

18.0 OTHER CEQA SECTIONS

18.1 SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS THAT CANNOT BE AVOIDED

This Draft Subsequent EIR (SEIR) concludes that all impacts associated with the proposed Hidden Falls Regional Park Trails Expansion Project can be mitigated to less than significant levels except for three that are considered significant and unavoidable. Each is discussed below.

1. **“Long-Term Changes in Visual Resources Associated with the Improvements to Garden Bar Road.”** Implementation of Mitigation Measures 7-1: Revegetate and Restore All Disturbed Areas to Minimize Visual Quality Impacts, and 12-8: Protect Oak Woodland Habitat would reduce this impact; however, this impact would remain significant and unavoidable because no other screening options along Garden Bar Road are available and revegetation of the disturbed areas would not reduce visual impacts in the short term.
2. **Conflict with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3 subdivision (b).** The proposed project results in an increase in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). Since no threshold has been established by the County, and the proposed project is inconsistent with the Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS), the increase in VMT is considered significant. Due to the rural nature of the project, the only feasible mitigation measure to reduce VMT is the parking reservation system which is included as a project feature in the project description employed for weekends, holidays, and other peak visitation days. Although the parking reservation system limits VMT and encourages carpooling, the increase in VMT remains significant and unavoidable.
3. **Conflict with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3 subdivision (b) - Cumulative Plus Project Conditions.** The proposed project will continue to generate VMT under cumulative plus project conditions and since no threshold has been established by the County and the project is inconsistent with the MTP/SCS, the increase in VMT is a cumulatively considerable impact. Due to the rural nature of the project, the only feasible mitigation measure to reduce VMT is the parking reservation system which is included in the project description and employed for weekends, holidays, and other peak visitation days. Although the parking reservation system limits VMT and encourages carpooling, the increase in VMT remains significant and unavoidable.

18.2 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

Public Resources Code Section 21100(b)(2)(B) provides that an EIR shall include a detailed statement setting forth “[i]n a separate section... [a]ny significant effect on the environment that would be irreversible if the project is implemented.” State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(c) provides the following guidance for an analysis of significant irreversible changes of a project:

Uses of nonrenewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the project may be irreversible because a large commitment of such resources makes removal or nonuse thereafter unlikely. Primary impacts and, particularly, secondary impacts (such as highway improvement that provides access to a previously inaccessible area) generally commit future generations to

similar uses. Also, irreversible damage can result from environmental accidents associated with the project. Irretrievable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified.

Mechanical construction techniques would be used to construct the proposed trail system and recreational facilities such as parking areas, restrooms, overlooks and bridges across Raccoon Creek and other drainages. In addition, the proposed trails expansion project would commit future generations to similar uses to some extent. The project would provide access to a rural area that has been inaccessible to most recreational users and other members of the public. This could be considered a secondary effect of the project. However, all potential effects of the project for all applicable environmental issue areas are analyzed in this SEIR. Therefore, this analysis assumes that no additional effects related to project development would occur that are not evaluated in other sections of this SEIR.

18.3 GROWTH-INDUCING EFFECTS

Public Resources Code Section 21100(b)(5) specifies that the growth-inducing impacts of a project must be addressed in an EIR. Section 15126.2(d) of the State CEQA Guidelines states that a project is growth-inducing if it could “foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment.” Direct growth inducement would result if a project involved (for example) the construction of new housing. Indirect growth inducement would result if a project established substantial new permanent employment opportunities (e.g., new commercial, industrial, or governmental enterprises), involved a construction effort with substantial short-term employment opportunities that would indirectly stimulate the need for additional housing and services, or removed an obstacle to housing development. Examples of growth-inducing actions include extending water, wastewater, fire, or other types of services in areas not previously served; extending transportation routes into previously undeveloped areas; and establishing major new employment opportunities.

The project would involve construction of a multi-use trail system and trailhead parking facilities within a rural recreational setting. Implementation of the HFRP Trails Expansion project could occur in phases and the work would be performed by one or more crews from the California Conservation Corps, licensed contractors, volunteers, and/or County staff. These activities would generate short-term employment opportunities; however, the work would be temporary and would occur over several years, with certain activities starting and stopping for shorter durations within that time period. Because of the limited number and type of new jobs that would be generated and the temporary nature of those jobs, it is anticipated that the new jobs would be filled using the existing local employment pool. Additional rangers and County Parks staff members would be needed to manage the proposed Trail Expansion areas. However, although the proposed project would require additional workers, the number of additional rangers and County Parks staff would have very little effect on the local workforce. For these reasons, indirect growth-inducing impacts resulting from implementation of the proposed Trails Expansion project would be less than significant.

The Trail Expansion areas would be consistent with permitted uses allowed in the Farm zone district, as parks are an allowed use within the Farm zone district, pursuant to approval of a use permit. Fire and emergency services as well as utilities are also provided to the area. The project includes mitigation that enhances public safety through the purchase of a light rescue emergency services vehicle (which can also be used for the residential areas in the vicinity of the expansion areas), new infrastructure to support firefighting, providing sources of water for fire

suppression, and creating places to post emergency command centers by utilizing parking areas when necessary. Use of the project features would be regulated through the permit system that controls public access and limits the number of guests to match the level of improvement and ensure adequate service levels. The level of proposed improvements is not sufficient to upgrade the local infrastructure in a way that supports growth and associated need for service. Local roadways are constrained and beyond physical improvements, there are regulatory approvals and permit requirements (e.g., water and wastewater facilities and capacity, compliance with the General Plan and Placer County Zoning Ordinance) that serve as limitations on future development. These permits and approvals must be met for any further development to occur along project roadways; therefore, the project would not result in direct growth-inducing effects.

18.4 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Section 15130 of the State CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR discuss cumulative impacts of a project when the project's incremental effect is "cumulatively considerable." According to Section 15065, "Cumulatively considerable means that the incremental effects of an individual project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, other current projects, and probable future projects as defined in Section 15130." Sections 15130 and 15355 of the State CEQA Guidelines both stress cumulative impacts in the context of closely related projects and from projects causing related impacts.

The term "considerable" is subject to interpretation. The standards used herein to determine whether an effect is considerable are that either the impact of the project would contribute in any manner to the existing significant cumulative impact, or the cumulative impact would exceed an established threshold of significance when the project's incremental effects are combined with similar effects from other projects.

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b) directs the crafting of an adequate discussion of cumulative impacts:

The discussion of cumulative impacts shall reflect the severity of the impacts and their likelihood of occurrence, but the discussion need not provide as great a detail as is provided for the effects attributable to the project alone. The discussion should be guided by standards of practicality and reasonableness and should focus on the cumulative impact to which the identified other projects contribute rather than the attributes of other projects which do not contribute to the cumulative impact.

A cumulative analysis may employ either of two methods for evaluating cumulative impacts; this Draft SEIR uses the list method in accordance with Section 15130(b) (1) (A) of the State CEQA Guidelines, which allows the lead agency to consider "past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts...." The environmental influences of past projects and present projects that have been implemented already exist as a part of current conditions in the project area. Therefore, the contributions of past and present projects to environmental conditions are adequately captured in the description of the existing settings within each resource chapter (Chapters 4.0 through 16.0) and need not be specifically listed here. This cumulative impact analysis focuses on the potential cumulative physical changes to the existing setting that could occur as a result of a combination of this proposed trail project and probable future projects that are reasonably foreseeable.

18.4.1 OTHER RELEVANT PROJECTS

HIDDEN FALLS REGIONAL PARK (EXISTING)

The existing HFRP covers roughly 1,200 acres and has approximately 30 miles of natural-surface, multi-use trails, with public parking located at Mears Place. The trails within HFRP cross Raccoon Creek and Deadman Creek via bridges in three locations. Raccoon Creek flows through the park from east to west and Deadman Creek joins Raccoon Creek from the south. Existing park amenities include two waterfall overlooks, interpretive displays, restrooms, drinking fountains, picnic areas, benches, trash receptacles, and hitching posts and horse-watering areas for equestrians. Since fully opening to the public in 2013, HFRP has grown in popularity and visitation.

PLACER COUNTY WINERY AND FARM BREWERY ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT (FUTURE PROJECT)

Placer County is currently preparing an Environmental Impact Report evaluating the impacts of amending the Winery & Farm Brewery Ordinance. In general, the proposed amendment is intended to preserve and protect agricultural land, support the tenets of agritourism, and address competing interests with regard to residential and agricultural uses. The zoning text amendment affords additional event allowances by-right, and as such, analyzes this net new allowance for existing and future wineries and farm breweries. From a standpoint of traffic and transportation, the amendments do not change the day-to-day operation of wineries and farm breweries; nor does the amendment change the process undertaken by the County to process new winery and farm brewery applications. The amendment will change the number of agricultural promotional events permitted at wineries and farm breweries and will increase the number of extraordinary events that are allowed at existing and future facilities located on large (10+ acre) parcel sizes.

SIERRA COLLEGE BLVD / SR 193 RETAIL CENTER (FUTURE PROJECT)

Placer County has been in pre-development discussions regarding a possible retail center to be constructed at the intersection of Sierra College Blvd and SR 193. This 10-acre development would require a GPA/rezone and would be subject to an EIR before consideration by the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. However, for this analysis this project has been assumed to be completed to provide a very conservative assessment of cumulative impacts.

ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS (FUTURE PROJECT)

Cumulative transportation infrastructure is identified in various County and regional planning documents. Placer County administers the Countywide Traffic Mitigation Fee Program, which requires new development to contribute to the cost of circulation system improvements of county wide benefit. Individual benefit districts have been established. These improvements that affect project area roads are assumed to be in place under cumulative conditions. In addition, the improvements to Garden Bar Road that were required to support full use of the HFRP site, as approved in 2010, have been assumed to be constructed under the cumulative base condition.

When preparations began on this Draft SEIR, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) was evaluating options for improving State Route (SR) 49 near the HFRP Trails Expansion site, including improvements to the intersections of SR-49 and Cramer Road and SR-49 and Lone Star Road, but discussions were in their infancy and there was no certainty as to which direction Caltrans would take or if funding was available. Therefore, the off-site improvements to these two intersections were mentioned, but were not included

in the cumulative setting or considered as feasible mitigation. As recently as mid-August of 2019, funding was approved by the California Transportation Commission (CTC) and programmed for the proposed highway improvements, which include two roundabouts and concrete median barrier from 0.3 miles south of Lorenson Road/Florence Road to 0.3 miles north of Lone Star Road.

18.4.2 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative impacts of the project are evaluated separately for each environmental topic area addressed in this SEIR. Within each topic area, the cumulative impact analysis focuses on the potential cumulative physical changes to the existing conditions that could occur as a result of a combination of the project and probable future projects described above.

LAND USE AND AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Chapter 4.0 identifies the effects of the existing HFRP and proposed HFRP Trails Expansion project on land use, planning, and agricultural resources. The HFRP Trails Expansion project would be consistent with the land uses and zoning of the project area, including the goals and policies of the General Plan and Placer Legacy. Therefore, operation of the HFRP Trail Expansion project would not create a conflict with any plans or policies adopted for the protection of environmental resources, nor divide an established community. The HFRP Trails Expansion Project would also be consistent with the future land uses of those surrounding properties. Operation of the project does not require the conversion of agricultural land to a developed use and existing livestock grazing would continue under the project. Because no significant impact on land use or agricultural resources was identified, the HFRP Trails Expansion would not create a considerable contribution toward a cumulative impact.

SOILS, GEOLOGY, SEISMICITY, AND MINERAL RESOURCES

Chapter 5.0 identifies the effects of the existing park and proposed Trails Expansion project on soils, geology, seismicity, minerals and paleontological resources. Disturbance of topsoil and removal of vegetation during construction of the proposed Trails Expansion project would increase the potential for wind and water erosion. The project could include construction or renovation of existing buildings on-site for human occupancy (e.g., caretaker residence at the ranch house site, restrooms) and construction of bridges that could, though unlikely, be subject to ground shaking, liquefaction, and landslides. Disturbance of naturally occurring asbestos fibers could also create a health hazard, is considered potentially significant, and could be cumulatively considerable.

Mitigation of project impacts requires the County to obtain authorization from the Central Valley RWQCB for land disturbance due to construction and operation and implement erosion and sediment control measures. Mitigation also requires the County to obtain and implement seismic engineering design recommendations, and prepare and implement an asbestos dust control plan, if needed. Because the project would implement site-specific mitigation consistent with the Central Valley RWQCB program and Placer County Air Pollution Control District, the incremental effect of the project is not cumulatively considerable when considered with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects. The project would not contribute to a significant cumulative effect on soils, geology, or seismicity.

CULTURAL RESOURCES AND TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Chapter 6.0 identifies the effects of the existing HFRP Trails Expansion Project on cultural resources, including tribal cultural resources. The project has the potential to affect known cultural resources and yet-to-be-discovered

subsurface cultural remains or human interments. The impacts of the project on cultural resources in the project area are considered potentially significant and could be cumulatively considerable.

Mitigation of impacts of the project includes modifying trail alignments to avoid potentially significant cultural resources, and halting construction immediately and notifying a qualified professional archaeologist of any discovery of cultural materials or human interments. The archaeologist would determine whether the resource is potentially significant as per the California Register of Historical Resources and would develop appropriate mitigation. If a Native American burial is discovered, Sections 7050.5 and 7052 of the California Health and Safety Code and Section 5097 of the California Public Resources Code would be complied with to ensure that the site is properly protected. Additionally, and as requested by the United Auburn Indian Community and Colfax Todds Valley Consolidated Tribe, post-grading/pre-public access notification to the two tribes would be made in order to provide the opportunity for the tribes to inspect the various graded areas for tribal cultural resources prior to allowing the public on the sites.

Because the project would implement site-specific mitigation consistent with the California Health and Safety Code and the California Public Resources Code and provide post-grading notification as requested by the United Auburn Indian Community and Colfax Todds Valley Consolidated Tribe, the incremental effect of the HFRP Trails Expansion Project would not be cumulatively considerable when considered with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects. Therefore, the HFRP Trails Expansion Project would not contribute to a significant cumulative effect on cultural resources.

VISUAL RESOURCES

Chapter 7.0 identifies the effects of the HFRP and HFRP Trails Expansion Project on visual resources. The project would not be visible from any scenic vistas or scenic highways, although there would be some partial views of the access roads and parking areas from adjacent properties. Project features would incorporate the use of natural colors and materials to the extent possible so that they would blend with the surrounding environment. Views of trails and recreational facilities from the surrounding areas would be limited. The project would introduce some new low-level security lighting on the buildings on-site; however, the lighting would be similar to lighting used in the local areas, and all lighting would be required to be the fully-cut off, fully-shielded style in order to direct light down, and not up or out. Road improvements along Garden Bar Road, Curtola Ranch Road, and Bell Road would be visible to nearby residents and would change the visual character of Garden Bar Road. Because of the tree removal necessary to widen Garden Bar Road, the impacts of the project on visual resources along Garden Bar Road are considered significant and would be cumulatively considerable.

Revegetating temporarily disturbed areas to minimize visual quality impacts and protecting oak woodlands would reduce the visual impact, but not to a less-than-significant level. Because the project's effects would not be reduced to a less-than-significant level, the project's contribution to a cumulative effect on visual resources would be considerable. Therefore, the project would contribute to a **significant and unavoidable cumulative effect** on visual resources.

TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

Chapter 8 identifies the effects of the HFRP Trails Expansion Project on transportation. Implementation of the proposed project will result in new daily vehicle travel, which would add VMT to the study area. The proposed project is anticipated to generate 2,036 daily trips on a Saturday and 944 daily trips on a typical weekday, as

shown in Tables 8-5 and 8-6 above. The average trip lengths and trip distribution for a peak Saturday are expected to be similar to the existing park, as shown in Table 8-7 of Section 8.

The traffic operations analysis contained in Section 8.6 indicates that the project will contribute towards unacceptable traffic operations at the SR 49/Lone Star Road and SR 49/Cramer Road intersections under cumulative plus project conditions. Although that results in a conflict with the County's LOS policy, LOS is not considered to be a significant impact under CEQA. Refer to Section 8.6 for more information about the traffic operations analysis.

Impact 18-1 Conflict with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3 subdivision (b) - Cumulative Plus Project Conditions. *The proposed project will continue to generate VMT under cumulative plus project conditions and since no threshold has been established by the County and the project is inconsistent with the MTP/SCS, the increase in VMT is a cumulatively considerable impact.*

The standard of significance of VMT has not been established for Placer County. The County is currently working on an SB 743 Implementation Plan, which will establish standards of significance for VMT under CEQA analysis. Since OPR's recommended thresholds are not applicable and Placer County has not yet established thresholds for VMT, any increase in VMT results in a significant impact. Nonetheless, in an abundance of caution, the County undertook a VMT analysis of the project.

VMT estimates for a peak Saturday were developed by multiplying the trip generation by the average trip length and the average trip distribution percentages for each geographic area where visitors originate from. VMT for each geographic area is then summed to generate the VMT estimate for the project for a peak Saturday. The analysis indicates that the project would generate approximately 78,000 VMT on a peak Saturday. To put that in context, the existing HFRP generates approximately 18,000 VMT on a peak Saturday. The proposed project would result in a substantial increase in VMT over the existing park operations. The project will continue to generate VMT into the future, which will result in a cumulatively considerable impact.

Additionally, the proposed project is located within an area designated as "Lands not Identified for Development" in the 2020 MTP/SCS. The MTP/SCS is aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions through VMT reduction, and these efforts are primarily focused on urban areas, where investments in the roadway system and transit, bike, pedestrian infrastructure are built into the MTP/SCS to achieve identified air quality targets.

According to the MTP/SCS, "Lands not Identified for Development" areas are typically located outside of urbanized areas and designated in local land use plans for no further development. Travel occurs almost exclusively by automobile, as transit service is minimal or nonexistent.

Figures 3-10 and 3-11 of the 2020 MTP/SCS show the 2016 and projected 2040 vehicle miles traveled per capita for the six-County SACOG region. The sub-region in which the project is located is shown as having both now, and in the future, greater than 150% of the regional average VMT per capita. Additionally, these areas are recognized as having high VMT per capita both now and in the future (2040 MTP/SCS Planning Period). The proposed project would further increase VMT above the assumptions in the MTP/SCS. Thus, it can be concluded that the potential increased activity associated with the proposed project would conflict with the MTP/SCS' strategy for reducing VMT through investments in roadway and multi-modal infrastructure primarily in urban areas.

The County does not have an established threshold for VMT and is not required to have a threshold in place until July of 2020, but because the project generates additional VMT beyond the baseline condition and it is not consistent with the MTP/SCS land use plan, the proposed project would result in a **significant impact**.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures for this impact are limited. Most mitigation measures that reduce VMT have low to negligible effects in rural areas, such as bike lanes, transit network improvements, and pedestrian networks. Other mitigation measures are not applicable, like commute reduction strategies and diversifying or intensification of land uses on the project site. The only feasible mitigation measure is the parking reservation system, which is already being employed as part of the project for weekends, holidays and other peak usage days. The parking reservation system serves to promote carpooling and control the amount of VMT generated by the proposed project. Even with the parking reservation system, VMT of the proposed project continues to exceed the applicable threshold. Therefore, this impact remains **significant and unavoidable**.

AIR QUALITY

Chapter 9.0 identifies the effects of the HFRP Trails Expansion Project on air quality. The HFRP Trails Expansion Project would result in construction-related effects on air quality. Construction-related emissions are considered as short-term or temporary but have the potential to generate emissions of criteria air pollutants (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) and ozone precursors (ROG and NO_x) during site preparation (e.g., excavation, grading, and clearing); exhaust from equipment operating onsite, material transportation, workers traveling to and from the site, and other miscellaneous activities. All construction activities within the air basin are considered to contribute towards current air quality violations similar to those of the HFRP Trails Expansion Project. Based on air quality modeling conducted consistent with PCAPCD guidance, construction-related activities associated with the worst-case day would result in project-generated daily unmitigated emissions of approximately 7.3 lb/day of ROG, 52 lb/day of NO_x, and 21 lb/day of PM₁₀. These emission estimates are below the adopted thresholds for PCAPCD, so project construction activity would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to the violation of air quality standards.

Operation of the Trails Expansion project would generate emissions of ROG, NO_x, and PM from visitors traveling by motor vehicle to and from the expansion areas, utility usage, and pumps used to operate groundwater wells. The model results indicate project operation would not result in emissions of ROG, NO_x, or PM₁₀ exceeding PCAPCD's significance threshold. Thus, project operation would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution of air emissions and would not contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation, expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations, or conflict with air quality planning efforts. Although the air basin is designated non-attainment for Ozone, the project's incremental contribution to the significant cumulative effect is not cumulatively considerable.

NOISE

Noise is a localized occurrence and attenuates rapidly with distance. Each proposed trail extension area is geographically distant from one another so no single receptor would be exposed to the entire duration of construction generated noise. Construction of project improvements would result in exterior noise levels experienced at the closest noise-sensitive use that are predicted to exceed 82 dBA L_{eq} if feasible noise controls are not implemented. If construction activities were to occur during the more noise-sensitive hours of the day (i.e.,

hours not exempt under the Placer County Noise Ordinance) or if construction equipment were not properly equipped with noise control devices, construction-generated noise levels would substantially increase noise experienced at nearby sensitive receptors. However, construction activity is limited to daytime hours and would be exempt from the Noise Ordinance.

Operation of the HFRP Trails Expansion project would generate noise from motor vehicles traveling on roadways, as well as parking lot activity (e.g., car doors closing, people talking and laughing, children playing, etc.). Mobile source noise along studied roads would not create a perceptible increase in traffic noise along roadways leading to the trailheads. Once the vehicles near the entrance to a trailhead vehicle noise because more noticeable. Modeling results predict that noise levels experienced along Curtola Ranch Road and Bell Road at the access driveways could result in an audible increase in ambient noise experienced at nearby residences. As discussed in Chapter 10 “Noise”, predicted noise levels at noise-sensitive receptors along Curtola Ranch Road near the project access driveway and Bell Road near the Twilight Ride driveway are expected to increase by more than 3 dBA. This increase would be audible but would not expose a sensitive receptor to noise levels that exceed adopted standards. Application of mitigation to restrict the hours of operation to daylight hours only and require use of pavement at the access roads would reduce project related noise increase to levels considered acceptable.

Stationary-source noise generated by activity in the proposed parking lots and trailheads would not expose sensitive receptors to noise levels that exceed adopted standards listed in the County’s noise regulations. Noise generated by project related activities would occur during the daytime hours when people are less sensitive to noise. Thus, operation of the HFRP Trails Expansion Project would not result in a significant impact to the noise environment with implementation of mitigation measures and the project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to a significant noise impact when considered with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects.

HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Chapter 11.0 identifies the effects of the park and proposed expansion project on hydrology and water quality. The project could result in temporary discharges of sediment and other contaminants into ephemeral drainages and Raccoon Creek in the project area. Installation of on-site septic systems could cause a change in the quality of the groundwater in the project area, and implementation of the project could cause impacts on groundwater supply because of the upgrade or installation of up to three additional groundwater wells in the expansion area to be used as a source for drinking water and restrooms.

Providing water to the public is a regulated activity under the California Health and Safety Code. Site occupancy and anticipated uses of a facility are the primary factors in determining whether a Transient Non-community (TNC) public water system will be required. As building permit applications for new study facilities are submitted to the County, such applications would be reviewed by the Placer County Environmental Health Department to determine TNC public water system requirements. Any future study facilities not providing a TNC public water system would be required by the County to sign a Declaration of Small Water System Status, which verifies that provision of a state small water system, rather than a public water system, is appropriate for the facility based on the number of service connections provided, the number of days that the facility is operational, the population served on a daily basis, and the number of days in a year that at least 25 people will be served. Any violation of TNC public water system requirements is a code enforcement issue. Therefore, the County would ensure that water systems at existing and future study facilities would be adequate to accommodate planned uses, including

Special Events. As mentioned above under “Soils, Geology, and Seismicity,” mitigation of impacts of the HFRP Trails Expansion Project would include obtaining authorization for construction and operation with the Central Valley RWQCB and implementing erosion and sediment control measures. Mitigation would also include preparing and implementing a grading and drainage plan and obtaining permits for wells and septic systems through the Placer County Division of Environmental Health. Because the project would implement site-specific mitigation consistent with the Central Valley RWQCB program and County permits, the incremental effect of the project is not cumulatively considerable when considered with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects. The project would not contribute to a significant cumulative effect on water quality or hydrology.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Chapter 12.0 identifies the effects of the existing park and proposed Trails Expansion Project on biological resources. Other known cumulative projects in the vicinity include roadway upgrades, revisions to the existing County Code (Winery Ordinance), and new commercial development from which the greatest potential for adverse effects on special-status species would consist of habitat disturbance related to construction and passive recreation. These impacts on biological resources are considered potentially significant. The contribution of the project to cumulative effects on biological resources in the project area could be cumulatively considerable.

Mitigation of impacts of the project consists of establishing buffers around sensitive resources, conducting pre-construction surveys, preserving oak woodland habitat within the project area, paying in-lieu fees for oak woodland preservation consistent with the Placer County Tree Ordinance, and obtaining and complying with terms of applicable permits. The project would implement site-specific mitigation consistent with regulations of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that would reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, the incremental effect of the HFRP Trails Expansion Project would not be cumulatively considerable when considered with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND UTILITIES

Chapter 13.0 identifies the effects of the existing HFRP and Trails Expansion Project on public services and utilities. Use of the existing HFRP has increased calls for emergency medical service (mostly heat-related calls) during the peak fire season, which means emergency service personnel who answer calls at HFRP are not available for other calls. Although the HFRP Trails Expansion would attract more visitors to this area, with the implementation of project improvements and the inclusion of mitigation measures, this project would not have a significant impact on fire protection and emergency response. Proposed trails cross rugged terrain and are often remote, requiring specialized equipment for access by emergency personnel. To address these issues, the HFRP Trails Expansion Project will be phased over time so the number of visitors is gradually increased, and project improvements such as the construction of two new bridges to help response times, the construction of new emergency/maintenance roads and emergency helicopter landing zones at the planned parking areas, and the mitigation measure requiring the provision of a Light Rescue Vehicle (an LRV), will improve emergency access within the park areas. The purchase of the LRV will enhance response to remote areas of the park as well as to other areas of the Placer County Fire Department/CAL FIRE’s service area.

With regards to police services, there would not be a significant increase in demand from the proposed project on police protection which would require the construction of new Sheriff’s facilities. For both fire and police

services, this project will not add to any cumulative impact of all relevant contemplated projects, as shown in Section 18.4.1.

The HFRP Trails Expansion Project would include installation of up to three water tanks in the expansion area, and septic systems within the park and expansion project area. Although soils in the project area exhibit limitations for the installation of a septic system, soil testing has identified suitable soils for septic systems at all three proposed parking areas, and the park and expansion project would comply with Central Valley RWQCB and County Division of Environmental Health regulations to ensure that on-site systems are properly engineered and designed to suit the on-site soil conditions. All wells for the proposed project would be required to obtain a well permit from the Placer County Division of Environmental Health. Because the HFRP Trails Expansion project would not connect to public sewer or water systems, it would not have a significant cumulative effect on public utilities when considered with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AND HAZARDS

Chapter 14.0 identifies the effects of the existing HFRP and proposed trails expansion project on hazardous materials and hazards. An accidental-spill prevention and response plan would be implemented, employees handling hazardous materials would be trained in safety measures, and hazardous materials would be stored in a designated staging area. A safety hazard plan would also be prepared and implemented to ensure construction workers are not exposed to hazards. In addition, as mentioned above under “Soils, Geology, and Seismicity” and “Hydrology and Water Quality,” the project would obtain authorization for construction and operation with the Central Valley RWQCB and the County and would implement erosion and sediment control measures. Because the project would implement this site-specific mitigation, the incremental effect of the project is not cumulatively considerable when considered with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects. The project would not contribute to a significant cumulative effect on hazardous materials and hazards.

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS AND ENERGY

Project operation would generate emissions of GHG below the PCAPCD Bright-line threshold of 10,000 MT CO₂e per year. According to the PCAPCD, the Bright-line level for the operational phases represents an emissions level which can be considered cumulatively considerable. Modeling output for the proposed project predicts operation of project components would generate approximately 1,347 MT CO₂e per year, which is below the PCAPCD operational threshold of 10,000 MT CO₂e per year that represents a bright line threshold. Therefore, the project’s impacts do not represent a cumulatively considerable contribution toward global GHG emissions. Similarly, all future development with the potential to generate GHG emissions would be required to demonstrate compliance with applicable federal and state regulatory requirements, including General Plan goals and policies of the affected jurisdiction, intended to reduce and/or avoid potential adverse environmental effects. At a regional level, the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) 2016 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS) has been adopted to achieve consistency with state mobility and GHG goals such as AB 32. As such, cumulative impacts to GHG emissions would be mitigated on a project-by-project level, and in accordance with the established regulatory framework, through the established regulatory review process.

WILDFIRE

CAL FIRE identifies the proposed expansion area as being in both a Moderate and High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. The majority of the new trail system would be located in the Harvego Preserve, and land adjacent to this area (north of the Bear River) is rated either a High or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (CAL FIRE 2019). Since 2006, there has never been a visitor-caused fire at the existing HFRP. However, sparks from construction and maintenance equipment could generate fire risks in the project area and visitors could generate fire risks.

The County would manage vegetation within the trail expansion areas consistent with the methods outlined in the *Hidden Falls Regional Park Vegetation, Fuels and Range Management Plan* as a working guide to reduce the risk of fire in the project area and would continue to work with CAL FIRE to reduce the fire hazard within the HFRP and Trail Expansion areas. The Placer Land Trust actively manages the landscape through management plans that incorporate defensible spaces and fuel breaks through the grazing and thinning of vegetation. Bridges designed to accommodate emergency vehicles would be 8–12 feet wide. As the trail network expands, new wells to extract water would be installed to support wildfire suppression and mobile telephone service is available at each of the parking areas for emergency calls. The HFRP Trail Expansion Project includes construction of two new helicopter landing zones, the installation of three new 12,000-gallon water tanks, and a mitigation measure that requires the purchase of a Light Rescue Vehicle (LRV) for CAL FIRE use within the park and trail expansion areas as well as in the local area in general. The LRV has the capability to hold up to 500 gallons of water and other fire retardant to provide an initial response to any potential fires. Because it is smaller in size than typical fire engines, it will be able to access more remote portions of the Trails Expansion area to provide faster response times. In addition, the County would comply with all laws, plans, policies, and regulations related to fire safety and wildfire suppression identified in Section 13.0, “Public Services and Utilities,” and Section 16.0, “Wildfire,” which would reduce the potential risk of wildfires, reduce the severity and size of potential wildfires, and improve CAL FIRE’s ability to respond more quickly to wildfires. Cumulative impacts of all relevant contemplated projects, as shown in Section 18.4.1, will potentially increase wildfire service calls associated with developed properties but are offset by increased tax revenues that will provide additional resources for various public services, including fire. Therefore, the project would not contribute to a significant cumulative effect associated with increased risks for wildfire when considered with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects.