



State of California – Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Northern Region
601 Locust Street
Redding, CA 96001
www.wildlife.ca.gov

GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor
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March 31, 2020

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

APR 01 2020

Kim Hunter, Director of Building and Planning
Trinity County Planning Department
PO Box 2819
Weaverville, CA 96093

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

Subject: Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Grocery Outlet – Weaverville Project, Trinity County, State Clearinghouse Number 2020039002

Dear Kim Hunter:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) has reviewed the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for the above-referenced project (Project). As a trustee for the State's fish and wildlife resources, the Department has jurisdiction over the conservation, protection, and management of fish, wildlife, native plants, and their habitat. As a responsible agency, the Department administers the California Endangered Species Act and other provisions of the Fish and Game Code that conserve the State's fish and wildlife public trust resources. The Department offers the following comments and recommendations on this Project in our role as a trustee and responsible agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, California Public Resources Code section 21000 et seq.

Project Description

The Project is a proposal to construct a new 20,000 square foot Grocery Outlet grocery store. The Project includes the development of two driveway entrances, sidewalks, drive aisles, parking spaces, a loading dock, stormwater improvements, landscaping, outdoor lighting, and monument signage. The Project includes the merger of three parcels and a lot line adjustment with a fourth parcel to provide a suitable lot area (2.2 acres) for the development of the grocery store. This merger and lot line adjustment will result in two parcels: the Project site and a remainder. The remainder parcel will not be subject to development; therefore, the IS/MND is focused primarily on the parcel that will be developed. The Project is located at 1155 Main Street in the community of Weaverville.

Comments and Recommendations

The Department appreciates the inclusion of measures in the IS/MND to mitigate impacts to biological resources and has the following comments and recommendations to further reduce impacts.

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Pallid Bat

The Grocery Outlet Weaverville Property Biological Review Report (Biological Report) prepared by Wildland Resource Managers in July 2019, indicates the presence of pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*) day roosting habitat on the Project site in the form of dilapidated buildings/abandoned old structures. The IS/MND acknowledges the potential for pallid bat to occur on the Project site and states that no focused bat surveys have been conducted. The Project description in the IS/MND states that “*existing development on the project site is limited to prior residential and commercial structures (e.g. foundations, utilities, debris, etc.) and paved and unpaved driveways.*” Therefore, the potential roosting habitat buildings may no longer occur on site, or may occur on the portion of the property that will be designated as a remainder and not subject to further development or review in the IS/MND.

Based on aerial photos and the Project description in the IS/MND, it appears that the majority of prior buildings and structures have already been removed. However, because of the discrepancy between the Project description in IS/MND and Biological Report, it is unclear if pallid bat habitat structures currently exist on the Project site. If these structures do currently exist, the Department recommends the completion of bat roost structure surveys well in advance of the demolition of the buildings referenced in the Biological Report, as these buildings could provide hibernacula or maternity roosting habitat. Removal or disturbance of a roost structure during either the hibernation or maternity seasons could cause significant impacts to bats which could lead to high mortality. This survey should be conducted by a qualified biologist knowledgeable in the ecology of local bat species. If the buildings are determined to be occupied, humane exclusion may be necessary prior to demolition. If necessary, humane evictions/exclusions must be conducted during seasonal periods of bat activity, which may vary by year, location, or species and must be conducted by or under the supervision of a biologist with specific experience conducting humane exclusions.

Nesting Migratory Birds

Mitigation measure BIO-1 addresses impacts to nesting migratory birds by recommending construction activities to occur outside the nesting season, requiring a qualified biologist to conduct surveys during the nesting season, and requiring the establishment of a protective buffer around active nests. The Department recommends the adding the following to the mitigation measure to ensure resource agency consultation occurs: “*If an active nest is located during the survey, a no-disturbance buffer shall be established around the nest by the qualified biologist, in consultation with California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.*”

Additionally, if construction activities are delayed or suspended for more than one week after the completion of the nesting surveys, the Project location and adjacent habitat should be resurveyed. In addition to being submitted to the Trinity County

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Planning Department, nesting survey results should also be sent to the Department at R1CEQARedding@wildlife.ca.gov, or at California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Attn: CEQA, 601 Locust Street, Redding, California 96001.

Native Vegetation

The Department recommends utilizing vegetation native to the local area in landscaping whenever possible. Benefits of utilizing native vegetation in landscaping include providing resources for native wildlife such as hummingbirds and beneficial pollinators, conserving water, reducing pesticide use, and reducing landscaping maintenance. The California Native Plant Society (CNPS) website (http://www.cnps.org/cnps/grownative/why_native.php) includes a variety of useful information and tools to help determine native species for a particular area, information on care and maintenance of native species, and contacts for purchasing native plants or seeds. The CNPS tool Calscape generates a list of native plants based on a specific address. A search of the Project site returned 585 native plants ([https://calscape.org/loc-40.7262,-122.9331\(1155%20Main%20Street,%20Weaverville,%20CA\)?&poploc=1](https://calscape.org/loc-40.7262,-122.9331(1155%20Main%20Street,%20Weaverville,%20CA)?&poploc=1)). Several of these native species could be substituted for the plants provided in the Conceptual Landscape Plan.

For more information regarding the importance of using native species in landscaping, please see the *CNPS Guidelines for Landscaping to Protect Native Vegetation from Genetic Degradation* at: <https://www.cnps.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/landscaping.pdf>.

The Department appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on this Project. If you have any questions, please contact Kristin Hubbard, Environmental Scientist, at (530) 225-2138, or by e-mail at Kristin.Hubbard@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

Curt Babcock

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Curt Babcock

Habitat Conservation Program Manager

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