

**MEMORANDUM
DEPARTMENT OF FACILITY SERVICES
COUNTY OF PLACER**

To: **BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

Date: **DECEMBER 11, 2012**

From:  **JAMES DURFEE / BILL ZIMMERMAN** 

Subject: **SHERIDAN WATER SUPPLY IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT 04834: MITIGATED
NEGATIVE DECLARATION ADOPTION, AND APPROVAL OF PLANS AND
SPECIFICATIONS**

ACTION REQUESTED / RECOMMENDATION:

1. Adopt a Resolution adopting the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) for the Sheridan Water Supply Improvements Project 04834 (Project) and direct staff to file a Notice of Determination.
2. Approve the Plans and Specifications and authorize staff to solicit bids for the Sheridan Water Supply Improvements Project funded through the existing Project budget.

BACKGROUND: The Sheridan public water system currently has 184 connections and serves approximately 660 residents. As a result of actions taken by your Board to complete improvements to the sewer system over the last five years, your Board was able to lift the long standing moratorium on new connections to both the sewer and water systems. Completion of the Project will bring the water system into compliance with the California Waterworks Standards and provide capacity for approximately 100-200 new connections in the community. The Project includes the development of a new supply well, a 180,000-gallon water storage tank, a well and pump station building, distribution piping, appurtenances, and the replacement of existing water lines from Camp Far West Road to the existing elementary school.

On July 8, 2010, your Board approved a contract with AECOM Technical Services, Inc. (AECOM) to evaluate the potential impacts and prepare environmental review documents for the Project. Because the Project is partially funded through Federal grants from the California Department of Housing and Community Development - Community Development Block Grant Program and U.S. Department of Agriculture - Rural Utilities Services (USDA RUS), the environmental process for the Project must comply with both the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). AECOM prepared a joint Initial Study (IS) / Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Project and determined that, with mitigation, all potential environmental impacts would be reduced to less than significant. As a result, the IS / MND is the appropriate level of environmental documentation for your Board to consider to comply with its obligations under CEQA.

In addition to complying with standard CEQA / NEPA noticing requirements, staff presented project updates to the Sheridan Municipal Advisory Council at several meetings throughout project implementation, including a formal public informational meeting held on October 10, 2012. Staff received a total of five written comments and has prepared responses to each; the comments and responses are included as an attachment to this memo. The comments did not require revisions to the IS / MND or MMRP. A copy of the IS / MND and MMRP are on file with the Clerk of the Board and available for public review at the Department of Facility Services, the Community Development Resource Agency, Sheridan Elementary School, Lincoln Public Library, and online at: www.placer.ca.gov/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/EnvCoordSvcs/NegDec.aspx

On November 6, 2012 staff presented the MND and MMRP to your Board for adoption. As a result of concerns expressed regarding potential effects from the Project on nearby wells and local views, your Board continued the item to allow staff to meet with the concerned residents. On November 16th, staff and our technical consultants met in Sheridan with a group of ten local residents to discuss the Project and their concerns. In order to address the concerns expressed, staff agreed to provide additional language documenting the County's responsibility to remediate any documented adverse impacts to the quantity and/or quality of groundwater wells in the vicinity of the Project resulting from the installation and operation of the new municipal well. Staff also agreed to install and maintain vegetative screening (trees) along the northern property line of the well and tank site to shield the view of the tank and to design the well building to be visually consistent with nearby agricultural structures (barns). In order to make these commitments part of the administrative record and available to all residents in the Project area, the MND Response-to-Comments was revised to include the commitments. Staff provided the revised responses to residents via e-mail and US mail. Because the concerns expressed do not raise any new CEQA issues, no revision of the MND is necessary.

Staff has received a preliminary funding commitment from the USDA RUS for partial funding for the Project. Adoption of the MND will allow staff to complete the final grant application package and secure the grant funding. In addition, staff has completed the Project design and is ready to proceed with the bidding process. In order to proceed, staff is requesting your Board's approval of the Plans and Specifications, and authorization to solicit construction bids. Copies of the Project Plans and Specifications are available for review at the Clerk of the Board and the Department of Facility Services. Staff will return to your Board with a recommendation to award the construction contract.

ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCE: With implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, the Project as proposed will not have a significant impact on the environment. Adoption of the MND and MMRP satisfies the environmental review requirements of CEQA.

FISCAL IMPACT: The Engineer's Estimate for construction is \$1.49 million. The total Project cost is estimated at \$2.2 million which includes an approximate 8% contingency. Project funding is through a Federal USDA RUS grant of \$285,000 (potentially \$385,000 to accommodate the cost of the pipeline to the School); a Community Development Block Grant of \$453,600; previous Placer County General Fund (GF) contributions totaling \$456,800 and a previously approved loan from the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund in the amount of \$925,000 guaranteed by the GF.

AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW AT THE CLERK OF THE BOARD: INITIAL STUDY / ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

ATTACHMENT: RESOLUTION
A - LETTER TO RESIDENTS
B - COMMENT LETTERS AND RESPONSES
C - MMRP

JD:BZ:KB:CH:LM

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Before the Board of Supervisors County of Placer, State of California

In the matter of:

Resolution _____

**A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE MITIGATED NEGATIVE
DECLARATION AND MITIGATION MONITORING AND
REPORTING PROGRAM FOR THE SHERIDAN WATER
SUPPLY IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT 04834**

The following RESOLUTION was duly passed by the Board of Supervisors of the
County of Placer at a regular meeting held _____, by the following vote on roll
call:

Ayes:

Noes:

Absent:

Signed and approved by me after its passage.

Chair, Board of Supervisors

Attest:

Clerk of the Board

WHEREAS, Placer County, through the Department of Facility Services, proposes to undertake the Sheridan Water Supply Improvements Project (the "Project") and

WHEREAS, an Initial Study (IS) and Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the Project was prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code 21000 et seq. - CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines (14 California Code of Regulations 15000 et seq.), and

WHEREAS, the proposed IS / MND was sent to the State Clearinghouse on February 29, 2012, and

WHEREAS, a Notice of Intent to adopt a MND was distributed to neighborhoods surrounding the proposed project site, and to other interested individuals and agencies, in compliance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15087, and

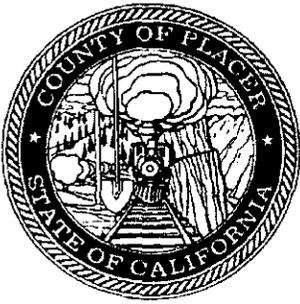
WHEREAS, a thirty (30)-day public review period of the proposed IS / MND was provided February 29, 2012 – March 30, 2012, and

WHEREAS, written comments were received, and responses to those comments have been prepared, and

WHEREAS, the Placer County Board of Supervisors held a public meeting on December 11, 2012 to consider adoption of the IS / MND.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Supervisors, County of Placer, State of California, that the Board, having considered the IS / MND, the written comments and responses thereto, the mitigation measures and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP), the staff report, and all public comment, oral and written, and all other information in the record pertinent to the Project, hereby makes the following findings and adopts the MND for the Project:

1. The IS / MND has been prepared in compliance with the requirements of CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines and all notice has been given as required by law.
2. There is no substantial evidence in the record as a whole to support a fair argument that the Project as mitigated would have a significant impact on the environment.
3. The MND, as adopted for the Project, reflects the independent judgment and analysis of the County, which has exercised overall control and direction of its preparation.
4. The MMRP prepared for the Project is approved and will be implemented.
5. Records associated with the Project are maintained at the Department of Facility Services located at 2855 2nd Street, Auburn, California.



COUNTY OF PLACER ATTACHMENT A
FACILITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Phone 530-886-4900 Fax 530-889-6809
www.placer.ca.gov

JAMES DURFEE, DIRECTOR
MARY DIETRICH, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
VALERIE BAYNE, ADMIN. SVS. MANAGER
JOEL SWIFT, DEPUTY DIRECTOR
MARK RIDEOUT, DEPUTY DIRECTOR
BILL ZIMMERMAN, DEPUTY DIRECTOR

November 28, 2012

Resident
Address
Sheridan CA 95681

RE: SHERIDAN WATER SUPPLY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Dear Resident:

Thank you for meeting with Placer County Environmental Engineering staff on Friday, November 16, 2012 to discuss the concerns brought forth at the November 6, 2012 Board of Supervisors meeting regarding the project and potential effects to area wells and local views.

Based on the discussion at the November 16th meeting, Environmental Engineering staff agreed to plant trees along the northern edge of the well property to shield the view of the tank and to remediate any adverse effects if the proposed well causes the water levels in an existing groundwater well to drop substantially due to implementation of the proposed Project. These commitments are reflected in the revised response to comments document which is attached to this letter and will also be presented to the Board of Supervisors.

Thank you working with us through this process. If you have questions or comments regarding this matter please contact us at your earliest convenience. For project questions, please contact Michelle White at (530) 886-4923 or mjwhite@placer.ca.gov; for response-to-comments questions please contact Kevin Bell at (530) 886-4915 or kbell@placer.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Bill Zimmerman, P.E.
Deputy Director

BZ:mw:lm

Attachments: Amended Response to Comments

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11476 C Avenue Auburn CA 95603
Entrance at 2855 2nd Street

Administration – Building Maintenance – Capital Improvements – Museums – Parks
Property Management – Environmental Engineering - Utilities

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The comment letter asks what recourse is available in a year if well water levels drop or groundwater quality is poor.

The County is responsible for ensuring that the water supply system within the community of Sheridan is maintained consistent with California Waterworks Standards and the California Department of Public Health standards. This includes monitoring the quality of the groundwater extracted from the proposed well. If the project degraded the groundwater such that the applicable water quality standards were exceeded, the County would be responsible for remediating the water quality violation.

Rev 1. - Additionally, the County is responsible for remediating any documented adverse impacts to the quality and/or quantity of groundwater wells in the vicinity of the new municipal well site resulting from the installation and operation of the new municipal well. Concurrent with implementation of the Project, the County will compile baseline information on groundwater elevations and quality from private wells in the vicinity of the Project and will develop an ongoing monitoring program to assess any potential impacts. Potential remediation measures may include connecting residential users to the community water supply system, re-drilling or lowering the groundwater pump in the existing domestic well, or through rebalancing the municipal water supply system to draw less water from the new municipal well.

The comment letter questions how the storage tank can be assumed to not adversely affect scenic vistas.

As stated on page 3-4 of the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, the project elements visible from surrounding areas would include the approximately 24-foot tall water storage tank, the single-story well and pump station building, the site access road, and the perimeter fencing. The introduction of these project elements would result in some change in the site's visual character. However, due to the relatively small size of the building (approximately 700 square feet) and water storage tank (approximately 50 feet in diameter), these changes would be relatively minor. These structures would be consistent with the rural built environment in the community of Sheridan, such as the adjacent Stewart Hall, and would not represent a substantial degradation of the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings. Therefore, the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration concluded that the proposed project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site. The project vicinity does not include any designated scenic vistas; therefore, the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration concluded that the proposed project would have no impact on scenic vistas.

Rev 1. - Additionally, the County agrees to install and maintain vegetative screening (trees) and irrigation along the northern property boundary of the well and tank site to lessen the visual effect to the properties to the north of the site. The County also agrees to paint and maintain the new well control building in a manner that is visually consistent with agricultural uses (barns) in the vicinity of the Project.

ATTACHMENT B

SHERIDAN WATER SUPPLY IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT INITIAL STUDY / ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT COMMENT LETTERS AND RESPONSES

The Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Sheridan Water Supply Improvements Project (Project) was distributed for a 30-day public review from February 29, 2012 to March 30, 2012. Due to federal funding, a Notice of Intent / Finding of No Significant Impact was distributed for a 15-day public review from August 16, 2012 to August 31, 2012.

The table below provides a list of all agencies, organizations, and persons who submitted written comments in response to the legal notices. Five (5) comment letters were received. Comment letters are organized by date received.

List of Commenters Submitting Written Comments on the Sheridan Water Supply Improvements Project		
Commenter	Letter ID	Date
Central Valley Regional Water Quality Board	A	March 12, 2012
Lee Bastien	B	March 27, 2012
Steve and Carol Starling	C	March 30, 2012
Steve and Carol Starling	D	August 20, 2012
Central Valley Regional Water Quality Board	E	August 28, 2012

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS

This section presents the comment letters received and the responses to those comments. Each comment contained in the comment letter is summarized at the beginning of each response.

The comment letter identifies permitting requirements under the heading Construction Storm Water General Permit.

The comment letter states that discharges whose projects disturb one or more acres of soil are required to obtain coverage under the General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction Activities, which requires the development and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). These statements are consistent with the discussion included in Mitigation Measure HYD-1 on page 10 of the Environmental Assessment. This mitigation measure identifies the detailed components that would be required in the development of a SWPPP for the project site.

The comment letter identifies permitting requirements under the heading Phase I and II Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permits.

The comment letter summarizes the requirements of Phase I and II Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permits and states in footnote #1 that Phase I MS4 permits are applicable to medium and large sized municipalities while the Phase II MS4 permits are applicable to small municipalities including military bases, public campuses, prisons and hospitals. The proposed project does not require the issuance of an MS4 permit but would include the implementation of best management practices (BMPs) to minimize the degradation of storm water runoff. The specific BMPs required for the proposed project are identified in Mitigation Measure HYD-1 on page 10 of the Environmental Assessment.

The comment letter identifies permitting requirements under the heading Industrial Storm Water General Permit.

The comment letter states that storm water discharges associated with industrial sites must comply with the regulations contained in the Industrial Storm Water General Permit Order No. 97-03-DWQ. The proposed project is considered a public utility and would not be subject to the permitting requirements for an industrial site.

The comment letter identifies permitting requirements under the heading Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit.

The comment letter states that if the project involves the discharge of dredged or fill material in navigable waters or wetlands, a permit pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act may be needed from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). As discussed on page 6 of the Environmental Assessment, the project site contains portions of two vernal pools, portions of which will be filled with project construction. At the request of Placer County, USACE conducted a jurisdictional determination of these vernal pools and concluded that they are not regulated by the USACE and are not subject to the jurisdiction of Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act, as confirmed in a letter from William Ness, Senior Project Manager, California North

Branch, USACE to Christina Hanson, Placer County Facility Services Department dated October 6, 2011.

The comment letter identifies permitting requirements under the heading Clean Water Act Section 401 Permit – Water Quality Certification.

The comment letter states that if a USACE permit, or any other federal permit, is required for this project due to the disturbance of waters of the United States, then a Water Quality Certification must be obtained from the Central Valley Water Board. As discussed in the response directly above, USACE confirmed in a letter from William Ness, Senior Project Manager, California North Branch, USACE to Christina Hanson, Placer County Facility Services Department dated October 6, 2011 that the vernal pools on the site are not regulated by the USACE and are not subject to the jurisdiction of Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act. Therefore, they are not considered waters of the United States and would not require the issuance of a Water Quality Certification.

The comment letter identifies permitting requirements under the heading Waste Discharge Requirements.

The comment letter states that if only non-jurisdictional waters of the State are present in the project area, the proposed project will require a Waste Discharge Requirement permit. It is assumed that this comment refers to the pump to waste activities. This comment is noted and the County will ensure that the appropriate permits are obtained for this activity.

The comment letter states in bullet #1 that there is no mention of the well site on the park site behind the building.

The comment letter is assumed to be referring to a potential well located on the County park property adjacent to the proposed well site. As confirmed by the Placer County Parks Department, there is no active well on the Park property; the Park's water supply is provided by the community water system. Therefore the proposed well would not impact the Park's water supply.

The comment letter in bullet #2 raises a concern related to the park sewer line running behind the building to the unnamed street beside the park.

The comment letter is assumed to be raising concerns regarding the water line extension interfering with the exiting sewer line extending from the park facilities. The potential exists that the water line extension would cross other existing underground utilities. The contractor installing the water line extension will be required to conduct an underground service alert (USA) prior to initiating any construction. If unknown utilities are encountered during construction, additional excavation may be necessary to ensure sufficient separation is placed between the existing utility and the water line extension.

The comment letter in bullet #3 states that when the County implemented the safe route to school project in Sheridan, the construction contractor discovered some unmarked/unknown utility lines.

As discussed in the response to bullet #2 above, if unknown utilities are encountered during construction, additional excavation may be necessary to ensure sufficient separation is placed between the existing utility and the water line extension.

The comment letter asks in bullet #4 how the construction of the pipe line is going to affect the use of the hall in the park for community meetings and rentals.

A discussion of the construction noise impacts associated with the proposed project is provided in Section 3.12 on page 3-42 of the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration. As stated on page 3-42, the construction activities associated with the proposed project would result in the temporary elevation of noise levels at the project site and surrounding areas. Therefore, users of the park hall could be disturbed by elevated construction noise. However, the construction activities would be temporary (i.e., over a six month period) with construction trenching activities near the park hall limited to a few weeks at the longest. Also, construction activities are exempted from noise standards as long as they comply with the requirements of the Placer County Noise Ordinance. Project construction would be required to comply with these requirements. Public access to the park and Stewart Hall will be maintained by ensuring users have access to the alternate parking lot located behind the hall.

The comment letter identifies concerns and questions left unanswered regarding the adverse repercussions to individual wells and water sources associated with drilling the project well.

The comment letter identifies specific concerns related to the proposed project including calling the project an upgrade when it really sounds more like a plan to use the new well as a primary well. The purpose of the proposed project is to upgrade the public water system within Sheridan by increasing the system's water supply and storage capacities, consistent with the requirements of the California Waterworks Standards. The County is required to upgrade the water supply system based on a June 26, 2008 inspection performed by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), during which it was noted that Sheridan had insufficient source and storage capacity to meet current California Waterworks Standards in Title 22 of the California Water Code Section 64554. The new well would upgrade Sheridan's water supply by providing an additional source of water to the system. The new well would be operated such that it would provide the primary water supply to the system with the other two primary wells supporting the system during periods of high water demand. These wells would also ensure adequate fire flow is available when necessary. However, the overall system demand is not anticipated to change. Growth in the area is projected to be consistent with the land uses identified in the Sheridan General Plan.

The comment letter identifies concerns related to salt in the existing primary wells.

The County is required to submit an annual report to the Department of Public Health documenting the existing water system's compliance with established water quality standards. To date, all reports have indicated that Sheridan's water supply is in compliance with applicable water quality standards. The reports have not identified any concerns associated with high salt levels. Therefore, salt levels in Sheridan's water supply were not discussed in the environmental documents prepared for the project.

In addition, a third party drilling company was contracted with to drill a well test hole and conduct water sampling activities at the proposed well site. Water samples were obtained and tested, and Sodium levels were reported as below laboratory reporting limits or within the acceptable range for applicable State Department of Public Health drinking water quality criteria.

The comment letter identifies concerns related to the designation of the new well as a primary well and its effects on rural well levels.

The comment letter states that there is no data to back up the statements that the water levels didn't drop during testing. The County conducted an analysis of several

potential site locations and selected the proposed site on the northwest side of town in part due to the superior hydrologic productivity of the site. Specifically, the County evaluated the aquifer and other hydrogeological characteristics in the area to confirm the aquifer would be suitable to meet the County's well parameters as well as avoid impacts to other wells in the area.

As discussed on page 3-35 of the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, an analysis by a third party engineering firm, Brown and Caldwell, determined the proposed well would draw down groundwater levels only in the immediate vicinity of the pump, creating a radius of influence (the radial distance from the center of a wellbore to the point where there is no lowering of the water table) of approximately 110 feet. A draw down analysis takes into account, among other things, the well depth, proposed pumping rate, and permeability (ability of water to flow through) of surrounding rock and soils.

In addition, a previous geologic study of Sheridan supports locating an additional water supply well to the west of town, based on data that shows salt water strata dipping steeply to the west, thus increasing the fresh water base in that area.

The proposed well would be located on the perimeter of the community away from most other private groundwater wells and is specifically located more than 600 feet from the nearest existing groundwater well (private well). Exhibit 2-3 on page 2-7 of the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration identifies the estimated radius of influence around the proposed well and the nearest groundwater well. The closest well, which is located approximately 600 feet to the east, is inactive and the property owner is connected to Sheridan's water system.

Based on this information, it can be reasonably concluded that the proposed well would not be expected to substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table.

The comment letter asks what recourse is available in a year if well water levels drop or groundwater quality is poor.

The County is responsible for ensuring that the water supply system within the community of Sheridan is maintained consistent with California Waterworks Standards and the California Department of Public Health standards. This includes monitoring the quality of the groundwater extracted from the proposed well. If the project degraded the groundwater such that the applicable water quality standards were exceeded, the County would be responsible for remediating the water quality violation.

Rev 1. - Additionally, the County is responsible for remediating any documented adverse impacts to the quantity and/or quality of groundwater wells in the vicinity of the new municipal well site resulting from the installation and operation of the new municipal well. Concurrent with implementation of the Project, the County will compile baseline information on groundwater elevations and quality from private wells in the

vicinity of the Project and will develop an ongoing monitoring program to assess any potential impacts. Potential remediation measures may include connecting residential users to the community water supply system, redrilling or lowering the groundwater pump in the existing domestic well, or through rebalancing the municipal water supply system to draw less water from the new municipal well.

The comment letter asks about the data backing up the statement that well one and two are potable.

The County is required to submit an annual report to the Department of Public Health documenting the community water system's compliance with established water quality standards. This includes wells #1 and #2. To date, all reports have indicated that Sheridan's water supply is in compliance with applicable water quality standards. Thus, these wells are producing potable water. The third well to which the comment letter refers is not proposed to be used as a potable water supply. As stated on page 1-1 of the Initial Study/Mitigation Negative Declaration, it is only used to fill fire department tanker trucks.

The comment letter asks how many hours the new well will run per day and how many gallons of water are used per day in Sheridan.

The well's hours of operation will depend upon demand with higher use and longer operating hours anticipated during the summer months due to higher residential irrigation demands. The annual water usage for the community of Sheridan for 2008-2009 was 28.169 million gallons, or 77,175 gallons per day.

The comment letter asks what plan is in place if the new well's use lowers water levels.

The ramifications associated with the proposed well lowering the water level in domestic groundwater wells in the community is discussed in detail above.

The comment letter raises concerns regarding the contamination of groundwater associated with operation of the new well.

The potential for the new well to adversely affect groundwater quality is discussed in detail above. As discussed above, the well's radius of influence (the radial distance from the center of a wellbore to the point where there is no lowering of the water table) is approximately 110 feet. Therefore, well operations are not anticipated to draw in contaminants from sources beyond this 110-foot radius. Also, there is no indication that the existing wells within the community of Sheridan are drawing in contaminants from areas such as the Bear River.

The comment letter asks why the sewer system within the community was enlarged when sufficient water wasn't available.

The County upgraded the community's wastewater system to ensure the system complied with State standards. The State of California issued Cease and Desist Order No. R5-2002-209 in 2002 requiring the wastewater treatment plant to either come into compliance with the site's National Pollution Discharge Elimination System

(NPDES) permit requirements or cease discharge altogether. The system upgrades ensured the system was in compliance with the site's NPDES requirements.

The comment letter questions how the storage tank can be assumed to not adversely affect scenic vistas.

As stated on page 3-4 of the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, the project elements visible from surrounding areas would include the approximately 24-foot tall water storage tank, the single-story well and pump station building, the site access road, and the perimeter fencing. The introduction of these project elements would result in some change in the site's visual character. However, due to the relatively small size of the building (approximately 700 square feet) and water storage tank (approximately 50 feet in diameter), these changes would be relatively minor. These structures would be consistent with the rural built environment in the community of Sheridan, such as the adjacent Stewart Hall, and would not represent a substantial degradation of the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings. Therefore, the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration concluded that the proposed project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site. The project vicinity does not include any designated scenic vistas; therefore, the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration concluded that the proposed project would have no impact on scenic vistas.

Rev 1. - Additionally, the County agrees to install and maintain vegetative screening (trees) and irrigation along the northern property boundary of the well and tank site to lessen the visual effect to the properties to the north of the site. The County also agrees to maintain the new well control building in a manner that is visually consistent with agricultural uses (barns) in the vicinity of the Project.

The comment letter states that no alternative plans to the proposed project are identified by the County.

A discussion of the alternatives considered by the County to the proposed project is provided in Section 2.5 on page 2-8 of the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration. As stated on page 2-10, two alternative sites were evaluated for installation of the proposed well and water tank including at Sheridan Park, directly east of the project site, and at a mobile home park site located further east of the project site or approximately 500 feet west of Camp Far West Road. Each alternative, including the proposed project, was evaluated to determine how best it would meet the County's objectives. The proposed project was determined to have the best hydrogeology due to its westerly location and the fact that it is furthest from the community's existing water supply wells and adjacent wells, the least cost because the County owns the property, and the best security due to its isolated location. For these reasons, the other potential alternatives were rejected from further consideration.

The comment letter states that an environmental impact report should be done and questions the notification provided about the project to the community.

CEQA requires the preparation of an environmental impact report only when the public agency finds substantial evidence that the project may have a significant effect on the environment (CEQA Guidelines sec. 15064[a][1]). The Mitigated Negative Declaration represents the lead agency's determination that the project as designed, with the recommended mitigation measures, would mitigate potentially significant environmental impacts to the point where no significant effect on the environment would occur (CEQA Guidelines sec. 15064[f][2]). At no time did the County state that an environmental impact report would be prepared for the proposed project.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15072 states that a Lead Agency shall give notice of intent to adopt a negative declaration or mitigated negative declaration by at least one of the following procedures to allow the public the review period provided under Section 15105:

- i. Publication at least one time by the lead agency in a newspaper of general circulation in the area affected by the proposed project. If more than one area is affected, the notice shall be published in the newspaper of largest circulation from among the newspapers of general circulation in those areas.
- ii. Posting of notice by the lead agency on and off site in the area where the project is to be located.
- iii. Direct mailing to the owners and occupants of contiguous property shown on the latest equalized assessment roll.

The County mailed the Notice of Intent to the local newspaper (Lincoln News Messenger), municipal advisory council (MAC) members (electronic and hard copies as well as presentations at MAC meetings), Lincoln Library, Sheridan Elementary School, County offices, and nearly 200 Sheridan residents (far in excess of the minimum required contiguous properties).

The comment letter expresses concerns that previously submitted (email) questions and concerns were not responded to or addressed.

The commenter previously submitted written comments on April 2, 2012, via email, during the public review period for the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration. County staff responded via email to these comments, and subsequent email questions, on April 2, 2012, April 4, 2012, and June 6, 2012, acknowledging that the comments were received and will be responded to pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines. In response to additional, subsequent emails asking about the environmental process, County staff responded, via email, on June 20, 2012, explaining the response-to-comment process required by CEQA for Mitigated Negative Declarations.

In response to the August 20, 2012 email commenting on the Finding of No Significant Impact, County staff responded by email on August 20, 2012, by phone on August 31, 2012, and in writing via this response (which was also mailed to the commenter to comply with the California Department of Housing and Community Development's requirements for NEPA responses).

Since lead agencies must consider all comments when making a decision on a project, County staff will provide written comments received, and responses, to both the County Board of Supervisors and the State Department of Housing and Community Development for their consideration.

The comment letter expresses concerns with the public review process, stating that it circumvented residents' right to be heard.

The public noticing of the Environmental Assessment was conducted according to HCD guidelines, applicable regulations (24 CFR Part 58, Subpart E) and consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). HCD guidelines require that the public notice and environmental documentation be available for public review and comment for 15 days; accordingly, the documents were circulated for public review from August 16, 2012 to August 31, 2012. In addition, it provides for an additional 15-day period for the HCD to accept objections to the Request for Release of Funds, which was released on September 4, 2012.

In addition, the public noticing for the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration was conducted pursuant to the County's Environmental Review Ordinance, CEQA guidelines, and applicable regulations (14 CCR 15000-15387). CEQA requires a minimum public review period of 30 days; accordingly the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration was circulated for public review from February 29, 2012 to March 30, 2012.

In addition to the mandatory public review process, County staff attended, and provided project updates to, the Sheridan Municipal Advisory Council (MAC) meetings

several times each year since the onset of this project, including a public informational meeting on October 10, 2012. All MAC agendas are made available to the public.

The comment letter expresses concerns that an Environmental Impact Report was not prepared.

A CEQA Environmental Impact Report or NEPA Environmental Impact Statement is only required if substantial evidence shows that the project may have a significant adverse environmental impact (PRC 21808, 24 CFR Part 58.37).

The Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration and Environmental Assessment represent the lead agencies' determination that the project as designed, with the proposed mitigation measures, would mitigate potentially significant environmental impacts to the point where no significant effect on the environment would occur (CEQA Guidelines sec. 15064[f][2], 24 CFR Part 58.36).

County staff responded to this comment by phone on August 31, 2012; the commenter specifically mentioned concerns regarding the impacts to neighboring water wells and aesthetic impacts as a result of the water tank.

As discussed on page 3-35 of the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, an analysis by a third party engineering firm, Brown and Caldwell, determined the proposed well would draw down groundwater levels only in the immediate vicinity of the pump, creating a radius of influence (the radial distance from the center of a wellbore to the point where there is no lowering of the water table) of approximately 110 feet. A drawn down analysis takes into account, among other things, the well depth, proposed pumping rate, and permeability (ability of water to flow through) of surrounding rock and soils.

In addition, previous geologic study of Sheridan supported locating an additional water supply well to the west of town, based on data that shows salt water strata dipping steeply to the west, thus increasing the fresh water base in that area.

The proposed well would be located on the perimeter of the community away from most other private groundwater wells and is specifically located more than 600 feet from the nearest existing groundwater well. Exhibit 2-3 on page 2-7 of the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration identifies the estimated radius of influence around the proposed well and the nearest groundwater well. The closest well, which is located approximately 600 feet to the east, is inactive and the property owner is connected to Sheridan's water system.

Based on this information, it can be reasonably concluded that the proposed well would not be expected to substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table.

Regarding the visual impacts of the water tank, CEQA and HCD Guidelines require the environmental analysis consider visual impacts such as affecting a designated

scenic vista, degrade existing visual character, or create new sources of light or glare, or whether the project is incompatible with land use requirements.

As discussed on page 3-5 of the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, Aesthetics, states that the project elements that would be visible from surrounding areas would include the approximately 24-foot tall water storage tank, the single-story well and pump station building, the site access road, and the perimeter fencing. The introduction of these project elements would result in some change in the site's visual character. However, due to the relatively small size of the building (approximately 700 square feet) and water storage tank (approximately 50 feet in diameter), these changes would be relatively minor, consistent with the rural built environment, such as the adjacent Stewart Hall, in the community of Sheridan, and would not represent a substantial degradation of the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.

**Comment Letter: Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
August 28, 2012**

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Since this comment letter contains identical comments as the letter submitted on March 12, 2012, please refer to the responses to Letter A above.

**SHERIDAN WATER SUPPLY IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT
MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM**

When an agency makes a finding that potentially significant impacts have been mitigated to less than significant levels, the agency must also adopt a program for reporting on or monitoring the efficacy of the mitigation measures that were adopted (Public Resources Code 21081.6). This document consists of a proposed Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) for the Sheridan Water Supply Improvements Project. The monitoring and reporting measures included in this program are the responsibility of the Lead Agency, the Placer County Department of Facility Services.

The MMRP identifies the mitigation measures required, the parties responsible for implementing and monitoring the measures, and a summary of the specific actions necessary to implement and monitor each measure. The MMRP is intended to ensure effective implementation of mitigation measures that are within Placer County's (County's) authority to implement, including monitoring and reporting where identified, throughout all phases of development of the Proposed Project.

Where responsibility for implementing a mitigation measure is listed as belonging to Placer County, the County may choose to delegate that responsibility to the construction contractor or another qualified individual, as deemed appropriate by the County or any other regulatory agency. However, Placer County remains responsible for ensuring that the implementation of these mitigation measures occurs to the extent noted in this Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program and, where it is noted, Placer County will be responsible for reviewing and monitoring the required mitigation measures to ensure compliance (CEQA Guidelines 15097).

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Sheridan Water Supply Improvements Project Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program				
Mitigation Measures	Party Responsible for Implementation	Party Responsible for Monitoring	Monitoring Action	Significance After Mitigation
Biological Resources				
<p>Mitigation Measure BIO-1: In order to minimize indirect impacts to the offsite vernal pool habitat located directly north of the project boundary, a qualified biologist shall be retained to conduct worker awareness training for construction personnel. The qualified biologist shall conduct worker awareness trainings for all construction personnel before ground-disturbance activities begin and, as needed, prior to new personnel beginning work. The program shall inform all construction personnel about the life history and status of vernal pool crustaceans, the need to avoid damaging vernal pool habitats, and the possible penalties for not complying with these requirements. All personnel will acknowledge that they have attended the training and understand all environmental requirements of the project by signing an attendance form at the completion of the training. Written documentation of the training and a list of attendees shall be submitted to USFWS upon request within 30 days of the completion of training.</p>	Placer County Department of Facility Services	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Retain qualified biologist and conduct worker awareness training prior to ground-disturbing activities. Submit written documentation of the training and a list of attendees to USFWS upon request within 30 days of the completion of training.	Less than significant
<p>Mitigation Measure BIO-2: High-visibility fencing shall be placed along the northern site boundary adjacent to the existing vernal pool habitat prior to ground-breaking activities in order to avoid direct impacts. This action will prevent the encroachment of construction vehicles and personnel into the offsite vernal pool habitat. A qualified biologist shall assist in the identification of the extent of the boundaries of the vernal pools and direct the placement of high-visibility fencing. Offsite vernal pool habitat to be avoided shall be marked in all applicable site plans and construction drawings. Placer County shall stipulate in the construction contract that the construction supervisor or designee shall inspect the fencing daily and maintain and repair the fencing as needed. The fencing shall be removed when project construction is complete.</p>	Placer County Department of Facility Services	Placer County Department of Facility Services	Install high-visibility fencing along the northern site boundary prior to ground-breaking activities. Ensure the fencing is inspected daily and maintained and repaired as needed	Less than significant
<p>Mitigation Measure BIO-3: The storage of construction equipment, portable equipment, vehicles, and supplies shall be</p>	Placer County Department of Facility	Placer County Department of	Ensure construction equipment and supplies are restricted to	Less than significant

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Sheridan Water Supply Improvements Project Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program				
Mitigation Measures	Party Responsible for Implementation	Party Responsible for Monitoring	Monitoring Action	Significance After Mitigation
restricted to the designated construction staging areas and exclusive of the offsite vernal pool habitat. All fueling, cleaning, and maintenance of vehicles and other equipment shall occur only within designated areas and at least 250 feet away from any wetland habitats or drainages as feasible. All workers shall be informed of the importance of preventing spills and appropriate measures to take should a spill occur.	Services	Facility Services	the designated staging areas and that workers are informed of measures to take should a spill occur.	
Mitigation Measure BIO-4: Temporary soil berms or other, as effective, barriers shall be installed along the limits of construction to prevent construction storm water discharge into the offsite vernal pool habitat. Ground disturbing activities will be limited to the dry season, generally March 15 to October 15, reducing the likelihood of any direct runoff escaping the immediate construction footprint.	Placer County Department of Facility Services	Placer County Department of Facility Services	Install temporary soil berms along the limits of construction and limit construction to the dry season.	Less than significant
Mitigation Measure BIO-5: The project shall implement best management practices (BMPs) in accordance with the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan that is prepared as a requirement of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permit issued by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board in order to control erosion during and after construction of the project. Erosion control measures and BMPs, which retain soil or sediment, control runoff from watering for dust control, and control hazardous materials on the construction site and prevent these from entering the offsite vernal pool habitat, shall be placed, monitored, and maintained throughout the construction operations. These measures and BMPs may include, but are not limited to, silt fencing, sterile hay bales, vegetative strips, hydroseeding, and temporary sediment disposal. All BMPs will be removed from the site after the completion of construction.	Placer County Department of Facility Services	Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board	Ensure BMPS are implemented throughout the construction operations.	Less than significant
Mitigation Measure BIO-6: The County shall acquire vernal pool habitat mitigation credits from a USFWS-approved mitigation bank for listed vernal pool branchiopod species for direct impacts to 0.03 acre and for indirect impacts to 0.03 acre of vernal pool habitat at a ratio determined by the USFWS. This	Placer County Department of Facility Services	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Acquire vernal pool habitat mitigation credits prior to the initiation of construction.	Less than significant

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Sheridan Water Supply Improvements Project Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program				
Mitigation Measures	Party Responsible for Implementation	Party Responsible for Monitoring	Monitoring Action	Significance After Mitigation
purchase will occur prior to the initiation of construction and proof of payment and credit acquisition shall be provided to the USFWS and Placer County prior to the initiation of construction.				
Mitigation Measure BIO-7: For all of the pipeline alignments, the County shall implement the Best Management Practices identified in Mitigation Measure HYD-1 below to ensure that soil erosion during construction is not transported into the adjacent wetlands. Also, when pipeline trenching occurs within close proximity to wetland fills, high-visibility fencing shall be placed two feet outside of the wetland boundary to minimize direct impacts.	Placer County Department of Facility Services	Placer County Department of Facility Services	Ensure BMPS are implemented throughout the construction operations and that high-visibility fencing is appropriately placed.	Less than significant
Cultural Resources				
Mitigation Measure CR-1: If archaeological artifacts, exotic rock (non-native), or unusual amounts of shell or bone, midden deposits, historic debris, building foundations, human bone, or paleontological resources are uncovered during any on-site construction activities, all work must stop immediately within 100 feet of the area and a SOPA-certified (Society of Professional Archaeologists) and/or Register of Professional Archaeologist (or Paleontologist, if appropriate) shall be retained to evaluate the deposits. The Placer County Planning Department and Department of Museums must also be contacted for review of the archaeological find(s). Work in the area may only resume after authorization is granted by the Placer County Planning Department.	Placer County Department of Facility Services	Placer County Planning Department and Department of Museums	Ensure work appropriately stops if artifacts are uncovered during construction and the appropriate agencies are contacted.	Less than significant
Mitigation Measure CR-2: In accordance with the California Health and Safety Code, if human remains are uncovered during ground-disturbing activities, the construction contractor shall immediately halt potentially damaging ground disturbing activity in the area of the remains and within 100 feet of the find and notify the Placer County Coroner, the appropriate Placer County representative, and a professional archaeologist specializing in Human-Osteology and approved by the County to determine the nature of the remains.	Placer County Department of Facility Services	Placer County Coroner	Ensure work appropriately stops if human remains are uncovered during construction and the appropriate agencies are contacted.	Less than significant

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**Sheridan Water Supply Improvements Project
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Mitigation Measures	Party Responsible for Implementation	Party Responsible for Monitoring	Monitoring Action	Significance After Mitigation
<p>The coroner is required to examine all discoveries of human remains within 48 hours of receiving notice of a discovery on private or state lands (Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5[b]). If the coroner determines that the remains are those of Native American origin, he or she must contact the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) by telephone within 24 hours of making that determination (Health and Safety Code Section 7050[c]). Following the coroner's findings, the County, the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), the construction contractor, the archaeologist, and the NAHC-designated Most Likely Descendent (MLD) shall determine the ultimate treatment and disposition of the remains and take appropriate steps to ensure that additional human interments are not disturbed. The responsibilities for acting upon notification of a discovery of Native American human remains are identified in California Public Resources Code Section 5097.9.</p> <p>The County and HCD shall ensure that the area of the discovery and the immediate vicinity within 100 feet of the find (according to generally accepted cultural or archaeological standards and practices) is cordoned off and not damaged or disturbed by further ground-disturbing activity (including pedestrian traffic) until consultation with the MLD has taken place. The MLD shall have 48 hours to complete a site inspection and make recommendations after being granted access to the site. A range of possible treatments for the remains, including nondestructive removal and analysis, preservation in place, relinquishment of the remains and associated items to the descendants, or other culturally appropriate treatment may be discussed. The concerned parties may extend discussions beyond the initial 48 hours to allow for the discovery of additional remains.</p>				
Hydrology and Water Quality				
Mitigation Measure HYD-1: The following mitigation measures	Placer County	Central Valley	Ensure storm water	Less than

Sheridan Water Supply Improvements Project Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program				
Mitigation Measures	Party Responsible for Implementation	Party Responsible for Monitoring	Monitoring Action	Significance After Mitigation
<p>shall be implemented during site construction activities associated with the Proposed Project:</p> <p>1. Because this project disturbs greater than one acre, coverage under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities (Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ, as amended) shall be obtained by Placer County prior to any soil disturbance activities. A storm water pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) shall be prepared by a Qualified SWPPP Developer (QSD) for the Proposed Project that complies with this Construction General Permit. The SWPPP shall be downloaded to the California Water Resources Control Board SMARTS database prior to the onset of any soil disturbance activities. All construction contractors shall retain a copy of the QSD-approved SWPPP on the construction site. At a minimum, the SWPPP shall identify and specify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The use of erosion and sediment-control Best Management Practices (BMPs) as determined by the QSD; ▶ The use of non-structural BMPs such as project scheduling; ▶ The means of waste disposal; ▶ The implementation of approved local plans, non-storm water-management controls, permanent post-construction BMPs, and inspection and maintenance responsibilities; 	Department of Facility Services	Regional Water Quality Control Board	management requirements are implemented during and after construction consistent with storm water permit requirements.	significant

**Sheridan Water Supply Improvements Project
Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program**

Mitigation Measures	Party Responsible for Implementation	Party Responsible for Monitoring	Monitoring Action	Significance After Mitigation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The pollutants that are likely to be used during construction that could be present in storm water drainage and non-storm water discharges, and other types of materials used for equipment operation; ▶ Spill prevention and contingency measures, including measures to prevent or clean up spills of hazardous waste and of hazardous materials used for equipment operation, and emergency procedures for responding to spills; ▶ Personnel training requirements and procedures that will be used to ensure that workers are aware of permit requirements and proper installation methods for BMPs specified in the SWPPP; ▶ The appropriate personnel responsible for supervisory duties related to implementation of the SWPPP; ▶ The designated risk level of the project as determined by a QSD; ▶ The monitoring and reporting requirements associated with the project's risk level; and ▶ The non-visual pollutant monitoring program. <p>2. BMPs identified in the SWPPP shall be installed and maintained throughout all site work and construction. BMPs may include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Implementing temporary sediment-control 				

Sheridan Water Supply Improvements Project Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program				
Mitigation Measures	Party Responsible for Implementation	Party Responsible for Monitoring	Monitoring Action	Significance After Mitigation
<p>measures in disturbed areas to minimize discharge of sediment into nearby drainage conveyances. These measures may include but are not limited to silt fences, staked straw bales or wattles, sediment/silt basins and traps, geofabric, and sandbag dikes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Implementing temporary erosion control measures to minimize or eliminate the erosion of sediment. These measures may include but are not limited to rolled erosion control products such as coconut matting, plastic sheeting, etc. ▶ Establishing permanent vegetative cover to reduce erosion in the roadway shoulder areas disturbed by construction that will slow runoff velocities, trap sediment, and enhance filtration and transpiration. ▶ Using drainage swales, ditches, and earth dikes to control erosion and runoff by conveying surface runoff down sloping land, intercepting and diverting runoff to a watercourse or channel, preventing sheet flow over sloped surfaces, preventing runoff accumulation at the base of a grade, and avoiding flood damage along roadways and facility infrastructure. <p>3. The SWPPP shall be amended by a QSD, as necessary, to address changing site conditions and risk levels. Any SWPPP amendments shall be contained within the onsite copy and downloaded to the SMARTS database.</p> <p>4. The project monitoring shall be performed by a QSD,</p>				

Sheridan Water Supply Improvements Project Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program				
Mitigation Measures	Party Responsible for Implementation	Party Responsible for Monitoring	Monitoring Action	Significance After Mitigation
<p>Qualified SWPPP Practitioner (QSP), or a designated trainee of a QSD or QSP. This monitoring is subject to the requirements of the Construction General Permit for the specified risk level for the project and may include discharge sampling and analysis. All monitoring results shall be downloaded to the SMARTS database within the required timeframes specified in the Construction General Permit.</p> <p>5. The SWPPP shall be implemented until all permanent post-construction BMPs have been successfully implemented and a Notice of Termination has been granted by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board absolving coverage under the General Construction Permit.</p>				

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