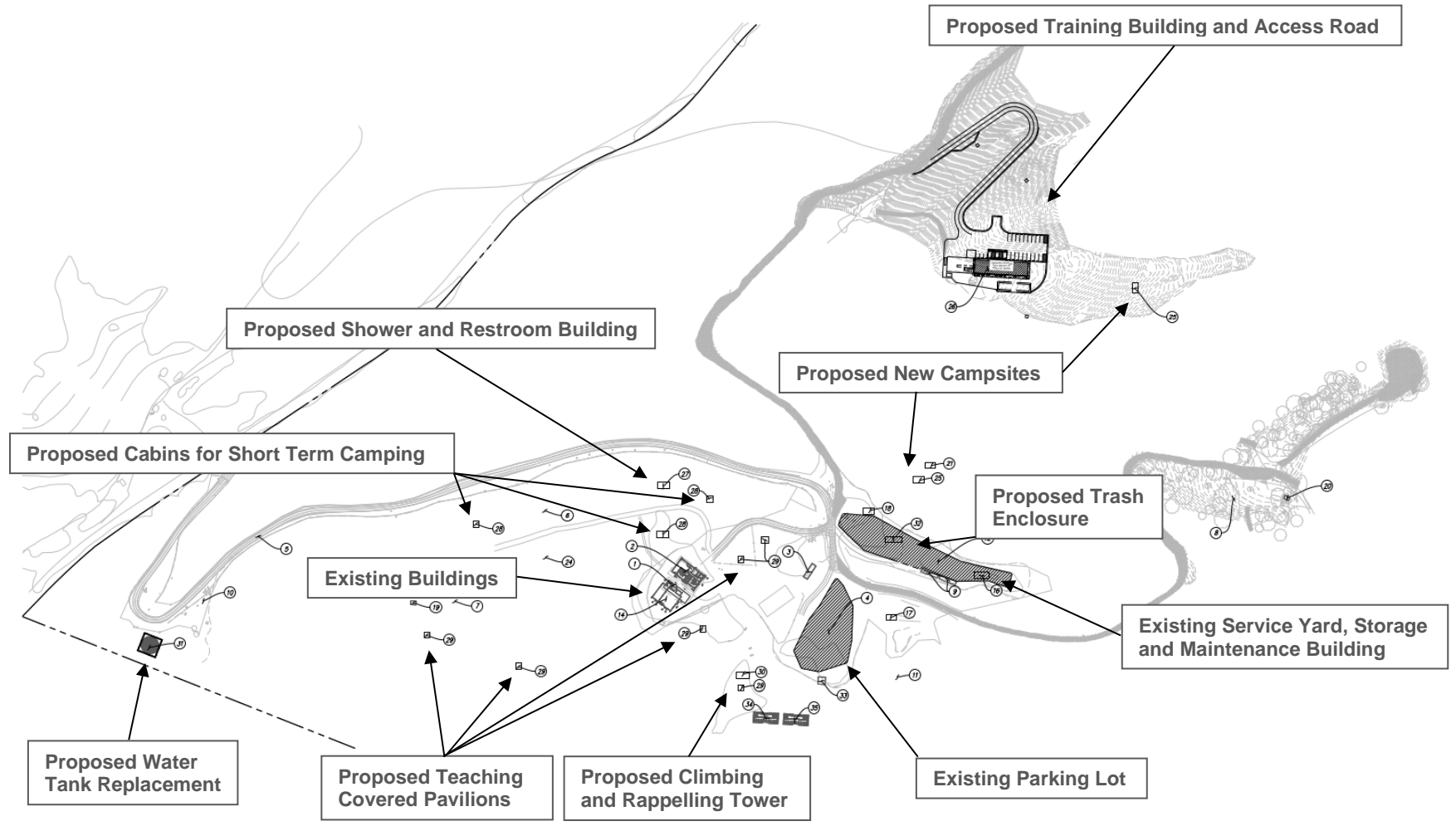


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**Project Site Plan**

**Figure 2**



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## II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS:

Parcel Size (acres): Master plan boundary area: approximately 444 acres  
Project site: approximately 113 acres

Existing Land Use: Open Space, Recreation (Boy Scouts Campground)

Vegetation: Largely consists of Douglas fir, redwood, tanoak, and Pacific madrone woodland

Slope in area affected by project:  0 - 30%  31 – 100%  N/A

Nearby Watercourse: Oil Creek

Distance To: Within one mile

### ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES AND CONSTRAINTS:

Water Supply Watershed:	Pescadero; Upper S. Lorenzo	Fault Zone:	Calaveras
Groundwater Recharge:	No	Scenic Corridor:	Hwy 9 Scenic Corridor
Timber or Mineral:	Yes - Timber, No - Mineral	Historic:	No
Agricultural Resource:	No	Archaeology:	Yes, portion
Biologically Sensitive Habitat:	Yes	Noise Constraint:	No
Fire Hazard:	Yes, portion	Electric Power Lines:	n/a
Floodplain:	n/a	Solar Access:	n/a
Erosion:	Potential	Solar Orientation:	n/a
Landslide:	Yes	Hazardous Materials:	n/a
Liquefaction:	Questionable and Unattributed Landslide Deposits present on-site	Other:	n/a

### SERVICES:

Fire Protection:	CSA 48 Santa Cruz County Fire, CALFIRE	Drainage District:	n/a
School District:	Lakeside Joint Union; and Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High	Project Access:	State Route 9
Sewage Disposal:	Sanitary District: CSA 12 Septic Maintenance	Water Supply:	Service Area: Camp Chesebrough (Private Well)

**PLANNING POLICIES:**

Zone District: TP (Timber Production)  
General Plan: O-R (Parks, Recreation  
and Open Space)

Special Designation: n/a

Urban Services Line:

Inside

Outside

Coastal Zone:

Inside

Outside

**ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING AND SURROUNDING LAND USES:**

**Natural Environment**

Santa Cruz County is uniquely situated along the northern end of Monterey Bay approximately 55 miles south of the City of San Francisco along the Central Coast. The Pacific Ocean and Monterey Bay to the west and south, the mountains inland, and the prime agricultural lands along both the northern and southern coast of the county create limitations on the style and amount of building that can take place. Simultaneously, these natural features create an environment that attracts both visitors and new residents every year. The natural landscape provides the basic features that set Santa Cruz apart from the surrounding counties and require specific accommodations to ensure building is done in a safe, responsible and environmentally respectful manner.

The California Coastal Zone affects nearly one third of the land in the urbanized area of the unincorporated County with special restrictions, regulations, and processing procedures required for development within that area. Steep hillsides require extensive review and engineering to ensure that slopes remain stable, buildings are safe, and water quality is not impacted by increased erosion. The farmland in Santa Cruz County is among the best in the world, and the agriculture industry is a primary economic generator for the County. Preserving this industry in the face of population growth requires that soils best suited to commercial agriculture remain active in crop production rather than converting to other land uses.

The natural setting of the project site consists of mixed-hardwood forest and steep hillsides. Existing development of the project site consists of a Boy Scouts of America campground. While portions of the site do not exceed 30 percent slopes (such as the existing campground buildings and the site of the proposed Valley Foundation Training Center), a majority of the topography of the project parcel exceeds 30 percent slopes and the proposed access road to the training center would cross a hillside that currently exceeds a 30 percent slope. Surrounding land uses consist of forested open space in all directions of the project site and State Route 9 to the east and south.

## **PROJECT BACKGROUND/METHODOLOGY:**

The site upon which the project site sits was originally donated to the Boy Scouts of America in 1977. In 1996, the original master plan (County Approval No. 96-0683) was prepared and approved by the Santa Cruz County (County) for which a mitigated negative declaration pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was prepared.

The master plan approved the following camp components for construction:

- 2,400 square foot multi-purpose building;
- 300 square foot camp office first aid center;
- 1,400 square foot storage and maintenance building;
- 200 square foot open air nature lodge;
- 1,600 square foot caretaker's residence;
- Four (4) camp site latrines;
- Four (4) 120 square foot three-sided sleeping structures; and
- Two (2) additional tent camp sites.

The master plan states that 25,550 person days of use per year was allowed for the site and 9,650 use days remain for contingencies and future growth.

The proposed project is within the master plan boundary and shall implement any mitigations or conditions identified in the master plan mitigated negative declaration, which are provided in this initial study where appropriate.

## **DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

The applicant has requested an amendment to the original 1996 master plan at an existing organized camp to include a multiple-use building for training purposes, a shower and restroom building, cabins for short term camping, covered teaching pavilions, a climbing and rappelling tower, a replacement water tank, and a recycling and trash enclosure on approximately 113 acres. No increase in the intensity of use/density of the campground or the total number of user days is proposed. No trees are proposed for removal; trees have already been removed from the work areas under a separate timber operations permit from CALFIRE.

Such improvements require an amendment to the original master plan approval. The following list of improvements and new structures are proposed to fall within the current master plan amendment:

Valley Foundation Training Center (3,200 square feet)

- Two classrooms, kitchen (serves 100), four restrooms, two showers;
- Adjacent 25-space parking lot, backup generator, and recycling/trash enclosure;
- Septic system and leech field;
- Backup generator; and
- Connection to existing utilities.

Shower and Restroom Building (1,000–1,800 square feet)

- 6–10 gender-neutral restroom/shower stalls, possible laundry.

Cabins for Short-Term Camping (250 square feet each)

- 8–12 wood cabins, near campsites and kitchen, for families and Cub Scouts.

Teaching Covered Pavilions (500 - 700 square feet each)

- 6–10 structures for all-weather program use, optional storage.

Climbing and Rappelling Tower (400 square feet)

- 40–50 feet tall, multiple climbing surfaces, near main parking.

Replacement Water Tanks (1,600 square feet)

- Four old tanks (combined capacity of approximately 20,000 gallons) replaced with a 120,000-gallon system for fire/potable water.
- Water line to connect new water tank to new training center building.

Recycling and Trash Enclosure (500 square feet)

- Animal-proof, central waste facility, meets new mandates.

Earthwork and grading activities of the project would result in 6,430 cubic yards of cut and 6,740 cubic yards of fill, resulting in 310 cubic yards of imported grading material. The project site plans (July 2024) can be found in Attachment 2 and the revised civil plans (October 2025) can be found in Attachment 3.

### III. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

#### A. AESTHETICS AND VISUAL RESOURCES

Except as provided in Public Resources Code section 21099, would the project:

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

**Discussion:** The project is located within a densely forested area and within an existing campground site. The project would not directly impact any public scenic vistas in the area. The project site itself is largely obstructed from any public viewpoints due to the dense vegetation in the area.

Scenic vistas in the project area include south-facing views of the Santa Cruz Mountains available from the Sempervirens Point Viewing Area, which is located approximately 50 feet south of the project site. Therefore, the project will not be visible from any public viewpoint and will have no impact on scenic vistas in this location.

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

**Discussion:** The project site is located adjacent to State Route 9, which is a County-designated scenic road and eligible for designation as a state scenic highway (County of Santa Cruz 2025c). However, the proposed project will not be visible from public viewpoints within State Route 9 due to topography, distance from the road, and dense vegetation. Therefore, impacts will be less than significant.

3. Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

**Discussion:** The existing visual setting of the area surrounding the project site is dense forest and slopes of the Santa Cruz Mountains. Public views of the site are minimal due to the dense vegetation.

The proposed project is designed and landscaped so as to fit into this setting as well as to blend with the existing campground facilities. As shown in the exterior elevations of the

proposed Valley Foundation Training Center, the structure includes earth-tone colors to blend in with the surrounding landscape (refer to Sheets A3.1P and A3.2P of the project plans dated July 2024, found in Attachment 2). The proposed project includes uses similar to the existing campground facilities at the site and would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site from a publicly accessible vantage point due to topography, distance, and dense vegetation.

- |   |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 4. 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

**Discussion:** The project would create an incremental increase in night lighting. However, this increase would be small, and would be similar in character to the lighting associated with the surrounding existing uses. Lighting would remain within the project site and would be shielded and directed downward to minimize glare and maintain nighttime views in compliance with Santa Cruz County Code (“SCCC”) Section 13.11.070(C)(4).

Compliance with the SCCC or applicable General Plan policies would ensure that impacts are less than significant.

## B. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

*In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state’s inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment Project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:*

- |  |                          |                          |                          |                                     |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. 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"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|

**Discussion:** The project site does not contain any lands designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency. The project site is identified as Other Land by the California Department of

Conservation (2025). In addition, the project does not contain Farmland of Local Importance. Therefore, no Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide or Farmland of Local Importance would be converted to a non-agricultural use. No impact would occur from project implementation.

- |   |                          |                          |                          |                                     |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2. <i>Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|

**Discussion:** The project site is zoned Timber Production (TP), which is not considered to be an agricultural zone. Additionally, the project site’s land is not under a Williamson Act contract (California Department of Conservation 2025d.). Therefore, the project does not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract. No impact is anticipated.

- |   |                          |                          |                          |                                     |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 3. <i>Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|

**Discussion:** Although the project site is zoned Timber Production (TP), the existing use at the site and the proposed uses as part of the project are permitted with a conditional use permit in this zoning district (SCCC - Table 13.10.372-1). The master plan site also has a timber management plan, which is used to increase timber production, reduce fire danger, and reforest the site (Santa Clara County Council Boy Scouts of America 1996, p. 12). An updated Non-Industrial Timber Management Plan (NTMP) was prepared by Big Creek Lumber Company and approved by CALFIRE in 2002. The NTMP serves as a planning document to manage Camp Chesebrough’s timber resources; goals of the NTMP include producing timber products from Camp Chesebrough’s forestlands, conducting forest management activities that complement and augment Camp Chesebrough’s Scouting activities, retaining natural resource values in Camp Chesebrough, and constructing and maintaining infrastructure to allow access to timber resources (Big Creek Lumber Company 2002). A submitted excerpt of the NTMP can be found in Attachment 4.

A Timber Production Zone Compatibility Analysis letter was prepared by Dennis McCorkle of DKM Forestry, a Registered Professional Forester, to determine the compatibility of the proposed project with timber harvesting activities (DKM Forestry 2024). DKM Forestry determined that the proposed project is compatible with periodic selective timber harvesting of the NTMP, an exemption to permit the conversion of timberland to prepare for the planned

development was approved, and harvesting operations were conducted in early 2024 under an existing CALFIRE permit. The letter can be found in Attachment 5. The project would not affect the resource or access to harvest the resource in the future.

Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timber Production.

- |   |                          |                          |                          |                                     |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 4. <i>Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|

**Discussion:** The project site is located within a densely forested area of the County. However, according to the biological evaluation letter report prepared by Live Oak Associates, Inc. (2024), trees have already been removed from the work areas under a separate timber operations permit from CALFIRE (p. 4).

The proposed uses would not result in the loss of the forest land or convert the land to non-forest use. Therefore, no impact is anticipated.

- |   |                          |                          |                          |                                     |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 5. <i>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?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|

**Discussion:** The project site and surrounding area does not contain any lands designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance or Farmland of Local Importance as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency (California Department of Conservation 2025). Therefore, no Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide, or Farmland of Local Importance would be converted to a non-agricultural use. As presented earlier, the project site contains forest land, but the proposed project would not result in the conversion of forest land to non-forest use. Therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

### C. AIR QUALITY

The significance criteria established by the Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD)<sup>1</sup> has been relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:

- |   |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

**Discussion:** The project would not conflict with or obstruct any long-range air quality plans of the MBARD. Because general construction activity related emissions (i.e., temporary sources) are accounted for in the emission inventories included in the air quality plans, impacts to air quality plan objectives are less than significant.

General estimated basin-wide construction-related emissions are included in the MBARD emission inventory (which, in part, form the basis for the air quality plans cited below) and are not expected to prevent long-term attainment or maintenance of the particulate matter standard within the North Central Coast Air Basin (NCCAB). Therefore, temporary construction impacts related to air quality plans for this pollutant from the project would be less than significant, and no mitigation would be required, since they are presently estimated and accounted for in the District’s emission inventory, as described below. No stationary sources would be constructed that would be long-term permanent sources of emissions.

The project would potentially result in new long-term operational emissions from the use of natural gas (energy source emissions), and consumer products, architectural coatings, and landscape maintenance equipment (area source emissions). The project would not result in a change in operational transportation, and therefore would not result in a change in mobile-source emissions. Emissions associated with buildout of the project is not expected to exceed any applicable MBARD thresholds. No stationary sources would be constructed that would be long-term permanent sources of emissions. Therefore, impacts to regional air quality as a result of long-term operation of the project would be less than significant.

Santa Cruz County is located within the NCCAB. The NCCAB does not meet the state standard for fine particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>). Therefore, the regional pollutant of concern that would be emitted by the project is PM<sub>10</sub>.

PM<sub>10</sub> is the major pollutant of concern for the NCCAB. In the NCCAB, highest particulate levels and most frequent violations occur in the coastal corridor. In this area, fugitive dust from various geological and man-made sources combines to exceed the standard. The majority of NCCAB exceedances occur at coastal sites, where sea salt is often the main factor causing exceedance. In 2005 daily emissions of PM<sub>10</sub> were estimated at 102 tons per day. Of this, entrained road dust represented 35 percent of all PM<sub>10</sub> emission, windblown dust 20 percent,

<sup>1</sup> Formerly known as the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District (MBUAPCD).

agricultural tilling operations 15 percent, waste burning 17 percent, construction 4 percent, and mobile sources, industrial processes, and other sources made up 9 percent (MBUAPCD, 2008).

Emissions from construction activities represent temporary impacts that are typically short in duration, depending on the size, phasing, and type of project. Air quality impacts can nevertheless be acute during construction periods, resulting in significant localized impacts to air quality. Table 1 summarizes the threshold of significance for construction activities.

Table 1: Construction Activity with Potentially Significant Impacts from Pollutant PM <sub>10</sub>	
Activity	Potential Threshold*
Construction site with minimal earthmoving	8.1 acres per day
Construction site with earthmoving (grading, excavation)	2.2 acres per day
<p>*Based on Midwest Research Institute, <u>Improvement of Specific Emission Factors</u> (1995). Assumes 21.75 working weekdays per month and daily watering of site.</p> <p>Note: Construction projects below the screening level thresholds shown above are assumed to be below the <b>82 lb/day threshold of significance</b>, while projects with activity levels higher than those above may have a significant impact on air quality. Additional mitigation and analysis of the project impact may be necessary for those construction activities.</p> <p>Source: Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District, 2008.</p>	

Given the no change in the amount of traffic that would be generated by the project, there is no indication that new emissions of reactive organic gases or nitrogen oxides would exceed MBARD thresholds for these pollutants and, therefore, there would not be a significant contribution to an existing air quality violation.

Project construction would be nominal and may result in a short term, localized decrease in air quality due to generation of PM<sub>10</sub>. However, standard dust control best management practices (BMPs), such as periodic watering, would be implemented during construction to avoid significant air quality impacts from the generation of PM<sub>10</sub>.

**Construction Impacts.** As required by the MBARD, construction activities (e.g., excavation, grading, on-site vehicles) which directly generate 82 pounds per day or more of PM<sub>10</sub> would have a significant impact on local air quality when they are located nearby and upwind of sensitive receptors such as campground users in the vicinity of the project site. Construction projects below the screening level thresholds shown in Table 1 are assumed to be below the 82 lb/day threshold of significance, while projects with activity levels higher than those thresholds may have a significant impact on air quality. The proposed project would require minimal grading. Although the project would produce PM<sub>10</sub>, it would be far below the 82 pounds per day threshold. This would result in less than significant impacts on air quality from the generation of PM<sub>10</sub>.

Although not a mitigation measure per se (i.e., required by law), California ultralow sulfur diesel fuel with a maximum sulfur content of 15 ppm by weight will be used in all diesel-powered equipment, which minimizes sulfur dioxide and particulate matter.

The BMPs identified below will be implemented during all site excavation and grading.

**Operation.** The project will not result in a change in the operational transportation evaluated for the original master plan. The kitchen proposed inside of the training center building and the shower stalls proposed inside the shower and restroom building may potentially use natural gas; however, air quality impacts would be less than significant.

### Recommended Measures

- No mitigation is required. However, MBARD recommends the use of the following BMPs for the control of short-term construction generated emissions: Water all active construction areas at least twice daily as necessary and indicated by soil and air conditions.
- Prohibit all grading during periods of high wind (over 15 miles per hour).
- Apply chemical soil stabilizers on inactive construction areas (disturbed lands within construction projects that are unused for at least four consecutive days)
- Apply non-toxic binders (e.g., latex acrylic copolymer) to exposed areas after cut and fill operations and hydroseed areas.
- Haul trucks shall maintain at least 2' 0" freeboard.
- Cover all trucks hauling soil, sand, and other loose materials.
- Plant tree windbreaks on the windward perimeter of construction projects if adjacent to open land.
- Plant vegetative ground cover in disturbed areas as quickly as possible.
- Cover inactive storage piles.
- Install wheel washers at the entrance to construction sites for all existing trucks.
- Pave all roads on construction sites.
- Sweep streets, if visible soil material is carried out from the construction site.
- Post a publicly visible sign which specifies the telephone number and person to contact regarding dust complaints. This person shall respond to complaints and corrective action within 48 hours. The phone number of the Monterey Bay Air Resources District shall be visible to ensure compliance with Rule 402 (Nuisance),
- Limit the area under construction at any one time.

Implementation of the above recommended BMPs for the control of construction-related emissions would further reduce construction-related particulate emissions. These measures are not required by MBARD or as mitigation measures, as the impact would be less than significant without mitigation. These types of measures are commonly included as conditions of approval associated with development permits approved by the County.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
--------------------------------	--	------------------------------	-----------

- |  |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2. <i>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?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

**Discussion:** The primary pollutant of concern for the NCCAB is PM<sub>10</sub>, as it is the pollutant for which the district is in nonattainment. Project construction would have a limited and temporary potential to contribute to existing violations of California air quality standards for PM<sub>10</sub> primarily through fugitive dust. The criteria for assessing cumulative impacts on localized air quality are the same as those for assessing individual project impacts. Projects that do not exceed MBARD’s construction or operational thresholds and are consistent with the Air Quality Management Plan would not have cumulatively considerable impacts on regional air quality (MBUAPCD, 2008). Because the project would not exceed MBARD’s thresholds and is consistent with the Air Quality Management Plan, there would not be cumulative impacts on regional air quality.

- |   |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 3. <i>Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

**Discussion:** Sensitive receptors near the project include campground users within and around the project site.

Diesel exhaust contains substances (diesel particulate matter [DPM], toxic air contaminants [TACs], mobile source air toxics [MSATs]) that are suspected carcinogens, along with pulmonary irritants and hazardous compounds, which may affect sensitive receptors such as young children, senior citizens, or those susceptible to respiratory disease. Where construction activity occurs in proximity to long-term sensitive receptors, a potential could exist for unhealthful exposure of those receptors to diesel exhaust, including residential receptors. Emissions from construction activities represent temporary impacts that are typically short in duration. Impacts to sensitive receptors would be less than significant.

**Impacts.** The project is located in the Chesebrough Scout Reservation in the Santa Cruz Mountains and sensitive receptors would be within and adjacent to the project area. Since construction is anticipated to occur over a nominal period, the sensitive receptors would be affected for a short, temporary duration and would not be greater than the 70-year maximum exposed individual criteria used for assessing public health risk due to emissions of certain air pollutants (MBUAPCD 2008).

Due to the intermittent and short-term temporary nature of construction activities, emissions of DPM, TACs, or MSATs would not be sufficient to pose a significant risk to sensitive receptors from construction equipment operations during the course of the project.

The project would not be expected to expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. Impacts would be less than significant.

- |  |                          |                          |                          |                                     |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 4. <i>Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|

**Discussion:** Land uses typically producing objectionable odors include agricultural uses, wastewater treatment plants, food processing plants, chemical plants, composting, refineries, landfills, dairies, and fiberglass molding. The proposed project does not include any uses that would be associated with objectionable odors. Odor emissions from the proposed project would be limited to odors associated with vehicle and engine exhaust and idling from cars entering, parking, and exiting the campground. The project does not include any known sources of objectionable odors associated with the long-term operations phase.

During construction activities, only short-term, temporary odors from vehicle exhaust and construction equipment engines would occur. California ultralow sulfur diesel fuel with a maximum sulfur content of 15 ppm by weight would be used in all diesel-powered equipment, which minimizes emissions of sulfurous gases (sulfur dioxide, hydrogen sulfide, carbon disulfide, and carbonyl sulfide). As the project site is in a mountainous area that experiences coastal breezes off of the Pacific Ocean and inland winds in the Santa Cruz Mountains, construction-related odors would disperse and dissipate and would not cause substantial odors at the closest sensitive receptors within the project site. Construction-related odors would be short-term and would cease upon completion. Therefore, no objectionable odors are anticipated from construction activities associated with the project.

The project would not create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people; therefore, the project is not expected to result in significant impacts related to objectionable odors during construction or operation.

#### D. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

*Would the project:*

- |  |                          |                                     |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. <i>Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|

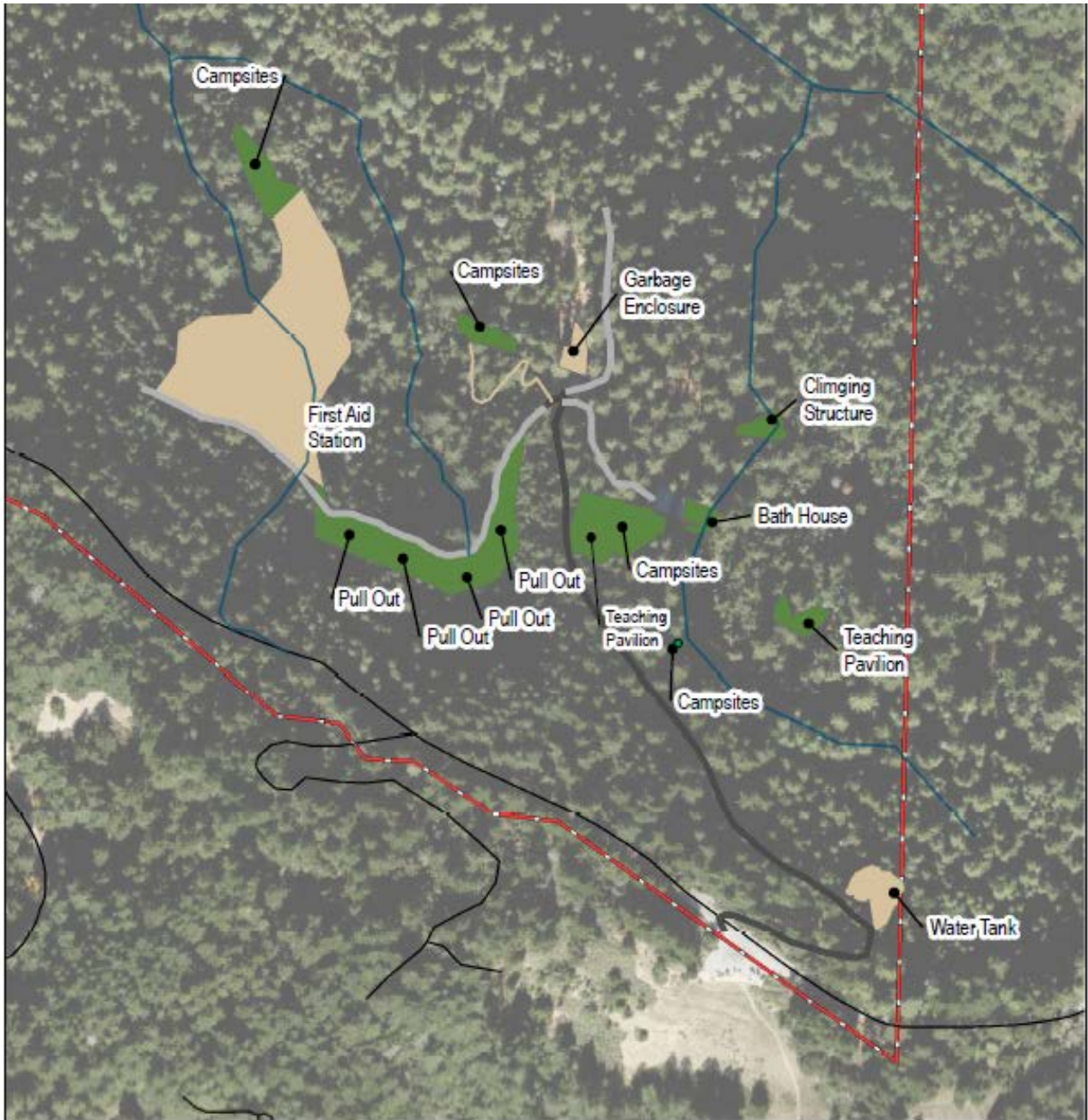
**Discussion:** The project site is located in an area of biotic concern. A biotic report was prepared for portions of this project by Live Oak Associates, Inc., dated April 19, 2024 (“biotic

report,” Attachment 6). This report has been accepted by County Environmental Planning staff without formal Biotic Report Review; the acceptance letter from Environmental Planning is included as Attachment 7.

A reconnaissance-level biological field survey of the project areas not included in the biotic report was conducted by EMC Planning Group biologist Rose Ashbach, MS, on September 18, 2025, to document existing plant communities/wildlife habitats and assess the suitability of the site to support special-status species. Biological resources were documented in field notes, including plant and wildlife species observed, dominant plant communities, wildlife habitat quality, disturbance levels, and aquatic resources.

Prior to conducting the survey, Ms. Ashbach reviewed the biotic report, site plans, aerial photographs, natural resource database mapping and reports, and other relevant scientific literature. This included searching the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) *Information for Planning and Consultation* database (USFWS 2025a), California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) *California Natural Diversity Database* (CDFW 2025a, CDFW 2025b), and California Native Plant Society (CNPS) *Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants* (CNPS 2025a) to identify special-status plants, wildlife, and habitats known to occur in the vicinity of the project site. A review of the USFWS *National Wetlands Inventory* (NWI) database was also conducted to identify jurisdictional aquatic features (wetlands, drainages, and/or riparian areas) on or adjacent to the project site (USFWS 2025b). Habitat observations are included in Figure 3, Habitat Map.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
--------------------------------	--	------------------------------	-----------



Source: ESRI 2025,  
Santa Cruz County GIS 2025



Figure 3

### Habitat Map



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The biotic report determined that habitat for nesting raptors and migratory birds, San Francisco dusky-footed woodrat (*Neotoma fuscipes annectens*), and Santa Cruz black salamander (*Aneides niger*) occurs on the project site and recommends avoidance and minimization measures for protection of these species and/or their habitat. Based on the reconnaissance-level survey of the project areas not included in the biotic report, measures to address potential habitat for special-status plant species and impacts as a result of increased artificial lighting are also included. An overview of these species and potential project related impacts is included below. The avoidance and minimization measures recommended in the biotic report have been incorporated into the mitigation measures below along with additional recommendations as a result of the September 2025 reconnaissance-level biological field survey.

### Migratory Bird Treaty Act

Migratory birds are protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918 (16 U.S.C. 703-711). The MBTA makes it unlawful to take, possess, buy, sell, purchase, or barter any migratory bird listed in 50 CFR Part 10 including feathers or other parts, nests, eggs, or products, except as allowed by implementing regulations (50 CFR 21). All migratory bird species are protected by the MBTA. Any disturbance that causes direct injury, death, nest abandonment, or forced fledging of migratory birds, is restricted under the MBTA. Any removal of active nests during the breeding season or any disturbance that results in the abandonment of nestlings is considered a “take” of the species under federal law.

### Impacts

The project area provides potential nesting habitat for birds of prey and birds listed by the MBTA. No nests or evidence of past nests were observed in the project area during the general biological surveys conducted on April 19, 2024 and September 18, 2025. However, nests could become established in the vegetation to be removed before construction begins. As a result, implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce impacts to below a level of significance.

### Mitigation Measure

BIO-1: Nesting Migratory Birds and Raptors. Under the MBTA, nests that contain eggs or unfledged young are not to be disturbed during the breeding season. The nesting season for migratory birds and birds of prey is generally 1 February through 31 August. Implementation of the following measures will avoid potential impacts.

- If construction begins outside the 1 February to 31 August breeding season, there will be no need to conduct a preconstruction survey for active nests.
- If construction is scheduled to begin between 1 February and 31 August then a qualified biologist shall conduct a preconstruction survey for active nests. The survey will include a 250-foot radius from the work area for nesting birds of prey

and a 50-foot radius from the work area for other nesting MBTA protected birds. The survey will be conducted from publicly accessible areas within one two weeks prior to construction. If no active nest of a bird of prey or MBTA bird is found, then no further mitigation measures are necessary.

- If an active nest of a bird of prey or MBTA bird is found, then the biologist shall determine a buffer suitable to protect the nest until fledging. The size of suitable buffers depends on the species of bird, the location of the nest relative to the project, project activities during the time the nest is active, and other project specific conditions.
- No construction activity shall be allowed in the buffer until the biologist determines that the nest is no longer active, or unless monitoring determines that a smaller buffer will protect the active nest. The buffer may be reduced if the biologist monitors the construction activities and determines that no disturbance to the active nest is occurring.
- If an active nest is identified in or adjacent to the construction zone after construction has started, the above measures will be implemented to ensure construction is not causing disturbance to the nest.

### Special Status Wildlife Species

The following special-status species have been documented in the vicinity and may potentially occur within or adjacent to the project area where suitable habitat is present.

#### *San Francisco Dusky-Footed Woodrat*

San Francisco dusky-footed woodrat is state listed Species of Special Concern and is a local subspecies of the broadly distributed dusky-footed woodrat that is found on the San Francisco Peninsula south to the southernmost edge of Santa Cruz County and inland to the East Bay hills. They typically inhabit oak and riparian woodlands with a well-developed understory as well as chaparral and scrub habitats, where their stick nests are often visible. The nests, often called ‘houses,’ may be as much as six feet tall and contain multiple chambers used for sleeping and food storage. Suitable habitat for San Francisco dusky-footed woodrats is present throughout the second growth Doug fir and mixed evergreen forest throughout the site. Although San Francisco dusky-footed woodrat nests were not observed within the work areas or immediately adjacent to the work areas, this species may occur in the vicinity of the work areas. Nests could also become established in the vegetation to be removed before construction begins. As a result, implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce impacts to below a level of significance.

### Mitigation Measure

BIO-2: San Francisco Dusky-Footed Woodrat. Within one month prior to the onset of construction activities, a qualified biologist should conduct a preconstruction survey for woodrat houses, and clearly flag all houses within the construction impact area and immediate surroundings. Woodrat houses should be avoided and fenced to prohibit encroachment. If avoidance of woodrat houses is not possible, a qualified biologist should develop and implement a San Francisco dusky-footed woodrat relocation plan, in coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the Santa Cruz County Planning Department, possibly including trapping and house dismantling. Once complete, a brief report documenting preconstruction survey, fencing, trapping, relocation, and/or house relocation activities should be prepared and submitted to CDFW and the Santa Cruz County Planning Department prior to the start of ground disturbance.

#### *Santa Cruz Black Salamander*

The Santa Cruz black salamander is listed as a California species of special concern. This subspecies is endemic the Santa Cruz Mountains within San Mateo, Santa Cruz, and western Santa Clara counties.

Foraging and nonbreeding habitat consists of moist, shaded environments, often in mixed evergreen and coniferous forests, riparian corridors, and coastal woodlands. Individuals are frequently found near streams, seeps, and wet rocky areas, where they shelter under logs, rocks, talus, leaf litter, and within damp soils. As a lungless salamander, Santa Cruz black salamander requires cool, humid microhabitats to maintain cutaneous respiration. Foraging occurs primarily at night when humidity is high, with individuals feeding on small invertebrates.

Although Santa Cruz black salamanders were not observed within the work areas or immediately adjacent to the work areas, this species may occur in the vicinity of the work areas. As a result, implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce impacts to below a level of significance.

### Mitigation Measure

BIO-3: Santa Cruz Black Salamander. A qualified biologist will conduct a preconstruction survey immediately prior to wildlife exclusion fencing (such as silt fence) installation around the perimeter of the site. Should this species be observed within the work areas, it should be allowed to leave on its own. Additionally, all holes should be capped at the end of each workday and trenches should be ramped at the end of each workday to prevent entrapment of Santa Cruz black salamander.

## Special Status Plants

Special-status plant species were evaluated for their potential to occur within the project area. Suitable mixed Douglas-fir woodland understory was observed in several locations, providing potential habitat to support Dudley's lousewort (*Pedicularis dudleyi*) and/or woodland woolly threads (*Monolopia gracilens*) (Attachment 8, Special-Status Plants within the Project Vicinity).

Dudley's lousewort is a California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) 1B.2 perennial herb endemic to California. It occurs in coastal redwood forests, chaparral, and riparian habitats, with a preference for forests characterized by a closed canopy and sparse understory. This species often benefits from disturbance and is frequently found along roadcuts and trail banks.

Woodland woolly threads is a CRPR 1B.2 annual herb known from the San Francisco Bay Area and regions to the south. It occupies a variety of habitats, including grasslands, chaparral, and woodlands. Although it can occur on serpentine soils, it is not restricted to them.

Although special-status plants were not observed within the work areas or immediately adjacent to the work areas during the site reconnaissance surveys, surveys did not occur during the appropriate blooming periods to identify special-status plants. If present, impacts to special-status plant species are considered significant. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce impacts to below a level of significance.

### Mitigation Measure

BIO-4: Focused Plant Surveys. During the peak blooming periods for Dudley's lousewort and woodland woolly threads, and prior to ground disturbance, a biologist qualified in Santa Cruz Mountain botany shall conduct one focused survey in all project areas that have not been previously graded (including construction staging areas) (Figure 3. Habitat Map). Surveys will be conducted in accordance with current CDFW and CNPS rare plant survey protocols (CDFW 2018 and CNPS 2001). The surveys will occur during the peak blooming period for each species to determine its presence or absence. Based on the known blooming periods of these special-status plant species, one surveys in May would be necessary to adequately survey the project site.

A report documenting the results of the survey will be prepared and, if appropriate, propose measures for avoiding, minimizing, and/or mitigating for possible impacts to special-status plants prior to and during construction. If the focused survey concludes species are not present within the project site, or if it is present but impacts can be completely avoided, then no further measures would be required. The report will be submitted to the Santa Cruz County Planning Department.

- |  |                          |                                     |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2. Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations (e.g., wetland, native grassland, special forests, intertidal zone, etc.) or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|

**Discussion:** Sensitive natural communities are communities with limited distribution statewide, within a county, or within a region, and are often vulnerable to environmental effects of development. CDFW’s *List of California Terrestrial Natural Communities* identifies which communities are considered sensitive based on the best available scientific information (CDFW 2025c).

The vegetation community within the project area can be described as Douglas fir, tanoak, and madrone forest (Douglas fir forest), characterized by either greater than 50 percent Douglas fir relative cover in the tree canopy, or greater than 30 percent Douglas fir relative cover with associated madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*), coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), canyon live oak (*Q. chrysolepis*), tanoak (*Notholithocarpus densiflorus*), or California bay (*Umbellularia californica*) (CDFW 2025c). This Douglas fir, tanoak, madrone forest is considered a sensitive natural community.

Although sensitive natural communities were not observed within the proposed training facility and water tank work areas (Live Oak 2024), additional areas were evaluated during a site assessment conducted by EMC Planning Group on September 18, 2025. This survey confirmed the presence of Douglas fir forest within the additional project areas. The National Wetlands Inventory (USFWS 2025) also identifies riverine habitat intersecting the development areas (Figure 3, Habitat Map); however, no riparian or wetland habitats were observed within the project areas during the EMC Planning Group September 2025 reconnaissance-level biological field survey.

The following mitigation measure would reduce impacts to sensitive natural communities to a less than significant level:

**Mitigation Measure**

BIO-5: Prior to the start of construction, the project applicant shall retain a qualified biologist to delineate the boundaries of sensitive natural communities within and adjacent to the project area. The biologist shall flag and map these areas in the field. Protective fencing (e.g., high-visibility construction fencing) shall be installed along the flagged boundaries to establish environmentally sensitive area (ESA) buffers. No ground disturbance, grading, or equipment staging shall occur within the fenced ESA.

If avoidance of sensitive natural communities is not feasible, the applicant shall prepare and implement a restoration and/or compensatory mitigation plan, in consultation with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), to ensure no net loss of sensitive natural community functions or values. The plan may include measures such as replanting with locally appropriate native species, habitat restoration, or off-site conservation at a minimum 1:1 ratio.

Additionally, all project areas are located within or adjacent to undeveloped, mixed Douglas fir forest with abundant wildlife habitat. Wildlife could be adversely affected by a new or additional sources of light that is not adequately deflected or minimized. The following mitigation measure will be added to the project, such that any potential impact will be reduced to a less than significant level:

**Mitigation Measure**

BIO-6: To minimize impacts on sensitive wildlife species, all project-related lighting shall be designed and installed to avoid spillover into adjacent natural habitats. The following measures will be implemented:

- Use fully shielded, downward-directed fixtures to prevent light from dispersing into surrounding habitat areas.
- Employ the minimum intensity and duration necessary for safety and security. Motion-sensor or timed lighting will be used where feasible.
- Avoid or minimize the use of blue-rich white light (short wavelengths), instead using warm-spectrum lighting (e.g., amber or yellow hues < 3,000 Kelvin) to reduce ecological disruption.
- Prohibit nighttime lighting of construction staging areas when not in active use.
- No lighting shall be directed toward intact habitats adjacent to the project area.
- Temporary construction lighting shall be removed immediately following completion of work.

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

**Discussion:** The National Wetlands Inventory and the County of Santa Cruz (USFWS 2025 & County of Santa Cruz 2025) identify riverine habitat intersecting the development areas. However, no riverine features were observed within the project areas during the

reconnaissance-level biological field survey conducted by an EMC Planning Group biologist on September 18, 2025. Similarly, Live Oak did not identify any federally protected wetlands on or adjacent to the project site during their 2024 site assessment.

Two proposed campsites, one north of the proposed training facility and the second west of the proposed garbage enclosure, are located above the top of bank of potential drainage features. Therefore, project implementation would not result in impacts to federally protected wetlands or other waters of the United States.

The project will maintain adequate setbacks from the riparian area as a standard condition of approval and comply with applicable County codes and standards. However, implementation of the following mitigation measure will further ensure that grading activities avoid areas below the top of bank and prevent potential impacts to Waters of the State.

**Mitigation Measure**

BIO-7: A qualified biologist will delineate and flag the top of bank prior to construction. Protective construction fencing will be installed along the top of bank to ensure that grading and ground-disturbing activities remain above this area.

- |   |                          |                                     |                          |                          |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 4. <i>Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|

**Discussion:** The project would not involve activities that interfere with the movement or migration of fish or wildlife, nor would it impede the use of a known wildlife nursery site. Although the site is located within an essential connectivity area (USFWS 2025), proposed development would not create barriers and is not anticipated to restrict wildlife migration. Project lighting, however, could result in localized effects on wildlife movement. Therefore, implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-6 (Lighting) would minimize potential impacts associated with increased artificial lighting to a less-than-significant level.

- |   |                          |                                     |                          |                          |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 5. <i>Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources (such as the Sensitive Habitat Ordinance, Riparian and Wetland Protection Ordinance, and the Significant Tree Protection Ordinance)?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|

**Discussion:** The County of Santa Cruz regulates development within riparian corridors. Although the National Wetlands Inventory and Santa Cruz County GIS identify aquatic features within and adjacent to project areas (USFWS 2025b, Santa Cruz County 2025c), no

aquatic resources were observed within the project boundaries during the reconnaissance-level biological field survey in September 2025 nor the site assessment conducted for the biotic report. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-7, mentioned previously, will ensure that all project activities remain outside of the top of bank of drainage corridors and will avoid potential impacts to Waters of the State.

The project will comply with local policies and ordinances for the protection of special-status species and protected habitats as a standard condition of approval and will implement Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-7, presented previously. Impacts would be less than significant.

- |   |                          |                          |                          |                                     |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 6. <i>Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|

**Discussion:** The project would not conflict with the provisions of any adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan (CDFW 2025). Therefore, no impact would occur.

## E. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

- |  |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. <i>Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

**Discussion:** Albion Environmental (“Albion”) prepared a cultural resources assessment letter report for the proposed project; County staff reviewed the report and submitted a letter to the applicant on October 23, 2025 accepting the report. This County letter can be found in Attachment 9.

The existing structures on the property are not designated as a historic resource on any federal, state or local inventory (Albion 2024). A redwood log bridge over Oil Creek located on the project site was listed as a historic resource in the *Confidential Archaeological Addendum For Timber Operations on Non-Federal Lands in California* (Travis Bargsten 2002), prepared for the original master plan that includes timber operations. However, this document concluded that because the bridge could be avoided and not used by timber operations in the area, no evaluation of significance assessment was determined to be needed and was not provided. Old segments of a historic road with the trinomial of CA-SCR-329H were also listed, but were not assessed for significance.

An archival database search was conducted through the Northwest Information Center (NWIC) of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) affiliated with the State of California Office of Historic Preservation in Sacramento. The NWIC was provided with a location map of the project area and a request of the historic resources within one-quarter mile radius of the project site boundary. One historic resource was listed within the project area: P-44-000401/CA-SCR-329H. The resource consists of parts of State Route 9 between mile-marker 2.4 and 4.7, and 17.6 to 27.1 (JRP 1999). The road is on a portion of the outer perimeter of the project area and should not be impacted by any ground disturbance activities related to the proposed project.

There are five historic resources listed as being within one-quarter mile of, and outside, the project area: P-41-000492; P-41-000494; P-41-002152; P-43-002456; and P-44-000298. These are parts of old State Route 9, tree graffiti isolate, a shingle mill, and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Saratoga Summit Forest Fire Station. Due to their distance from the project site, these resources will not be impacted by the proposed project.

Unknown buried and significant historic resources could be present. Such resources, if present, could be damaged or destroyed by ground-disturbing construction activities associated with the project. This would be a significant impact. Compliance with the SCCC Chapter 16.40, Native American Cultural Sites, which establishes regulations for the protection, enhancement, and perpetuation of Native American cultural sites in order to promote the public welfare, and to implement the stated policies of the County’s General Plan would ensure that potential impacts would be less than significant.

- |  |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

**Discussion:** According to the *Confidential Archaeological Addendum For Timber Operations on Non-Federal Lands in California*, evidence of pre-contact cultural resources is documented in the project area. This has also been verified by a current search of the NWIC in September 2025 (No. 25-0208).

The NWIC revealed the archaeological resource P-44-000-570/CA-SCR-354, also known as the Shingle Mill Point Archaeological Site, which consists of a lithic scatter and midden deposit. It is located on a flat ridge top within 400 feet of a perennial spring at the Shingle Mill Campground located on the project site. The archaeological site has been disturbed and was limited to an approximate ten-foot perimeter at the time it was reported.

Albion Environmental (2024) assessed the nine (9) main portions of the property and did not locate any surface cultural resources. Pursuant to section 16.40.040 of the SCCC, if archaeological resources are uncovered during construction, the responsible persons shall

immediately cease and desist from all further site excavation and comply with the notification procedures given in Chapter 16.40. In compliance with SCCC Section 16.40.035, if an archaeological resource is found during construction activities, ground disturbance shall not come within 50 feet of the resource.

Compliance with the SCCC would ensure that potential impacts would be less than significant.

- |  |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 3. <i>Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

**Discussion:** Impacts are expected to be less than significant. However, pursuant to section 16.40.040 of the SCCC, and California Health and Safety Code sections 7050.5-7054, if at any time during site preparation, excavation, or other ground disturbance associated with this project, human remains are discovered, the responsible persons shall immediately cease and desist from all further site excavation and notify the Sheriff-Coroner and the Planning Director. If the coroner determines that the remains are not of recent origin, a full archaeological report shall be prepared, and representatives of local Native American Indian groups shall be contacted. If it is determined that the remains are Native American, the Native American Heritage Commission will be notified as required by law. The Commission will designate a Most Likely Descendant who will be authorized to provide recommendations for management of the Native American human remains. Pursuant to Public Resources Code section 5097, the descendants shall complete their inspection and make recommendations or preferences for treatment within 48 hours of being granted access to the site. Disturbance shall not resume until the significance of the resource is determined and appropriate mitigations to preserve the resource on the site are established.

## F. ENERGY

*Would the project:*

- |  |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. <i>Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

**Discussion:** The project, like all development, would be responsible for an incremental increase in the consumption of energy resources due to on-site construction equipment during construction and minimal grading activities. All project construction equipment would be required to comply with the California Air Resources Board (CARB) emissions requirements for construction equipment, which includes measures to reduce fuel-consumption, such as imposing limits on idling and requiring older engines and equipment

to be retired, replaced, or repowered. In addition, the project would comply with General Plan policies BE-4.2.2, and 6.5.9b, which requires all new development to be sited and designed to minimize site disturbance and grading. As a result, impacts associated with the small temporary increase in consumption of fuel during construction are expected to be less than significant.

The project involves an amendment to the original master plan at an existing organized camp to construct a multiple-use building for training purposes, shower and restroom building, cabins for short term camping, covered teaching pavilions, climbing and rappelling tower, replacement water tank, and a recycling and trash enclosure. Less than significant impacts are expected from project implementation. Therefore, the project will not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources.

In addition, the County has strategies to help reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. These strategies included in the *County of Santa Cruz Climate Action Strategy* (County of Santa Cruz, 2013) are outlined below.

**Strategies for the Reduction of Energy Use and GHG Emissions**

- Develop a Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) Program, if feasible.<sup>2</sup>
- Increase energy efficiency in new and existing buildings and facilities.
- Enhance and expand the Green Business Program.
- Increase local renewable energy generation.
- Public education about climate change and impacts of individual actions.
- Continue to improve the Green Building Program by exceeding the minimum standards of the state green building code (Cal Green).
- Form partnerships and cooperative agreements among local governments, educational institutions, nongovernmental organizations, and private businesses as a cost-effective way to facilitate mitigation and adaptation.
- Reduce energy use for water supply through water conservation strategies.

**Strategies for the Reduction of Energy Consumption and GHG Emissions from Transportation**

- Reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) through County and regional long-range planning efforts.
- Increase bicycle ridership and walking through incentive programs and investment in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and safety programs.

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<sup>2</sup> Central Coast Community Energy (3CE) (formerly Monterey Bay Community Power (MBCP)) was formed in 2017 to provide carbon-free electricity. All Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) customers in unincorporated Santa Cruz County were automatically enrolled in 3CE in 2018.

- Provide infrastructure to support zero and low emissions vehicles (plug in, hybrid plug-in vehicles).
- Increase employee use of alternative commute modes: bus transit, walking, bicycling, carpooling, etc.
- Increase the number of electric and alternative fuels vehicles in the County fleet.

Therefore, the project will not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources. Impacts are expected to be less than significant.

- |  |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2. <i>Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

**Discussion:** AMBAG’s 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS) recommends policies that achieve statewide goals established by CARB, the California Transportation Plan 2040, and other transportation-related policies and state senate bills. The SCS element of the MTP targets transportation-related greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in particular, which can also serve to address energy use by coordinating land use and transportation planning decisions to create a more energy efficient transportation system.

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC) prepares a County-specific regional transportation plan (RTP) in conformance with the latest AMBAG MTP/SCS. The 2040 RTP establishes targets to implement statewide policies at the local level, such as reducing vehicle miles traveled and improving speed consistency to reduce fuel consumption.

In 2013, Santa Cruz County adopted a Climate Action Strategy (CAS) focused on reducing the emission of greenhouse gases, which is dependent on increasing energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy. The strategy intends to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions by implementing a number of measures such as reducing vehicle miles traveled through County and regional long-range planning efforts, increasing energy efficiency in new and existing buildings and facilities, increasing local renewable energy generation, improving the Green Building Program by exceeding minimum state standards, reducing energy use for water supply through water conservation strategies, and providing infrastructure to support zero and low emission vehicles that reduce gasoline and diesel consumption, such as plug in electric and hybrid plug in vehicles.

In addition, the Santa Cruz County General Plan has historically placed a priority on “smart growth” by focusing growth in the urban areas through the creation and maintenance of an urban services line. Objective BE-1.1 (Urban Growth and Rural Preservation) encourages new development within urban areas at a growth rate compatible with the capacity of existing public facilities and services, limits growth, supports compact development, and helps reduce sprawl. The Access and Mobility Element of the General Plan further establishes a more efficient transportation system through goals that promote the wise use of energy resources, reducing vehicle miles traveled, and transit and active transportation options.

Energy efficiency is a major priority throughout the County’s General Plan. Goal H-5 of the Housing Element includes policies that require new residential projects to comply with State and County codes and guidelines for energy-efficient buildings, compact communities that reduce vehicle miles traveled and vehicle emissions, and encouraging alternative modes of transportation. Section 4.5 (Energy Conservation) of the Housing Element also describes opportunities for energy conservation, and climate actions pertaining to housing, building codes, and County policy. Further, the County adopted the 2022 Climate Action and Adaptation Plan which includes strategies and objectives for energy efficiency, electrification, transportation, and climate change in the County.

The project will be consistent with the AMBAG 2040 MTP/SCS and the SCCRTC 2040 RTP. The project would also be required to comply with the Santa Cruz County General Plan and any implemented policies and programs established through the CAS. In addition, the project design would be required to comply with CALGreen, the state of California’s green building code, to meet all mandatory energy efficiency standards. Energy demand for the project would consist of power for lighting, heating, and cooking. The Valley Foundation Training Center would include a backup generator. Therefore, the project would not conflict with or obstruct any state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

**G. GEOLOGY AND SOILS**

Cornerstone Earth Group prepared the following four geologic and geotechnical reports for the proposed project: *Geotechnical Consultation Chesebrough Power Pole Road Site and New Water Tank* (September 2023), *Geotechnical Review of Grading and Improvement Plans Chesebrough Power Pole Road Site and New Water Tank* (April 2024a), *Engineering Geology Assessment Report Site Improvements at Chesebrough Camp* (July 2024b), and *Geotechnical Investigation and Geologic Hazards Evaluation CSR Master Plan and Training Center* (March 2025). The full geologic and geotechnical reports can be found in Attachment 10. The County’s approval letter of the applicant’s grading plan, dated January 21, 2026, can be found in Attachment 11.

Would the project:

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

A. 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"/>
B. Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
D. Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Discussion (A through D):** All of Santa Cruz County is subject to some hazard from earthquakes, and there are several faults within the County. While the San Andreas fault is larger and considered more active, each fault is capable of generating moderate to severe ground shaking from a major earthquake. Consequently, large earthquakes can be expected in the future. The October 17, 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake (magnitude 7.1) was the second largest earthquake in central California history.

**Fault Rupture.** The project site is located outside of the limits of the State Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Zone (California Division of Mines and Geology, 2001). The project site is located approximately 2.7 miles south of the San Andreas fault zone and approximately 0.21 miles north of the Butano fault zone. The geotechnical reports state that the nearby Butano Fault is not considered active and the closest fault considered capable of surface rupture is the San Andreas Fault Zone; therefore, fault rupture hazards at the site are generally low (Cornerstone Earth Group 2025, p. 13). Therefore, the project would not directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving rupture of a known earthquake fault.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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**Seismic Ground-Shaking.** According to the geotechnical reports, because of the proximity to the San Andreas Fault and other regional faults, there will be significant ground-shaking (Cornerstone Earth Group 2025, p. 17). Cornerstone Earth Group recommends that foundation design for new structures (water tanks, training center, cabins, and other facilities) should follow current building codes.

The proposed project would be required to comply with the approved reports and applicable codes and standards to ensure impacts associated with seismic ground-shaking are less than significant.

**Liquefaction.** The project site is not within a liquefaction zone. The closest liquefaction zone is located 2.2 miles north of the project site (California Department of Conservation 2025b). Therefore, the project would not directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving liquefaction.

**Landslides.** Cornerstone Earth Group concludes that landsliding is one of the significant hazards to the site with a moderate risk and that acceptable design measures should be taken to address foundations, subsurface drainage, retaining walls and internal structural integrity (2024b, p. 9-10). Cornerstone Earth Group recommendations that are focused on the access road to the proposed training facility include, but are not limited to: grading the cut slopes above the proposed roadway to a gentler slope of 2:1 (horizontal:vertical); or, if a 2:1 slope is not possible, constructing a debris catchment fence (Cornerstone Earth Group 2025, p. 21).

The proposed project is required to comply with the applicable codes and standards as a condition of approval and to implement all recommendations provided by the geologic report and geotechnical reports (Attachment 10). Implementation of these conditions of approval and recommendations would reduce risks associated with landslides to a less-than-significant level.

2. *Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?*

**Discussion:** The potential for erosion exists during the construction phase of the proposed project. Although Cornerstone Earth Group concludes that risk due to erosion is low, temporal application of risk is relevant for storm intensity, which can accelerate runoff and erosion that can lead to landslides and localized flooding (2025, p. 14).

Grading activities of the proposed project would result in 6,430 cubic yards of cut, 6,740 cubic yards of fill, resulting in an import of 310 cubic yards of material (Sandis 2025). SCCC Section 16.20.040 requires that a discretionary grading permit be obtained for projects with earthwork volumes between 1,000 and 8,000 cubic yards, such as the proposed project. Additionally, prior to approval of a grading or building permit, the project must have an approved stormwater pollution control plan pursuant to SCCC Section 7.79.100, which would specify detailed erosion and sedimentation control measures. This plan would also include

provisions for disturbed areas to be planted with ground cover and to be maintained to minimize surface erosion. The County has accepted the applicant’s grading plan, refer to the approval letter dated January 21, 2026 (Attachment 11).

The proposed project would include development on slopes exceeding 30 percent. During the analysis of site constraints and project design, the Cornerstone Earth Group and the applicant, in coordination with County staff, identified five (5) potential locations for the training center, of which four were found not viable. The four (4) locations that were discussed with County staff as not a viable location for the training center facility and access road were: (1) location consisting of existing group camping sites that serve the campground; (2) location consisting of administrative and cooking facilities, an on-site well, and water infrastructure; (3) location consisting of an existing parking area that serves the campground; and (4) location consisting of additional camping sites, underground utilities, access roads, and recorded Native American resources. The fifth location evaluated for the location of the new training center and access road is what is proposed as part of this project. Cornerstone Earth Group submitted a letter to the applicant on December 12, 2025 (Attachment 12) confirming that the revised civil plans dated October 2025 (Attachment 3) are in general conformance with the recommendations of the geotechnical report. Additionally, County staff reviewed the *Geotechnical Investigation and Geologic Hazards Evaluation CSR Master Plan and Training Center* (March 2025) and submitted a letter to the applicant on May 22, 2025 accepting the report with conditions that require the implementation of recommendations outlined within the report (see Attachment 13).

Compliance with the SCCC, applicable codes and standards as conditions of approval, the County-approved grading plan, and implementation of the recommendations presented in the geologic report and geotechnical reports would ensure that impacts associated with erosion would be less than significant.

- |  |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 3. <i>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?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

**Discussion:** The geotechnical reports concluded that there is a potential risk from landslide and ground shaking hazards (Cornerstone Earth Group 2025). Additionally, the proposed access road to the training center facility would be located in areas with slopes exceeding 30 percent.

Refer to the discussion under checklist item #2, above. Cornerstone Earth Group and the applicant evaluated multiple geometries for the access road at the proposed location and determined that the proposed site and layout were the least impactful. Feedback resulting

from multiple site visits with geotechnical engineers/engineering geologists and County staff were incorporated into the design of the project. County staff reviewed the *Geotechnical Investigation and Geologic Hazards Evaluation CSR Master Plan and Training Center* (March 2025) and submitted a letter to the applicant on May 22, 2025 accepting the report with conditions that require the implementation of recommendations outlined within the report. This County letter can be found in Attachment 13.

Compliance with the SCCC, applicable codes and standards as conditions of approval, the County-approved grading plan, and implementation of the recommendations contained in the geologic report and geotechnical reports would ensure impacts associated with unstable soils are less than significant.

- |   |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 4. <i>Be located on expansive soil, as defined in section 1803.5.3 of the California Building Code (2016), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

**Discussion:** According to the geotechnical reports, there is moderate expansion potential at the project site (Cornerstone Earth Group 2025). Cornerstone Earth Group recommends, among other things, that the slabs-on-grade should have sufficient reinforcement and be supported on a layer of non-expansive fill and that footings should extend below the zone of seasonal moisture fluctuation.

Compliance with applicable codes and standards as conditions of approval and implementation of the recommendations contained in the geologic report and geotechnical reports would ensure that impacts associated with expansive soils are reduced to a less-than-significant level.

- |  |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 5. <i>Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks, leach fields, or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

**Discussion:** The project proposes an on-site sewage disposal system. Fox Onsite Solutions prepared an on-site wastewater treatment system (OWTS) report (2024) for the project, which can be found in Attachment 14. The OWTS report states that the proposed conventional leach field is adequate to meet Santa Cruz County Local Agency Management Program standards (Fox Onsite Solutions 2024).

Compliance with applicable codes and standards as conditions of approval and implementation of the recommendations contained in the geologic report and geotechnical reports would ensure septic and sewage disposal-related impacts are less than significant.

- |  |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 6. <i>Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site of unique geologic feature?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

**Discussion:** According to the County’s GISweb, the project site is not located in an area designated as “geologic paleontologic” (County of Santa Cruz 2025). Because no unique paleontological resources or sites or unique geologic features are known to occur in the vicinity of the project, no direct or indirect impacts are anticipated.

## H. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

*Would the project:*

- |  |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. <i>Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

**Discussion:** The project would not construct new residential dwelling units and would result in less than 50,000 square feet of structures. The project, like all development, would be responsible for an incremental increase in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by usage of fossil fuels during the site grading and construction. As discussed in Section F. Energy, Santa Cruz County’s CAS intended to establish specific emission reduction goals and necessary actions to reduce greenhouse gas levels to pre-1990 levels as required under Assembly Bill (AB) 32 legislation. The strategy intends to reduce GHG emissions and energy consumption by implementing measures such as reducing vehicle miles traveled through the County and regional long-range planning efforts and increasing energy efficiency in new and existing buildings and facilities. Implementing the CAS, Central Coast Community Energy (3CE) (formerly Monterey Bay Community Power (MBCP)) was formed in 2017 to provide carbon-free electricity. All PG&E customers in unincorporated Santa Cruz County were automatically enrolled in the MBCP in 2018. All project construction equipment would be required to comply with the CARB emissions requirements for construction equipment. Further, all new buildings are required to meet the State’s CALGreen building code. As a result, impacts associated with the temporary increase in GHG emissions are expected to be less than significant.

### Strategies for the Reduction of Greenhouse Gases:

- Reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) through County and regional long-range planning efforts.
- Increase bicycle ridership and walking through incentive programs and investment in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and safety programs.
- Provide infrastructure to support zero and low emissions vehicles (plug in, hybrid plug-in vehicles).

- Increase employee use of alternative commute modes: bus transit, walking, bicycling, carpooling, etc.
- Reduce County fleet emissions.

**Strategies for the Reduction of Greenhouse Gases from Energy Use**

- Develop a Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) Program, if feasible.<sup>3</sup>
- Increase energy efficiency in new and existing buildings and facilities.
- Enhance and expand the Green Business Program.
- Increase local renewable energy generation.
- Public education about climate change and impacts of individual actions.
- Continue to improve the Green Building Program by exceeding the minimum standards of the state green building code (Cal Green).
- Form partnerships and cooperative agreements among local governments, educational institutions, nongovernmental organizations, and private businesses as a cost-effective way to facilitate mitigation and adaptation.
- Reduce energy use for water supply through water conservation strategies.

Impacts are expected to be less than significant.

2. *Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?*

**Discussion:** See the discussion under H-1 above. No significant impacts are anticipated.

**I. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

Would the project:

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

**Discussion:** The project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment. No routine transport or disposal of hazardous materials is proposed. However, during construction, fuel would be used at the project site. In addition, fueling may occur

<sup>3</sup> Central Coast Community Energy (3CE) (formerly Monterey Bay Community Power (MBCP)) was formed in 2017 to provide carbon-free electricity. All Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) customers in unincorporated Santa Cruz County were automatically enrolled in 3CE in 2018.

within the limits of the staging area which have yet to be determined. Best management practices would be used to ensure that no impacts would occur. Impacts are expected to be less than significant.

- |  |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2. <i>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?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

**Discussion:** See discussion under I-1 above. Project impacts would be considered less than significant.

- |  |                          |                          |                          |                                     |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 3. <i>Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|

**Discussion:** There are no schools within one-quarter mile of the project site. Although fueling of equipment is likely to occur within the staging area, BMPs to contain spills would be implemented. No impacts are anticipated.

- |   |                          |                          |                          |                                     |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 4. <i>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?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|

**Discussion:** The project site is not included on the September 17, 2025 list of hazardous sites in Santa Cruz County compiled pursuant to Government Code section 65962.5. No impacts are anticipated from project implementation.

- |  |                          |                          |                          |                                     |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 5. <i>For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|

**Discussion:** The project is not located within two miles of a public airport or public use airport. No impact is anticipated.

- |  |                          |                          |                          |                                     |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 6. <i>Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|

**Discussion:** The project would not conflict with implementation of the County of Santa Cruz Local Hazard Mitigation Plan 2021-2026 (County of Santa Cruz, 2021) because the project would not include any changes to the existing public roadways that provide emergency access to the site. The project would be required to comply with adopted local, regional, and State plans and regulations addressing emergency response and emergency access. Additionally, the project would require review by County emergency services staff to provide feedback and approval pertaining to emergency access/response. Therefore, no impacts to an adopted emergency response plan or evacuation plan would occur from project implementation.

- |  |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 7. <i>Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

**Discussion:** See discussion under Wildfire Question T-2. Impacts would be less than significant.

**J. HYDROLOGY, WATER SUPPLY, AND WATER QUALITY**

**Water Storage System: Existing Capacity and Proposed Changes**

The camp currently operates four water storage tanks with a combined capacity of approximately 20,000 gallons. The proposed project would consolidate these into a single large storage tank with a total capacity of 120,000 gallons. This consolidation eliminates the operational complexity of managing multiple distributed tanks and improves the reliability of the water system for both potable and fire protection uses.

Of the estimated 120,000-gallon capacity, approximately 90,000 gallons is dedicated to fire suppression, a requirement established by Fire in connection with the camp's on-site sprinkler system. The remaining capacity supports domestic potable use for camp operations. The camp is the only large water resource, public or private, in the immediate area, and the tank is intended to serve as a regional fire suppression asset in cooperation with the Cal Fire station located approximately two and a half miles from the property.

**Filling Protocol and Groundwater Management**

The new tank will not be filled all at once. Based on current well production capacity of approximately 18,000 gallons per 24-hour period, the filling plan calls for incremental pumping, typically one day per week, on a cycle of roughly 12 weeks during the construction

period. This approach allows the water table to recharge between pumping events and avoids stressing the aquifer. The camp has no interest in over-pumping its own well, as doing so would risk pump failure or loss of the water source entirely.

The nearest neighbors are approximately one and a half miles away, and the surrounding land consists primarily of open space, preserve, and park lands. Impacts to neighboring wells are not anticipated. No new well is proposed nor is it necessary.

### Metering and Monitoring

The camp intends to install metering on the tank and throughout the distribution system. Monitoring will allow the system operator and camp management to detect leaks, verify usage, track turnover rates, and respond to any unexpected changes in consumption or storage. The camp holds the appropriate small water system license and works with a qualified system operator, who will be consulted regarding tank turnover requirements and operational compliance under applicable small water system regulations.

*Would the project:*

- |   |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. <i>Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

**Discussion:** The project contains a creek called Oil Creek and has the potential to generate water quality impacts during construction. An erosion control plan is required per section 16.22.060 of the SCCC.

The following water quality protection and erosion and sediment control BMPs will be implemented, based on standard County requirements, to minimize construction-related contaminants and mobilization of sediment to Oil Creek.

The BMPs will be selected to achieve maximum sediment removal and represent the best available technology that is economically achievable and are subject to review and approval by the County. The County will perform routine inspections of the construction area to verify the BMPs are properly implemented and maintained. The County will notify contractors immediately if there is a noncompliance issue and will require compliance.

The BMPs will include, but are not limited to, the following.

- All earthwork or foundation activities involving rivers, ephemeral drainages, and culverts, will occur in the dry season (generally between June 1 and October 15).
- Equipment used in and around drainages and wetlands will be in good working order and free of dripping or leaking engine fluids. All vehicle maintenance will be

performed at least 300 feet from all drainages and wetlands. Any necessary equipment washing will be carried out where the water cannot flow into drainages or wetlands.

- Develop a hazardous material spill prevention control and countermeasure plan before construction begins that will minimize the potential for and the effects of hazardous or toxic substances spills during construction. The plan will include storage and containment procedures to prevent and respond to spills and will identify the parties responsible for monitoring the spill response. During construction, any spills will be cleaned up immediately according to the spill prevention and countermeasure plan. The County will review and approve the contractors' toxic materials spill prevention control and countermeasure plan before allowing construction to begin. Prohibit the following types of materials from being rinsed or washed into the streets, shoulder areas, or gutters: concrete; solvents and adhesives; thinners; paints; fuels; sawdust; dirt; gasoline; asphalt and concrete saw slurry; heavily chlorinated water.
- Any surplus concrete rubble, asphalt, or other rubble from construction will be taken to a local landfill.
- An erosion and sediment control plan will be prepared and implemented for the project. It will include the following provisions and protocols. The Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) for the project will detail the applications and type of measures and the allowable exposure of unprotected soils.
  - Discharge from dewatering operations, if needed, and runoff from disturbed areas will be made to conform to the water quality requirements of the waste discharge permit issued by the RWQCB.
  - Temporary erosion control measures, such as sandbagged silt fences, will be applied throughout construction of the project and will be removed after the working area is stabilized or as directed by the engineer. Soil exposure will be minimized through use of temporary BMPs, groundcover, and stabilization measures. Exposed dust-producing surfaces will be sprinkled daily, if necessary, until wet; this measure will be controlled to avoid producing runoff. Paved streets will be swept daily following construction activities.
  - The contractor will conduct periodic maintenance of erosion and sediment control measures.
  - An appropriate seed mix of native species will be planted on disturbed areas upon completion of construction.
  - Cover or apply nontoxic soil stabilizers to inactive construction areas (previously graded areas inactive for 10 days or more) that could contribute sediment to waterways.

- Enclose and cover exposed stockpiles of dirt or other loose, granular construction materials that could contribute sediment to waterways. Material stockpiles will be located in non-traffic areas only. Side slopes will not be steeper than 2:1. All stockpile areas will be surrounded by a filter fabric fence and interceptor dike.
- Contain soil and filter runoff from disturbed areas by berms, vegetated filters, silt fencing, straw wattle, plastic sheeting, catch basins, or other means necessary to prevent the escape of sediment from the disturbed area.
- Use other temporary erosion control measures (such as silt fences, staked straw bales/wattles, silt/sediment basins and traps, check dams, geofabric, sandbag dikes, and temporary re-vegetation or other ground cover) to control erosion from disturbed areas as necessary.
- Avoid earth or organic material from being deposited or placed where it may be directly carried into the channel.
- Ensure all areas that are disturbed/compacted during construction are stabilized, vegetated, and de-compacted as necessary, so that runoff rates from landscaped and pervious areas do not exceed those from pre-disturbed/natural conditions.

Compliance with applicable codes and standards as conditions of approval and implementation of the above BMPs would ensure that water quality impacts to Oil Creek and its tributaries are less than significant.

- |  |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2. <i>Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

**Discussion:** The property has two (2) recorded wells. The campground currently uses one (1) active private well on-site. The project would continue to rely on the private well for water supply. Although the project is located in the Pescadero Watershed and within a County-designated Water Supply Watershed, the proposed project would be required to be consistent with General Plan policies ARC-4.1.14 (Water Pollution from Urban Runoff), ARC-4.2.8 (Allowed Uses in Water Supply and Least Disturbed Watersheds), ARC-4.2.9 (Development Activities Within Water Supply and Least Disturbed Watersheds), and ARC-4.5.5 (Developing Groundwater Resources). The project would also be consistent with section 7.79.110 of the SCCC (New Development and Redevelopment). The code states, “All responsible parties shall mitigate impacts due to development and implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) per the County Design Criteria adopted by the County of Santa Cruz and Chapters 16.20 and 16.22 of the SCCC to control the volume, runoff rate, and potential pollutant load of stormwater runoff from new development and redevelopment

projects to minimize the generation, transport, and discharge of pollutants, prevent runoff in excess of predevelopment conditions, and maintain predevelopment groundwater recharge.” No adverse impact would occur to groundwater recharge with project implementation such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin.

See Question J-5 for further discussion of sustainable groundwater management.

- |   |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 3. <i>Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A. <i>result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;</i>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B. <i>substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;</i>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| C. <i>create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or;</i>                              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| D. <i>impede or redirect flood flows?</i>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Discussion:** The County Department of Public Works Stormwater Management Section staff has reviewed and approved the proposed drainage plan prepared for the project. The project is consistent with SCCC section 7.79.070 (Storm drain system and channel modification prohibited), which states, “No person shall make any unpermitted alterations to drainage patterns or modifications to the storm drain system or any channel that is part of receiving waters of the county. No person shall deposit fill, debris, or other material in the storm drain system, a drainage channel, or on the banks of a drainage channel where it might enter the storm drain system or receiving waters and divert or impede flow.”

Drainage calculations prepared by Sandis, dated April 2024, have been reviewed for potential drainage impacts and accepted by the County Department of Public Works Stormwater Management Section staff. The calculations show that the project site has enough room to

store runoff. The runoff rate from the project site would be controlled by a bio-retention area located adjacent to the proposed training facility, which will treat stormwater and allow for infiltration and evapotranspiration prior to discharging to existing grade. BMPs for stormwater treatment maintenance and source control include planting of native trees, shrubs, and plants that are resistant to pests to minimize the number of pesticides needed; gasoline and/or oil spills on pavement shall be vacuumed as soon as possible and the area shall be jet washed to prevent the contamination of the stormwater treatment device; commercial waste and recyclables stored outside will be in enclosed containers (Sandis 2024, p. 2). Staff have determined that existing storm water facilities are adequate to handle the increase in drainage associated with the project. Impacts would be considered less than significant.

4. *In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?*

**Discussion:**

**Flood Hazards.** According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Flood Insurance Rate Map, dated May 16, 2012, no portion of the project site lies within a flood hazard zone, and there would be no impact.

**Tsunami and Seiche Zones.** There are two primary types of tsunami vulnerability in Santa Cruz County. The first is a teletsunami or distant source tsunami from elsewhere in the Pacific Ocean. This type of tsunami is capable of causing significant destruction in Santa Cruz County. However, this type of tsunami would usually allow time for the Tsunami Warning System for the Pacific Ocean to warn threatened coastal areas in time for evacuation (County of Santa Cruz 2010).

A greater risk to the County of Santa Cruz is a tsunami generated as the result of an earthquake along one of the many earthquake faults in the region. Even a moderate earthquake could cause a local source tsunami from submarine landsliding in Monterey Bay. A local source tsunami generated by an earthquake on any of the faults affecting Santa Cruz County would arrive just minutes after the initial shock. The lack of warning time from such a nearby event would result in higher casualties than if it were a distant tsunami (County of Santa Cruz 2010).

Seiches are recurrent waves oscillating back and forth in an enclosed or semi-enclosed body of water. They are typically caused by strong winds, storm fronts, or earthquakes.

The project site is located approximately 13 miles inland, approximately 12.5 miles beyond the effects of a tsunami. The project site is located approximately 4.5 miles from Stevens Creek Reservoir and would not be affected by a seiche. Therefore, there would be no impact.

- |  |                          |                          |                          |                                     |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 5. <i>Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|

**Discussion:** The project site is not within a groundwater basin. The project will comply with SCCC Chapters 13.13 (Water Conservation – Water Efficient Landscaping), 7.69 (Water Conservation) and 7.70 (Water Wells), as well as Chapter 7.71 (Water Systems) section 7.71.130 (Water use measurement and reporting), to ensure that it will not conflict with or obstruct implementation of current water quality control plans.

## K. LAND USE AND PLANNING

*Would the project:*

- |   |                          |                          |                          |                                     |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Physically divide an established community?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|

**Discussion:** The project does not include any element that would physically divide an established community. No impact would occur.

- |   |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2. <i>Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

**Discussion:** As discussed in Section III. G. Geology and Soils, a component of the proposed project would develop on slopes exceeding 30 percent and, therefore, would conflict with SCCC Chapter 16.22 and Policy 6.5.9.b (Site Design to Minimize Grading) of the General Plan. However, multiple locations and geometries were evaluated and the proposed project layout was determined by the geotechnical engineers/engineering geologists, in coordination with County staff, to be the least impactful.

The proposed multi-purpose building and associated access road were sited based on slope mapping to minimize grading and environmental disturbance. The selected location represents one of the last remaining relatively flat areas of the site, allowing the project to avoid development on steeper slopes and substantially reduce cut-and-fill activities compared to other previously evaluated locations. This site selection also avoids areas where cultural resources were identified during earlier assessments, thereby limiting ground disturbance in sensitive areas. The access road alignment follows existing topography to the extent feasible and has been reviewed and accepted by County staff as compliant with applicable grading and engineering standards. The County’s acceptance of the applicant’s grading plan can be found in the approval letter dated January 21, 2026 (Attachment 11).

Cornerstone Earth Group also submitted a letter to the applicant on December 12, 2025 (Attachment 12) confirming that the revised civil plans dated October 2025 (Attachment 3) are in general conformance with the recommendations of the geotechnical report (Attachment 10). Attachment 13 includes a geotechnical investigation and geologic hazards evaluation review letter from County staff dated May 22, 2025 accepting the report with conditions that require the implementation of recommendations outlined within the report.

Compliance with the SCCC, applicable codes and standards as conditions of approval, the County-approved grading plan, and implementation of the recommendations presented in the geologic and geotechnical reports would ensure that the project does not result in significant impacts associated a conflict with any land use plan, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

#### L. MINERAL RESOURCES

*Would the project:*

- |   |                          |                          |                          |                                     |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>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?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|

**Discussion:** The site does not contain any known mineral resources that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state. Therefore, no impact is anticipated from project implementation.

- |  |                          |                          |                          |                                     |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2. <i>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?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|

**Discussion:** The project site is zoned Timber Production (TP), which is not considered to be an Extractive Use Zone (M-3) nor does it have a Quarry (Q) land use designation (County of Santa Cruz 2024a). Therefore, no potentially significant loss of availability of a known mineral resource of locally important mineral resource recovery (extraction) site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan would occur as a result of this project.

**M. NOISE**

Would the project result in:

- |  |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. <i>Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

**Discussion:**

**County of Santa Cruz General Plan.** The County of Santa Cruz has adopted noise thresholds for construction noise in the General Plan. The following applicable noise related policy is found in the Noise Element of the Santa Cruz County General Plan (Santa Cruz County 2024a).

- Policy 9.2.6: Require mitigation and/or best management practices to reduce construction noise as a condition of project approvals, particularly if noise levels would exceed 75 dB at neighboring sensitive land uses or if construction would occur for more than 7 days.

The General Plan also contains the following table (identified in the General Plan as Table 9-3), which specifies the maximum allowable noise exposure for stationary noise sources (operational or permanent noise sources) (Table 2).

<b>Table 2 Maximum Allowable Noise Exposure Stationary Noise Sources<sup>(1)</sup></b>		
	Daytime <sup>(5)</sup> (7:00 am to 10:00 pm)	Nighttime <sup>(2, 5)</sup> (10:00 pm to 7:00 am)
Hourly L <sub>eq</sub> average hourly noise level, dB <sup>(3)</sup>	50	45
Maximum Level, dB <sup>(3)</sup>	70	65
Maximum Level, dB – Impulsive Noise <sup>(4)</sup>	65	60
Notes: (1) As determined at the property line of the receiving land use. When determining the effectiveness of noise mitigation measures, the standards may be applied to the receptor side of noise barriers or other property line noise mitigation measures. (2) Applies only where the receiving land use operates or is occupied during nighttime hours (3) Sound level measurements shall be made with “slow” meter response. (4) Sound level measurements shall be made with “fast” meter response (5) Allowable levels shall be raised to the ambient noise levels where the ambient levels exceed the allowable levels. Allowable levels shall be reduced 5 dB if the ambient hourly Leq is at least 10 dB lower than the allowable level. Source: County of Santa Cruz 2024		

**County of Santa Cruz Code (SCCC).** Section 13.15.040(A) (Exemptions) of the SCCC includes an exemption for noise sources reasonably associated with construction and grading, provided a permit has been obtained from the County as required, and provided the activities take place between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on weekdays unless authorized by the Building Official. Section 13.15.050(A) (General noise regulations and unlawful noise) requires

operational noise to conform with the noise parameters provided in Table 9-2 and Table 9-3 of the General Plan (Table 2 above represents Table 9-3 of the General Plan). Section 8.30.010 (Offensive noise) of the SCCC contains the following language regarding noise impacts:

(A) No person shall make, cause, suffer, or permit to be made any offensive noise.

(B) “Offensive noise” means any noise which is loud, boisterous, irritating, penetrating, or unusual, or that is unreasonably distracting in any other manner such that it is likely to disturb people of ordinary sensitivities in the vicinity of such noise, and includes, but is not limited to, noise made by an individual alone or by a group of people engaged in any business, activity, meeting, gathering, game, dance, or amusement, or by any appliance, contrivance, device, tool, structure, construction, vehicle, ride, machine, implement, or instrument.

(C) The following factors shall be considered when determining whether a violation of the provisions of this section exists:

(1) Loudness (Intensity) of the Sound.

(a) Day and Evening Hours. For purposes of this factor, a noise shall be automatically considered offensive if it occurs between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. and it is:

(i) Clearly discernible at a distance of 150 feet from the property line of the property from which it is broadcast; or

(ii) In excess of 75 decibels at the edge of the property line of the property from which the sound is broadcast, as registered on a sound measuring instrument meeting the American National Standard Institute’s Standard S1.4-1971 (or more recent revision thereof) for Type 1 or Type 2 sound level meters, or an instrument which provides equivalent data.

A noise not reaching this intensity of volume may still be found to be offensive depending on consideration of the other factors outlined below.

(b) Night Hours. For purposes of this factor, a noise shall be automatically considered offensive if it occurs between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. and it is:

(i) Made within 100 feet of any building or place regularly used for sleeping purposes; or

(ii) Clearly discernible at a distance of 100 feet from the property line of the property from which it is broadcast; or

(iii) In excess of 60 decibels at the edge of the property line of the property from which the sound is broadcast, as registered on a sound measuring instrument meeting the American National Standard Institute's Standard S1.4-1971 (or more recent revision thereof) for Type 1 or Type 2 sound level meters, or an instrument which provides equivalent data.

A noise not reaching this intensity of volume may still be found to be offensive depending on consideration of the other factors outlined below.

- (2) Pitch (frequency) of the sound, e.g., very low bass or high screech;
- (3) Duration of the sound;
- (4) Time of day or night;
- (5) Necessity of the noise, e.g., garbage collecting, street repair, permitted construction activities;
- (6) The level of customary background noise, e.g., residential neighborhood, commercial zoning district, etc.; and
- (7) The proximity to any building regularly used for sleeping purposes.

(D) Prior to issuing a citation for this section, the responsible person or persons will be warned by a law enforcement officer or other designated official that the noise at issue is offensive and constitutes a violation of this chapter. A citation may be issued if, after receiving the warning, the responsible person(s) continues to make or resumes making the same or similar offensive noise(s) within three months of the warning. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (C)(1) of this section, enforcement of violations under this chapter shall not require the use of a sound level meter.

- (1) For purposes of this section "responsible person or persons" means a person or persons with a right of possession in the property from which the offensive noise is emanating, including, but not limited to, an owner or a tenant of the property if the offensive noise is coming from private property, or a permittee if the offensive noise is coming from a permitted gathering on public property, or any person accepting responsibility for such offensive noise. "Responsible person or persons" shall additionally include the landlord of another responsible party and the parents and/or legal guardians of a responsible person under the age of 18 years. [Ord. 5255 § 1, 2017; Ord. 5205 § 1, 2015; Ord. 4001 § 1, 1989].

**Sensitive Receptors.**

Some land uses are generally regarded as being more sensitive to noise than others due to the type of population groups or activities involved. Sensitive population groups generally include children and the elderly. Noise sensitive land uses typically include all residential uses (single- and multi-family, mobile homes, dormitories, and similar uses), hospitals, nursing homes, schools, and parks.

Properties surrounding the project site are owned and managed by public agencies for open space uses. The nearest sensitive receptors are campground users within and near the project area.

**Impacts**

Although construction activities would likely occur during daytime hours, noise may be audible to nearby sensitive receptors. However, periods of noise exposure would be temporary. Noise from construction activity may vary substantially on a day-to-day basis.

***Potential Temporary Construction Noise Impacts***

Construction activity would be expected to use equipment listed in Table 3. Noise generated during project construction would increase the ambient noise levels in adjacent areas. Construction would be temporary, however, and given the limited duration of this impact it is considered to be less than significant with the application of the standard noise control Best Management Practices (BMPs).

The BMPs will include, but are not limited to, the following.

- Limit construction activity to between the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Saturday in order to avoid noise during more sensitive nighttime hours. Prohibit construction activity on Sundays.
- Require that all construction and maintenance equipment powered by gasoline or diesel engines have sound-control devices that are at least as effective as those originally provided by the manufacturer and that all equipment be operated and maintained to minimize noise generation.

Equipment	L <sub>max</sub> (dBA)
Air Compressor	80
Backhoe	80
Chain Saw	85
Compactor	82
Concrete Mixer	85
Concrete Pump	82
Concrete Saw	90
Crane	83
Dozer	85
Dump Truck	84
Excavator	85
Flat Bed Truck	84
Fork Lift	75
Generator	82
Grader	85
Hoe-ram	90
Jack Hammer	88
Loader	80
Paver	85
Pick-up Truck	55
Pneumatic Tool	85
Roller	85
Tree Chipper	87
Truck	84

Source: Federal Transit Authority, 2006, 2018.

- Prohibit gasoline or diesel engines from having unmuffled exhaust.
- Use noise-reducing enclosures around stationary noise-generating equipment capable of 6 dB attenuation.

Compliance with applicable codes and standards as conditions of approval and implementation of the above BMPs would ensure that construction noise impacts are less than significant.

**Potential Permanent Impacts**

The project would not result in a permanent increase in the ambient noise level. The main source of ambient noise in the project area is traffic noise along State Route 9. However, no substantial increase in traffic trips is anticipated as a result of the project. The training center building would utilize an HVAC mechanical unit that would be located behind chain link fencing with privacy slats. Impacts are expected to be less than significant.

- |  |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2. <i>Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

**Discussion:** The use of construction and grading equipment would potentially generate periodic vibration in the project area. This impact would be temporary and periodic and is not expected to cause damage; therefore, impacts are not expected to be significant.

- |  |                          |                          |                          |                                     |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 3. <i>For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|

**Discussion:** The project is not in the vicinity of a private airstrip or within two miles of a public airport. Therefore, the project would not expose people residing or working in the project area. No impact is anticipated.

**N. POPULATION AND HOUSING**

*Would the project:*

- |  |                          |                          |                          |                                     |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|

**Discussion:** The project would not induce substantial population growth in an area because the project does not propose any physical or regulatory change that would remove a restriction to or encourage population growth in an area. The project proposes a training facility, restrooms, cabins, and other physical improvements that would not induce population growth. No impact would occur.

- |  |                          |                          |                          |                                     |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2. <i>Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|

**Discussion:** There are no existing, permanent residences on the project site and, therefore, the project would not displace any existing housing. No impact would occur.

## O. PUBLIC SERVICES

Would the project:

1. *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:*

- |  |                          |                          |                                     |                                     |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. <i>Fire protection?</i>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| b. <i>Police protection?</i>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| c. <i>Schools?</i>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| d. <i>Parks?</i>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| e. <i>Other public facilities; including the maintenance of roads?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

**Discussion (a through e):** The County Service Area 48 Santa Cruz County Fire serves the fire protection needs of the project site. Additionally, the project site would be served by the San Mateo-Santa Cruz Unit (CZU) of CALFIRE. The nearest Santa Cruz County Fire and CALFIRE station is Saratoga Summit Station #21 located 1.1 miles north of the project site, at 12900 Skyline Boulevard (State Route 35) in Los Gatos.

The Boulder Creek Beat of the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office serves the police protection needs of the project site. The nearest County Sheriff's Office station is the Boulder Creek Sheriff's Service Center located 8.5 miles south of the project site, at 13210 Central Avenue (State Route 9) in Boulder Creek.

The nearest Santa Cruz County Park is Miller Property County Park, located 5.7 miles south of the project site, at 16798 Kings Creek Road, Boulder Creek.

The project does not result in an increase in population and, therefore, would have no impact on existing school facilities.

While the project represents an incremental contribution to the need for services, the increase would be minimal. The project consists of an amendment to the original master plan at an existing organized camp to include a multiple-use building for training purposes, shower and restroom building, cabins for short term camping, covered teaching pavilions, climbing and rappelling tower, replacement water tank, and a recycling and trash enclosure with no increase in camp density or total number of user days. Moreover, the project would be required to meet all of the standards and requirements identified by the local fire agency or California Department of Forestry, as applicable, and transportation fees to be paid by the applicant would be used to offset any incremental increase in demand for public roads. Impacts would be considered less than significant.

**P. RECREATION**

*Would the project:*

- |   |                          |                          |                          |                                     |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>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?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|

**Discussion:** The project itself involves the construction of recreational facilities and, therefore, would not substantially increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities outside the project site. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

- |  |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2. <i>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?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

**Discussion:** The proposed project involves the construction of recreational facilities. Potentially significant construction impacts associated with the implementation of the project’s recreational facilities are identified in the air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, and noise sections of this initial study. All such impacts are either less than significant or mitigated to less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures. Please refer to the respective sections for more information.

## Q. TRANSPORTATION

Would the project:

- |   |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

**Discussion:**

Senate Bill (SB) 743, signed by Governor Jerry Brown in 2013, changed the way transportation impacts are identified under CEQA. Specifically, the legislation directed the State of California’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR) to look at different metrics for identifying transportation impacts. OPR issued its “Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA” (December 2018) to assist practitioners in implementing the CEQA Guidelines revisions to use vehicle miles traveled (VMT) as the preferred metric for assessing passenger vehicle related impacts. The CEQA Guidelines were also updated in December 2018, such that vehicle level of service (LOS) will no longer be used as a determinant of significant environmental impacts, and an analysis of Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) will be required as of July 2020. A discussion of consistency with the Santa Cruz County General Plan LOS policy is provide below for informational purposes only.

The project consists of a master plan amendment to construct recreational facilities associated with the existing campground. Vehicular improvements would include a new internal road for a proposed training center and associated parking. However, there would be no operational changes to the vehicle circulation system because no additional traffic would be generated.

The project would be consistent with applicable Santa Cruz County plans, policies, and ordinances. The project design would comply with current road requirements, including the regulations under Section 13.16.060 (Vehicle parking design standards) and Section 13.16.090 (Site access and circulation) of the SCCC, as well as the County of Santa Cruz Department of Public Works Design Criteria. Compliance with the SCCC and Public Works Design Criteria would ensure that impacts would be less than significant.

- |   |                          |                          |                          |                                     |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2. Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)(1) (Vehicle Miles Traveled)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|

**Discussion:** In response to the passage of Senate Bill 743 in 2013 and other climate change strategies, OPR amended the CEQA Guidelines to replace LOS with VMT as the measurement for transportation impacts. The “Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA,” prepared by OPR (2018) provides recommended thresholds and methodologies for assessing impacts of new developments on VMT. There are

also a number of screening criteria recommended by OPR that can be used to determine whether a project will have a less-than-significant impact. The screening criteria include projects that generate less than 110 net new trips, map-based screening, projects within a ½ mile of high-quality transit, affordable housing projects, and local serving retail. Since Santa Cruz County has a Regional Transportation Planning Authority and generally conducts transportation planning activities countywide, the county inclusive of the cities is considered a region.

In June of 2020, the County of Santa Cruz adopted a threshold of 15% below the existing countywide average per capita VMT levels for residential projects, 15% below the existing countywide average per employee VMT for office and other employee-based projects, no net increase in the countywide average VMT for retail projects, and no net increase in VMT for other projects. Based on the countywide travel demand model the current countywide average per capita VMT for residential uses is 10.2 miles. The current countywide per employee average VMT for the service sector (including office land uses) is 8.9 miles, for the agricultural sector is 15.4, for the industrial sector is 13.9, and for the public sector is 8.2. Therefore, the current VMT thresholds for land use projects are 8.7 miles per capita for residential projects. For employee-based land uses the current thresholds are: 7.6 miles per employee for office and services projects, 13.1 miles per employee for agricultural projects, 11.8 miles per employee for industrial projects, and 7 miles per employee for public sector land use projects. The threshold for retail projects and all other land uses is no net increase in VMT. For mixed-use projects, each land use is evaluated separately unless they are determined to be insignificant to the total VMT.

The project consists of an amendment to the original master plan at an existing organized camp to include a multiple-use building for training purposes, shower and restroom building, cabins for short term camping, covered teaching pavilions, climbing and rappelling tower, replacement water tank, and a recycling and trash enclosure. None of these improvements would cause any increase in vehicle trips and, therefore, would not increase VMT. The County staff report and traffic study prepared for the original 1996 master plan states that the highest trip generation would occur at off-peak times. A one-week class would generate approximately 50 vehicles and would not impact peak hour traffic, which is less than the screening threshold of 110 net new trips. Summer camps incorporate the use of buses for transportation (County of Santa Cruz, 1997, p. 3). The project would not increase camp density or total number of user days, and the original 1996 master plan and associated mitigated negative declaration pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was approved by the County of Santa Cruz. No impact from project implementation would occur.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
--------------------------------	--	------------------------------	-----------

- |  |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 3. Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

**Discussion:** The project consists of an amendment to the original master plan at an existing organized camp to include a multiple-use building for training purposes, shower and restroom building, cabins for short term camping, covered teaching pavilions, climbing and rappelling tower, replacement water tank, and a recycling and trash enclosure. The project includes an access road to the proposed training facility that would be required to comply with all County Public Works Department requirements to ensure safety in its design and that no increase in hazards or incompatible uses occur. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

- |   |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 4. Result in inadequate emergency access? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

**Discussion:** The project's road access meets County standards and has been approved by the local fire agency. The project would be required to comply with any County Fire Department requirements and applicable codes and standards for emergency access as a condition of approval.

Emergency access is currently adequate for the site's current use, and the scope of the project does not include any aspect which would alter or change emergency access. It is for this reason that impacts would be less than significant.

## R. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

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

- |  |                          |                                     |                                     |                          |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| A. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources Code section 5020.1(k), or  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> |

*Code section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.*

**Discussion:** The project proposes to establish a recreational training facility. Section 21080.3.1(b) of the California Public Resources Code (AB 52) requires a lead agency formally notify a California Native American tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated within the geographic area of the discretionary project when formally requested. The County contacted the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) on September 25, 2025 and was provided a list of tribal contacts. The NAHC responded on September 29, 2025 with a list of affiliated tribes that may be interested in consultation. The County contacted the affiliated tribes offering consultation on October 8, 2025 via mail and on October 9, 2025 via email. Five different individuals, representing four different tribes, responded to the request for consultation. The County responded to the tribes on October 31, 2025 with additional information regarding the proposed project and proposed a virtual meeting to provide additional information and discuss the project further with the affiliated tribes. The County sent a formal invitation to the virtual meeting on November 5, 2025. The virtual meeting was held on November 13, 2025, with one tribal representative in attendance. Tribe members that were unable to attend the meeting were asked to provide any additional comments or concerns to County staff outside of the virtual meeting. The discussion with the tribes covered potential concerns regarding tribal cultural resources that may be present on the site and how the resources can be adequately protected with mitigation measures.

The tribal representatives requested the following mitigations to ensure protection of tribal cultural resources:

**Mitigation Measures**

- TRI-1: Conduct a pre-construction meeting with all construction crew members prior to beginning any construction or site disturbance, including a qualified archaeologist and tribal representative. As part of the pre-construction meeting, a cultural sensitivity training regarding tribal cultural resources shall be provided to all construction crew members.
- TRI-2: Ensure that a qualified archaeologist is present on site as an archaeological monitor during all grading and site disturbance activities to identify any potential sensitive tribal cultural resources that may be uncovered as a result of grading or site disturbance activities.

With the incorporation of the above listed mitigations, and observance of the regulations specified in SCCC 16.40 regarding archaeological resources, potential impacts to sensitive tribal cultural resources will be adequately mitigated.

## S. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:

- |  |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <p>1. <i>Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

### Discussion:

**Water.** The project would rely on one (1) existing active individual well for water supply. Public water facilities would not have to be expanded. Impacts from project construction would be less than significant.

**Wastewater.** The project would be served by a private on-site sewage disposal system, which would be adequate to accommodate the demands of the project. Fox Onsite Solutions prepared an on-site wastewater treatment system (OWTS) report (2024) for the project, which can be found in Attachment 14. The OWTS report states that the proposed conventional leach field is adequate to meet Santa Cruz County Local Agency Management Program standards (Fox Onsite Solutions, 2024). Impacts would be less than significant.

**Stormwater.** The drainage analysis for the project, *Preliminary Stormwater Management Report for Boy Scouts of America APN: 088-05-137 26005 HWY 9, Los Gatos, CA*, prepared by Sandis, dated April 2024, concluded that although the treatment area available in the project site is lower than the excavated volume needed, there is additional storage available in the infiltrating bio-retention area and, therefore, the project site has enough room to store runoff. Stormwater treatment would include an infiltrating bio-retention area to cleanse the water of sediment, nutrients, trash, pesticides, oil, and grease. The proposed project would include an approximately 1,557 square foot drainage management area consisting of the stormwater treatment system and appurtenances. The stormwater treatment system would direct water into an approximately 1,016 square foot bio-retention area located adjacent to the proposed training center, consisting of permeable soil, rock, and aggregate to treat and infiltrate stormwater into the ground on-site. However, substantial environmental impacts associated with the improvements are not anticipated; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

**Electric Power.** Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) provides power to existing and new developments in the Santa Cruz County area. As of 2018, residents and businesses in the County were automatically enrolled in 3CE's community choice energy program, which provides locally controlled, carbon-free electricity delivered on PGE's existing lines.

The proposed site is already served by electric power, but additional improvements are necessary to serve the site. However, no substantial environmental impacts will result from the additional improvements; impacts will be less than significant.

**Natural Gas.** PG&E serves the urbanized portions of Santa Cruz County with natural gas.

There is no natural gas service in the vicinity of the project site. The project site is served by propane tanks, and no improvements related to natural gas service will be required. No impacts are anticipated.

**Telecommunications.** Telecommunications, including telephone, wireless telephone, internet, and cable, are provided by a variety of organizations. AT&T is the major telephone provider, and its subsidiary, DirectTV provides television and internet services. Cable television services in Santa Cruz County are provided by Charter Communications in Watsonville and Comcast in other areas of the county. Wireless services are also provided by AT&T, as well as other service providers, such as Verizon.

No improvements related to telecommunications are required, and there will be no impact.

2. *Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?*

**Discussion:** All the main aquifers in this County, the primary sources of the County’s potable water, are in some degree of overdraft. Overdraft is manifested in several ways including 1) declining groundwater levels, 2) degradation of water quality, 3) diminished stream base flow, and/or 4) seawater intrusion. Surface water supplies, which are the primary source of supply for the northern third of the County, are inadequate during drought periods and will be further diminished as a result of the need to increase stream baseflows to restore habitat for endangered salmonid populations. In addition to overdraft, the use of water resources is further constrained by various water quality issues.

The project would rely on one (1) existing active individual well for water supply. The project includes replacing four (4) existing 5,000-gallon water tanks with a new 120,000-gallon water tank for drinking supply and fire protection. Of the estimated 120,000-gallon capacity, approximately 90,000 gallons is dedicated to fire suppression, a requirement established by Fire in connection with the camp's on-site sprinkler system. The remaining capacity supports domestic potable use for camp operations. The camp is the only large water resource, public or private, in the immediate area, and the tank is intended to serve as a regional fire suppression asset in cooperation with the Cal Fire station located approximately two and a half miles from the property. The new tank will not be filled all at once. Based on current well production capacity of approximately 18,000 gallons per 24-hour period, the filling plan calls for incremental pumping, typically one day per week, on a cycle of roughly 12 weeks

during the construction period. This approach allows the water table to recharge between pumping events and avoids stressing the aquifer. The camp has no interest in over-pumping its own well, as doing so would risk pump failure or loss of the water source entirely.

Operation of the project would not increase the camp density or total number of user days at the campground, and the project would only use small amounts of water during construction for dust control and concrete work. Therefore, existing water supplies would be sufficient to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years. Impacts would be less than significant.

- |  |                          |                          |                          |                                     |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 3. <i>Result in 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?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|

**Discussion:** No wastewater would be connected to the municipal sewer collection system during construction of the project. Wastewater generated during operations would be served by the proposed on-site septic system. Therefore, no impacts would occur from project implementation.

- |  |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 4. <i>Generate solid waste in excess of state or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

**Discussion:** Construction debris would be generated during construction activities, much of which would be recycled. The waste generated would not exceed local or state standards, or require additional landfills or recycling centers. Due to the small incremental increase in solid waste generation by the project during construction and operations, the impact would not be significant.

- |   |                          |                          |                          |                                     |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 5. <i>Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|

**Discussion:** The project would comply with all federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste disposal. No impact would occur.

## T. WILDFIRE

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:

- |   |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. <i>Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

**Discussion:** The project is located in a high fire hazard severity zone in a state responsibility area (CALFIRE 2024). The *San Mateo – Santa Cruz Unit Strategic Fire Plan and the Community Wildfire Protection Plan* address areas with inadequate access and evacuation routes and identify risk to life and property from wildland fire and provide information on firefighter safety, community evacuation and recommended actions by first responders. The plans also address post-fire responsibilities for natural resource recovery, including watershed protection reforestation, and ecosystem restoration. In addition, the adopted a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan 2021-2026 (County of Santa Cruz 2021), as required by State law. The project will be developed consistent with County development standards and will not conflict with any of these plans. Therefore, impacts will be less than significant.

- |   |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2. <i>Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

**Discussion:** Although the project is located in a high fire hazard severity zone in a state responsibility area, the project has been reviewed by the County Fire Department to ensure that the project provides consistent and adequate standards for fire protection including all applicable fire safety code requirements and fire protection devices, as required.

The project could introduce occupants/visitors to the site that could increase the likelihood of ignitions from (e.g., not completely putting out a campfire, careless disposal of lit materials, etc.); however, the site already serves an existing boy scout campground. Although the project site contains steep slopes that could exacerbate wildfire risks, compliance with the conditions and regulations required by the County Fire Department would ensure less than significant impacts associated with the project’s potential to exacerbate fire risks and thereby expose project occupants and visitors to fire pollutants or the uncontrolled spread of a fire.

The proposed project is required to comply with the applicable codes and standards pertaining to wildfire as a condition of approval. In addition, the project will be required to meet the General Plan policies related to fire resilience and access in the Santa Cruz County General Plan, and standards for defensible spaces in the Public Resources Code and SCCC. Direct or indirect impacts would be less than significant.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
3. <i>Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Discussion:** Although the project is located in a high fire hazard severity zone in a state responsibility area, the project design incorporates all applicable fire safety code requirements and includes fire protection devices as required by the local fire agency. The project includes replacing four (4) existing 5,000-gallon water tanks (combined capacity of approximately 20,000 gallons) with a new 120,000-gallon water tank for drinking supply and fire protection, and extension of the fire protection water lines and hydrants would be made to any new facilities. In addition, the project will be required to meet the General Plan policies related to fire resilience and access in the Santa Cruz County General Plan, and standards for defensible spaces in the Public Resources Code and SCCC. A fire suppression connection, fire extinguisher, and fire sprinkler risers would be located in the proposed training center. A Fire Access Plan for the new training center is included in the plan set for the proposed training center (Sheet C-2.0, Attachment 3). With these design features incorporated, direct or indirect impacts would be less than significant.

4. <i>Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**Discussion:** Although the project is located in a high fire hazard severity zone in a state responsibility area, the project design incorporates all applicable fire safety code requirements and includes fire protection devices as required by the local fire agency. Section III. G. Geology and Soils, contains requirements associated with the SCCC, applicable codes and standards as conditions of approval, the County-approved grading plan, and recommendations contained in the geologic report and geotechnical reports. These requirements shall be implemented by the project in order to address the potential for landslides and other instability factors associated with the project site. Implementation of these requirements would ensure less than significant impacts associated with exposing people or structures to significant risks including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes.

**U. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

- |  |                          |                                     |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. 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 community 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"/> |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|

**Discussion:** 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 were considered in the response to each question in Section III (A through T) of this Initial Study. Resources that have been evaluated as significant would be potentially impacted by the project, particularly nesting migratory birds and raptors, San Francisco dusky-footed woodrat, Santa Cruz black salamander, Dudley’s lousewort, woodland wooly threads, and sensitive natural communities. However, mitigation has been included that clearly reduces these effects to a level below significance. These mitigations include conducting preconstruction surveys, focused plant surveys, delineating boundaries of sensitive natural communities prior to the start of construction, designing and installing lighting to avoid spillover into adjacent natural habitats, and delineating riverine banks prior to construction.

The project would not impact the historical importance of portions of State Route 9 within the project area, and would not impact other cultural or historic resources on the project site or surrounding area. If resources are uncovered during construction, the project would be required to comply with County regulations.

As a result of this evaluation, there is no substantial evidence that, after mitigation, significant effects associated with this project would result. Therefore, this project has been determined not to meet this Mandatory Finding of Significance.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
2. <i>Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Discussion:** In addition to project specific impacts, this evaluation considered the project’s potential for incremental effects that are cumulatively considerable. As a result of this evaluation, there were determined to be potentially significant cumulative effects related to biological resources, geology and soils, and construction noise. The proposed project would not generate a significant volume of vehicle trips that would add to ambient noise levels on surrounding roadways. Therefore, the project’s contribution to cumulative traffic noise impacts would be less than significant. The proposed project would generate GHG emissions that contribute to associated cumulative effects; however, these impacts were determined to be less than cumulatively considerable.

Mitigation has been included that clearly reduces these cumulative effects to a level below significance. This mitigation includes measures to reduce these impacts to a less than significant level. As a result of this evaluation, there is no substantial evidence that there are cumulative effects associated with this project. Therefore, this project has been determined not to meet this Mandatory Finding of Significance.

3. <i>Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**Discussion:** In the evaluation of environmental impacts in this Initial Study, the potential for adverse direct or indirect impacts to human beings were considered in the response to specific questions in Section III (A through T). As a result of this evaluation, there were determined to be potentially significant effects to human beings related to the following: biological resources and geology and soils. However, mitigation has been included that clearly reduces these effects to a level below significance. As a result of this evaluation, there is no substantial evidence that, after mitigation, there are adverse effects to human beings associated with this project. Therefore, this project has been determined not to meet this Mandatory Finding of Significance.

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